



## Mrs. Dorothy McKim Miller

February 18, 1929 - December 7, 2022

Dorothy May Chism was born on February 18, 1929 in Mt. Holly, New Jersey to Ruth Adelaide Chism. Two weeks after her birth, she became the daughter of Bettie Barnes McKim, her maternal great aunt and husband, Oscar McKim. Following Oscar's death in 1935, Bettie raised Dorothy as a single parent. Dorothy attended Cinnaminson # 2 Elementary School and graduated from Palmyra High School in 1945. Following graduation, she worked at Penn Fruit Super Market in Philadelphia to fund her college education. In the fall of 1946, she moved to Washington, D.C. and enrolled in Howard University's freshman class. Four years later, she graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts degree in History and a minor in German. That same year she began working as a Printer's Assistant at the United States Bureau of Engraving. On February 1, 1952, she married her Howard classmate, Brawley Miller. As a child, Dorothy had thoughts of becoming a teacher. Later, she dreamed of becoming a

doctor. Ultimately, she chose to enroll in Howard University's School of Social Work graduating in the class of 1960 with a Master's degree.

Her professional career began in 1960 with the D.C. Department of Public Welfare Protective Service Section. She provided casework service to parents who neglected or had the potential

for neglecting their children. After a 3 year stint (1960-1963), she left and worked for 5 years on

the Children's Psychiatric Inpatient Unit at D.C. General Hospital where she continued to service

families and acquire some supervisory responsibilities. From this experience, she would

develop her therapeutic and supervisory skills which would enhance her future skillsets as a

mental health therapist and supervisor. From 1968-1970, she was hired as a supervisor at

Community Health Hospital Administrative Bureau of Clinical Services, commonly known as

Gale's Clinic, where she guided her staff in developing health services for families and children

and worked with interdisciplinary groups in child development, nutrition, maternal and child

health. This job prepared her for what would be her most challenging and rewarding position.

In 1974, the years of continued professional growth paid off when she became the first African American employed in an administrative professional position in the Fairfax County network of

Community Mental Health Centers including, the Mt. Vernon Center for Community Mental

Health (MVOPU). As Dorothy said herself, "I think each job I've had prepared

me for the next one." Dorothy became the Unit Director in charge of adult and child and youth outpatient services at the MVOPU and over the next 15 years, she was met with several challenges both clinical and personal. But she met them all with courage and bravery and during one of the darkest periods of her career, with the support of her husband Brawley-and by never backing down.

An example of her clinical bravery was her spearheading the first treatment program for sexual offenders in Fairfax County. She initiated this program as she did all of her clinical work. She studied and researched and only began when she and other staff members were sufficiently trained. For those she supervised or mentored, she encouraged their continuing education and professional development. She also pursued her own professional growth and development by enrolling in a 2 year certificate program in Family Theory and Practice at the Smith College School for Social Work.

While working at Mount Vernon, she ventured into business and opened an office in Arlington, Virginia specializing in psychotherapy.

In 1990, Dorothy was asked to apply for the newly created Associate Director for Social Services position at For Love of Children (FLOC). Dorothy accepted the post which required her to

supervise the directors of several of FLOC!s programs including Foster Home, Hope and a Home, and the Learning Center.

Following her tenure at FLOC, Dorothy continued seeing clients in her private practice until she decided to fully retire at the age of 72.

Dorothy was well known for her sense of adventure. As a child, she loved riding downhill on her sled. That daredevil spirit returned during the early 70s when she decided she wanted to ride

like the wind and purchased a Honda 350 motorcycle. After learning how to ride the bike,

husband Brawley decided he wanted to ride and purchased his own bike.

Together and

separately, they cruised the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia roadways.

Skiing was yet another one of her adventures. Although she had never been on the slopes, she

started taking lessons at local ski resorts. She also joined Black Ski and traveled to such well

known resorts as Vail and Steamboat, Colorado. While hip replacement surgery ended her

adventures on the slope, it did not dampen her spirits. She turned to her new found passion,

golf, where she walked the tees and greens, carried her clubs, and, participated in golf

tournaments. She played until she was 91 years old.

While in her 80s, Dorothy practiced chair yoga at the Smith Center for Healing Arts and other

yoga centers. She also dabbled in tai chi and decided to study Spanish. At the age of 77, she

traveled to Guatemala to live with a host family and attend a Spanish

immersion school.

This was the first time Dorothy ever traveled alone outside the country. Her other travels were mainly stateside family vacations where she and Brawley would load the car and carry the children to fun-filled trips like Atlantic City or a once in a life-time cross country road trip.

When Brawley and Dorothy became empty nesters, they took an Alaska cruise and sailed the waters of the Caribbean visiting such islands as St. Thomas, Puerto Rico, and Panama.

Following her travels to Guatemala she traveled to Dominica, the island nation of her former son-in law Paul Carrette, and satisfied a life-long dream to travel to Europe.

She visited Paris, London, Cumbria, and England's Central Lake District.

Dorothy loved all things about nature. Her photograph collection of plants underscored her joy and admiration of the natural world. When she was in her early to middle 30's, she used to

have a vegetable garden at the side of the family residence. Later, she turned her attention to

bonsai. For several years, she was a member of the Washington Bonsai Club. She cared and

maintained her trees and made plans for their care when she was on vacation and where they

will go for their continued care upon her death.

Despite her 93 years, Dorothy pulled weeds for about two hours without tiring. She said it was

therapeutic and relaxing. Just weeks before her death, she was pulling the prolific weeds that

continued to sprout despite the cooler weather.

While the pedestrian traffic, friends, associates, and neighbors will remember Dorothy for her gardening and beloved front yard, where the Japanese Maple tree stands, Dorothy will no doubt love to be remembered for her honesty, integrity, empathy, and spirituality. Dorothy was preceded in death by her son Brawley McKim and husband Brawley. She is survived by her daughters Phyllis and Cynthia, grandchildren David and Lauren Carrette, former son-in-law Paul Carrette, great grandson Menelik, cousin Gloria Montgomery, and a host of other relatives.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Dorothy McKim Miller*

January 28, 2023 at 02:13 PM



“ *Mrs. Dorothy McKim Miller*

January 28, 2023 at 10:26 AM



“ *Ms. Miller was a wonderful and strong black woman, when I first met her was one of the best things that happened to me, I found myself becoming more stronger in my life just due to her attitude of life, I truly loved the way she treated me and other people, God bless you, sleep in peace, you will be missed and thank you for your friendship.*



**Tony Blakes** - December 21, 2022 at 07:27 AM