



Ms. Elinor Alexis Gross

December 6, 1948 - April 7, 2024

Elinor Alexis Gross (Smith) was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on December 6, 1948, to Raymond Smith and Velma Smith (Thomas). Her father nicknamed her "Smokey Jo" because he said she reminded him of Smokey Joe Williams, a star of the Negro Baseball League. So, friends and family called her "Jo Jo " when she was young. Her nick name was later shortened to just "Jo." She spent her early years in Louisiana before moving to Washington, D.C. where she lived with her mother Velma and her stepfather William J. Mines Sr., sister Constance Smith, brothers Bruce Smith, Michael Mines and William Mines Jr. She received her early education in the District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS). She graduated from Eastern High School in 1966 and accepted a full academic scholarship to D.C. Teacher's College (now the University of the District of Columbia) where she majored in mathematics and pledged the Sigma Gamma Rho sorority. She said that she enjoyed mathematics because "there is only one correct answer to a problem."

After graduation, she taught at Hamilton Junior High School in Washington, D.C., where she became head of the mathematics department. She went on to teach at Browne Junior High School. She retired from the DCPS in 2002. She enjoyed retirement for a few years and then returned to the classroom as a mathematics teacher at Earnest E. Just Middle School in Prince George's County, Maryland. She positively impacted the lives of thousands of young people during her career. She retired for good in 2010.

Jo loved to travel with her special travel buddy, her daughter Candyce. They not only traveled throughout the United States to include Alaska, but they also had adventures in far-away places such as the Caribbean, Italy, and France. Some of Jo's most enjoyable vacations were with the entire family at the Outer Banks of North Carolina. She was an avid bowler and shopper. She also enjoyed watching scary movies (the scarier the better) and making her bread pudding. Jo always put family first. She loved spearheading and organizing family gatherings. For example, she planned trips to Louisiana for family reunions and she made sure that the entire family got together for the holidays. She made every gathering joyful and eventful. When together, the family played games, watched movies, had sleepovers and, most importantly, made fun of each other. Jo attended every important family event such as graduations and weddings.

Jo's greatest joy was her grandson, Carter. She would light up when she saw him. He would always put a big smile on her face. Anytime Jo had a difficult day, Carter would immediately lift her spirits. She and Carter loved to make silly faces together. He was truly the light of her life.

Jo is survived by her loving daughter, Candyce Young and her grandson Carter Smith, and her brothers Michael Mines (Beatrice), William Mines (Donna), her sister Racine Williams (Allan) and sister-in-law, Linda Smith, numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her father Raymond Smith, her mother Velma Mines, her stepfather William J. Mines, Sr., her sister Constance Gordon, her brother Bruce Smith and her long-time partner Charles Young.

Cemetery Details

WASHINGTON NATIONAL

4101 SUITLAND RD
Suitland, MD 20746

Previous Events

Wake

MAY 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Pope Funeral Home Forestville Chapel
5538 MARLBORO PIKE
FORESTVILLE, MD 20747

Funeral Service

MAY 4. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Pope Funeral Home Forestville Chapel
5538 MARLBORO PIKE
FORESTVILLE, MD 20747

Tribute Wall



“ Pope Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Ms. Elinor Alexis Gross



Pope Funeral Homes - May 04, 2024 at 09:48 AM

OJ

“ Ms. Gross was my 7th grade math teacher at Browne JHS. She made math fun in the class. She was one of the teachers that was passionate about teaching and making sure the students understood what was explain to us. My condolences to the family of Ms. Gross, especially her daughter Candyce, you're in my thoughts and prayers. 🙏



Omar Jackson - May 06, 2024 at 11:27 PM

LS

“ Our Hearts reach out to yours with Love and Sympathy at this most difficult time, but know that our memories shared will forever remain and you're always be in our thoughts. Love, Aunt Linda, Teriyana and Jennifer.

Linda Smith - April 24, 2024 at 12:42 PM

ET

Our family will not be the same without (Jo Jo). I know we'll find comfort in each other and we'll get through this together

Uncle Emanuel & your Louisiana Family

Emanuel Thomas - May 01, 2024 at 10:44 PM



My heartfelt sympathy to Mike Mines and Jo's family. I pray you will find comfort from sweet memories and each other. 🙏🙏

Margaret Hardy - May 03, 2024 at 09:09 PM

SM

To My Family,

I want to let you know my prayers and thoughts are with you today. Let's cherish our memories of Jo Jo and try to focus on the times that brought us joy. Let's allow our shared blessings to fill us with love, comfort us, and inspire us to move forward.

As we struggle to adjust to the loss of Jo Jo, please know that we are here for one another. In our moments of loneliness, we can find solace in each other's company, and we can never forget Jo Jo's love, kindness, laughter, and beautiful spirit.

*With love always,
Cousin Sheila*

Sheila Minder - May 04, 2024 at 11:08 AM

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Sheila Minder - May 04, 2024 at 12:19 PM