



## Rozena G. Crawford

April 19, 1942 - August 2, 2019

To be born—On Saturday, April 18, 1942, halfway around the world, the US led its first air strike at the Japanese main islands as B-25s lifted off the USS Hornet to bomb Tokyo in the Doolittle Raid of WW11. The US celebrated this as a victory. But just one day later, on this side of the world, in an unincorporated agrarian community in Volusia County, Florida, United States, located at the intersection of State Road 40 and U.S. 17, a real celebration took place. It was Sunday, April 19, 1942. In Barberville, FL, without fireworks, music, or balloons, but with thanksgiving and praise, Jesse Q. Graham and Rosa Lee Brown Graham welcomed their first little baby girl. She was the 2nd of eight children who joined Jesse James, the firstborn son of the Graham clan. She would be called Rozena.

...Then came Ellsworth, Elouise, Stephen, Ronald, Sandra, and finally Lynn who was born when Rozena was 14 years old.

To Learn—In 1955 the family relocated to DeLand just 14 miles away. Rozena's dad commuted daily continuing to provide for his family as a harvester in the ferning industry. Several things happened in 1955. Rozena graduated from her 6th grade school in Barberville. She enrolled in Euclid Junior Senior High School in DeLand where she made many lifelong friends. Her two closest friends, Martha Reid and Minerva Small, along with her other schoolmates lovingly called her "Zena." Zena brought her academic prowess with her and started to establish new standards of excellence. Even though she was an academic challenge to her new friends, she was accepted and even sought after because of her warmth, genuineness, and character. Also in 1955, Rozena accepted Jesus Christ as her Saviour, was baptized by Elder Harold L. Cleveland, and became a member of the Emmanuel SDA Church. From 1955 until 1959, when she graduated as valedictorian of her class at the tender age of 17, her life was full and exciting: she helped at home with her six younger siblings; at church, she was the Missionary Volunteer (MV) leader; she was a great friend, smart, fun to be around, respected; and she established and maintained a reputation for being true to her religious convictions.

The year 1959 found Rozena enrolled at Oakwood College, now university. She was the

first in her family, on both sides, to attend college. An excellent student, she received a B.A. degree in English with a minor in Secretarial Science, and as expected, she graduated with honors. At Oakwood, like Junior and Senior High, Rozena made many lifelong friends who describe her as nice, kind, generous, studious, refined, and a great friend.

To Love—While at Oakwood, Rozena did not only earn a degree and make many new friends. She also met a Milwaukee, Wisconsin student, via Chicago, Detroit, etc., who was smart and funny, but a bit tough around the edges. His name was Gene Crawford. Rozena, being defined and studious, held an elite position of clerk in the registrar's office. Gene, while completing his registration a day late in September 1962, became fascinated with the lovely, efficient, DeLand girl who worked in the registrar's office. After only one date, however, Rozena bowed out and put Gene in timeout.

It was a year later, they were reintroduced and began dating the second semester of their junior year. Dating was still a bit rocky, partly because Rozena was a refined young lady, and Gene, well.... Let's just say he was yet on his way to becoming the suave and debonair gentleman that he became.

After graduating in 1965, Rozena returned to Florida and taught in the public schools of Volusia County. Gene was drafted toward the end of 1965 and served in the US Army in Korea during the Vietnam era. They were wed April 23, 1966 and Gene returned to the United States in 1968. This union was blessed with three extraordinary children: Deirdre Michele, Gene, Jr., and Kristen. And Gene and Rozena kept their promise, "until death do we part."

To Learn More – The family resided in Maryland and Rozena taught in the public schools of Prince Georges County. Gene decided on a career change and completed medical school. Upon completion of his residency, he relocated the family with 3 children, Deirdre Michele, Gene Jr., and Kristen, to Huntsville Alabama in 9181 where he began his OB/GYN practice. After teaching one semester in Oakwood College Rozena joined the practice as medical office manager. Upon their return to Maryland in 1984, Rozena continued to serve as office manager for their medical offices in Maryland and Washington, DC until 1993 when Gene had a stroke. Gene and Rozena relocated to Deltona, Florida in 1995 where she worked full-time and cared for Gene until he passed away in 2004.

