



## Harriette Kennebrew Perkins

March 15, 1947 - October 29, 2025

Harriette Kennebrew Perkins, a woman of grace, laughter, and undeniable style, entered eternal rest on October 29, 2025, after 78 years joyfully lived. Born at Chicago's historic Provident Hospital, she carried her hometown pride wherever she went. In her trademark red St. John knit, Harriette loved to laugh, to dance a Chicago-style two-step, and to tell anyone who would listen about the heritage of the South Side and the legacy of Provident's founder, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, the pioneering heart surgeon.

A daughter of the Great Migration, Harriette was the beloved only child of Georgia natives Clara Mahone and L.C. (Lucius) Kennebrew, who made their home among the vibrant, close-knit communities of Chicago's South Side. Surrounded by relatives and family friends who had also journeyed north, young Harriette thrived in an extended village filled with warmth, faith, and joy. She worshiped at Woodlawn Baptist Church, ordered hamburgers from the local dime store, and rode streetcars downtown to shop the bustling department stores.

The family later moved to Michigan City, Indiana, where Harriette continued to grow in faith and community. She sang in the choir at Mount Zion Baptist Church and lent a hand in the family's businesses-Kennebrew's Florist and Coleman's Funeral Home-planting the seeds of her creativity and service. She went on to study at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, an experience that

broadened her horizons and shaped her early adult years.

Harriette's life changed forever when she met Louis B. Perkins in Chicago. They married on November 13, 1970, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and together raised their three children-Kimberley, Louis Jr., and James Arthur. As a devoted military spouse, Harriette embraced every chapter of their assignments, proudly fulfilling her role as an Officer's Wife and serving as treasurer of the Officers' Wives Club in Heidelberg, Germany. Their family's journey spanned Europe, Africa, and the United States, each place enriched by her presence, leadership, and generosity.

A woman of many talents, Harriette built a varied and distinguished career. She worked as an Administrative Assistant during their time at Fort Sheridan, Illinois; taught at the American Cooperative School in Monrovia, Liberia; and served as a Budget and Fiscal Assistant Officer for the U.S. State Department at the Embassy in Liberia. Once the family settled in the Washington, D.C. area after Louis's retirement, she continued her professional path as a Legal Administrator. But her favorite role may have been as a sales associate at Nordstrom, where her eye for elegance and love of fashion found a natural home-and where she happily supported her devotion to St. John.

Faith and service were central pillars of Harriette's life. She was a devoted member of Alfred Street Baptist Church, singing in the Young and Adult Choir for more than 25 years. She poured her heart into community organizations including the Highland Park and Prince George's County Chapters of Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated, the Epicureans, and especially Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Harriette fulfilled a dream by pursuing her studies at Trinity Washington University, where she excelled as an honors student and was proudly initiated into the Iota Iota Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

A committed advocate for justice, Harriette attended the March on Washington with her parents as a young woman-an experience that shaped her lifelong civic engagement. She remained politically active throughout her life, supporting Vice President Kamala Harris's Senate campaign and the presidential campaigns of Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton and her Forever President, Barack Obama.

Harriette's talents were as wide-ranging as her passions. She was an accomplished seamstress and a florist by training, expressing her love through the handmade dolls, lingerie bags, and gifts she carefully crafted for others. She was an avid reader whose shelves held suspense novels, works by Black authors, and histories of the Civil Rights Movement. Music filled her home and her heart-especially the soul-stirring voice of Aretha Franklin, the classic Motown sound, and the uplifting power of gospel. For 20 years, she traveled with the Mahone women on an annual Mother's Day spa trip, visiting destinations from Charleston to Salt Lake City and filling each journey with laughter and unforgettable memories. She and Louis also nurtured a love of travel together, exploring new cities and countries well beyond the adventures of military life.

Above all, Harriette was immensely proud of her children, grandchildren, and great-granddaughter. She never missed an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments or discuss current events, sharing her excitement with anyone who would listen. Her family was her heart, and she devoted her life to nurturing, supporting, and championing them.

Harriette leaves behind her cherished husband of 55 years, Louis B. Perkins, Sr.; her beloved children Kimberley, Louis Jr., and James Arthur (Leah); her grandchildren Alexia, Jordan, Jalen, Peri, Louis III, Cameron, and Ryan; and her great-granddaughter Anastasia. She is also survived by her treasured

sister-cousins Yvonne Goodwin Moore of Chicago, Illinois and Laura Mae Williams Jackson of Hamilton, Georgia; her brother-cousin Norman Goodwin of Greensboro, Georgia; and a host of extended family members and dear friends who loved her deeply and will forever cherish her memory.

Harriette's life was a tapestry of love, faith, artistry, service, and joy. She lived boldly, celebrated fully, and left a legacy of elegance, compassion, and fierce devotion. Her laughter, her stories, her handmade gifts, and her unshakeable pride in her family will forever remain in the hearts of all who loved her.

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Ave  
ARLINGTON, VA 22211

# Previous Events

## Viewing

DEC 9. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Alfred Street Baptist Church  
301 S. Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## Funeral Service

DEC 9. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Alfred Street Baptist Church  
301 S. Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314