



Odie Mae Lathan Penny

April 1, 1936 - May 3, 2025

Odie Mae Lathan Penny peacefully transitioned on Sunday, May 3, 2026. She lived a full and beautiful life defined by faith, service, family, and a deep love for people and community.

Born on April 1, 1936, in Vance, Mississippi, to the late Walter Lathan and Lula V. Cooper Lathan, Odie accepted Christ at an early age and remained steadfast in her faith throughout her life. She was a lifelong servant of the church, including Bellevue Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois, where she faithfully served for many years.

Odie was a dedicated educator who poured into generations of students. She earned her bachelor's degree from Jackson State University and her master's degree from Loyola University Chicago. Her excellence in education was recognized through numerous honors, including the Dedicated Teacher Award for Meritorious Service and recognition among the Outstanding Elementary Teachers of America.

Odie had a love for life that extended far beyond her professional and service commitments. She was an avid traveler who explored the world with curiosity and joy, visiting six of the seven continents. She extended this passion to her students, introducing her inner-city students in Chicago, Illinois, to new experiences by organizing and leading educational trips throughout the United

States and Canada.

A proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, initiated into the Gamma Rho Chapter in 1955, Soror Odie remained actively engaged for decades through the Theta Omega Chapter in Chicago, Illinois. She served in leadership and service roles at the national, regional, and chapter levels. Her commitment to sisterhood, service, and excellence left a lasting impact on all who knew her and worked alongside her.

She was united in holy matrimony to her beloved husband, James Penny, with whom she shared 70 years of love, partnership, and devotion and a friendship of over 85 years.

She was preceded in death by her son, Selwyn Andre Penny, and her beloved sister, Louise Lathan Hall.

She leaves to cherish her memory of her devoted husband; her loving daughter, Tanya Penny Woods; her dearly loved son-in-law, Vernon Woods; her grandson, Joseph Paige and his wife, Dawn Paige; and her two precious great-granddaughters, Ryan Paige and Cameron Paige.

She is also survived by her first cousins Mamie Brown and Robert Lee Cooper, her favorite brother-in-law, Jerome Penny; her first cousins, Robert and Mamie; and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins, including Angela Penny, Anthony Penny (Val), Bridgette Anderson (Ken), and Tamika Penny. Also cherishing her memory are her chosen goddaughters, Adrienne Davis Hill, Vera Willis, and Sharon Collins, along with their families, all of whom held a special place in her heart.

Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she impacted-and in the example she set as a woman of strength, grace, and purpose.

Cemetery Details

Cedar Hill Cemetery

4111 Pennsylvania Ave
Suitland, MD 20746

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 14. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

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

Funeral Service

MAY 14. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

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

Tribute Wall



“ *Pope Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Odie Mae Lathan Penny*



Pope Funeral Homes - May 14 at 09:26 AM

CW

“ *The Waters Family sends Heartfelt Condolences to the Penny, Woods and Paige Families. May Your Love One Rest In Devine Peace With Christ Jesus.*



Christine Waters - May 14 at 06:28 PM



“ *Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Odie Mae Lathan Penny.*



May 09 at 11:44 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of ODIE MAE PENNY.*

May 09 at 11:44 AM