



Famebridge F. Payne

July 24, 1933 - May 18, 2024

Famebridge Frances (Cunningham) Payne, was born in Richmond, VA to the late Katherine (Banks) and Charles Cunningham, a domestic and a train porter. She graduated in 1950 from Armstrong High School and received a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1954 from Virginia State University. She then began working as a schoolteacher in Richmond. She later studied at the University of Pennsylvania.

She met her future husband, fellow Richmond educator Osborne Payne, in 1960, during an education conference in New York City, when he surrendered his seat to her on a crowded bus. They wed on March 18, 1961, at her family church, First African Baptist in Richmond.

Their first child, Famebridge Sannequille, was born the following year in Richmond. Soon after, the family moved to Liberia, West Africa, where Mr. Payne served as educational advisor for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1963, their daughter Sarita Sinyea was born in Liberia. Famebridge later supported her husband and assisted with the physical education program at Liberia's Cuttington College, where Mr. Payne served from 1963-65 as acting Dean of Instruction.

The family returned to Virginia in 1965. While she taught in Roanoke schools, he went to work for Total Action Against Poverty. In 1967, he accepted a job

with the National Education Association (NEA) in Washington, DC, where the family ultimately moved and she taught at Sherman Elementary School.

While attending a principal's convention in Miami, Mr. Payne met a McDonald's owner-operator, which spurred him to apply for a McDonald's license.

The family opened their first McDonald's in 1974 on Broadway in East Baltimore, between North Avenue and Harford Road. They spent the next two decades opening and operating McDonald's franchises throughout the area.

Before settling in Columbia in 1976, the family lived in Silver Spring. Mrs. Payne began teaching in 1969 in Montgomery County, including at Four Corners Elementary. She last served as a Reading Teacher at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School, from which she retired in 1977 to work for the family restaurant business. The family was recognized for training and employing thousands of Baltimore City youth and remained active in community and charitable circles.

Mrs. Payne was a member the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); the Columbia (MD) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; the Columbia Chapter, National Epicureans, Inc.; the Columbia (MD) Chapter of The Links, Inc.; an Archousa (wife member) of the Gamma Boule chapter of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; the Red Hat Society; and the Que-ettes, wives of members of the Tau Pi chapter of Omega Psi Fraternity, Inc.

She was a longtime, active member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Ellicott City, where she taught Sunday School, played in the Handbell Choir and served on the Altar Guild and the Antique Show Committee.

She was predeceased by her husband, who died in 2012; and her stepdaughter, Andrea Kyles, who died in 2004. She is survived by her daughters, Famebridge Witherspoon (Gary) and Sarita Payne, all of Columbia; five grandchildren, Astarte Barnett (Joshua) of Phoenix, AZ; Jordahn Witherspoon (Priscilla) of Putnam, CT; Ahmadee and Clark Witherspoon, both of Southbridge, MA; and Jackson Witherspoon of Columbia; and five great-grandchildren, Londyn, Aubri and Linkyn Barnett of Phoenix; and Vanessa and Jeremiah Witherspoon of Putnam; and many friends.

Cemetery Details

St. John's Episcopal Church Cemetary

9140 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Previous Events

Viewing

MAY 31. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Rd
Windsor Mill, MD 21244
(410) 655-0110

Wake

JUN 1. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. John Episcopal
9140 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Funeral Service

JUN 1. 11:30 AM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal
9140 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Tribute Wall

SG

“ Affectionately called by me, “Mom Fame” was a wonderful special person to me. She embraced Famebridge and Sarita’s friends as her extended daughters and she was always someone I could talk to especially after my Mother passed in 2013. It’s hard to let go! Rest in Paradise❤️ Love Stacy Green

Stacy Green - June 03, 2024 at 09:54 AM

KJ

“ Famebridge, Sarita and Family,

Remember that your loss is shared by many friends in New Kent County, Virginia who care. You're in our thoughts, our hearts, and in our prayers.

With heartfelt sympathy,

The Johnson Family

(Patricia J. Smith, Jane J. Burrell, Katie Johnson, Louis Johnson, and Spotswood Johnson)

Katie Johnson - May 31, 2024 at 08:57 PM

SS

“ Sherri Jones Simmons planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Famebridge F. Payne.

Sherri Jones Simmons - May 29, 2024 at 11:27 PM

SS

“ *Sherri Jones Simmons purchased the Sweet Sincerity for the family of Famebridge F. Payne.*



Sherri Jones Simmons - May 29, 2024 at 11:27 PM

M(

“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Life Tribute Center (Randallstown) - May 29, 2024 at 09:53 AM

AC

“ *Dear Famebridge, Sarita and All the Family,*

Your mother was one of the first people we met at St. John's. She was "recruiting" volunteers to cook and prepare food for the church's biggest fundraiser, the three-day Antiques Show. I wasn't sure how involved I wanted to get, since we were very new to the church. But your mother's charm, sincere and gracious warmth and good humor were impossible to turn down, and we've been at St. J's ever since (1983). We loved your parents and miss them both a lot.

*With love and sincerest condolences,
Jim & Alison Coker*

Alison Coker - May 27, 2024 at 06:22 PM