To Plant – Rozena's friendliness, kindness, and dedication to worthy causes aided her as she spearheaded projects, along with her husband, Gene. They dedicated themselves to

supporting Christian education. While residing in the Huntsville area, a fund-raising project was initiated. It was called Fruit from Florida. The entire family, including the children, worked the project and the proceeds provided scholarships for students who attended Oakwood College. After returning to the Maryland/Washington, DC area, the Crawfords assisted in two annual fund-raising banquets which supported Christian education. During these years, Rozena was elected Oakwood National Alumni Regional Vice-President from Alleghney East; in 1987, she received the HBCU leadership award from the NUCF/Washington Inter-Alumni Council; and in 1988, she received the Alleghney East Conference Certificate of Merit award from Oakwood National Alumni Association, Greater Orlando Chapter, where she served on the membership committee. She volunteered with the Auxiliary of Florida Hospital in Deland and as treasurer of the Area Retired Teachers' Association of Volusia County. She was active in Women's Connection, a Stonecroft Ministries women's prayer group. Rozena used social and civic activities as tools to enable her to sow seeds to better her community, promote children, provide hope, and cultivate others who will render service to mankind.

To Serve – Sister Rozena Crawford loved the Lord with all her heart, mind, and soul. It was evident by the way she lived. Wherever she planted her feet, she let her little light shine. She is still known by high school friends as the student who lived what they believe. After baptism, even as a young teenage girl, she became involved with the church and even held offices as a young person.

Wherever the family located, she, along with the entire family, would be found worshipping her Saviour and serving mankind. She was active in the Oakwood College Church serving as church clerk, church board member, and Home and School Leader. In the Dupont Park SDA Church in Washington, DC she served as Sabbath School Secretary and Sabbath School Superintendent. She also served as church school treasurer. This provided her with the opportunity to know which students needed help and anonymously, the Crawfords provided financial assistance for many students. She held these positions from 1985-1993. After relocating to Florida in 1995, Rozena transferred her membership and served faithfully at Mars Hill SDA Church in Sanford, Florida. She served as treasurer from 1999 until just recently, even though she suffered a stroke in 2005.

To Give – Rozena Graham Crawford was a Phenomenal Woman long before Maya Angelou penned her popular poem. God gave her life and His life and she gave her heart and her life back to Him by serving Him while serving others. Armed with her favorite text as her guide, Philippians 4:13 (NIV) "I can do all this through Him who gives me strength", she lived a life of service. She supported, cared for, revered, and respected her parents, spending more time with her mom who was the longest liver. She was a buttress for her

siblings, providing comfort and a haven in her home, not just for them, but for friends and other family as well. Many of us will always remember the times spent socializing in their home – Gene the Rookster and Rozena, the always champion Boggler. She nurtured her children, and with a shared commitment with Gene, they were educated in Adventist academies, and of course Oakwood. Gene said the kids could go to any college that they chose, but HIS money was going to Oakwood. Their investment yielded abundant returns. Each child is a servant of God and a productive member of society (Deirdre, MBA/CPA, Gene Jr., Patent Attorney and Mechanical Engineer, and Kristen, MSW). So, she gave back to God, her church, her family, her friends, and to her husband. In a tribute that Gene made when he surprised Rozena with a 25th wedding anniversary celebration in 1991, he summarized her well. He said: “From this marriage, we have three children...I am so proud of Rozena for many reasons. The top reasons stem from her ability to do a task with extreme diligence. I am actually proud of her every day. When I look at our children – I cannot say enough about her. Zena means more to me than anything on this entire earth. Through the years, I have grown to love and need her more with each passing day. It is Rozena that I dedicate this evening of celebration.”

To Die – She was preceded in death by her parents, 6 siblings, and her beloved husband, Gene, Sr.

Emulating the royal color purple that she loved, Rozena took a bow, said “Farewell”, and made her exit on Friday August 2, 2019. Now that the final act is over, the curtain has closed, we are not left standing alone. Armed with our heavenly Father’s promises to keep us, we march on with the assurance of reuniting never to part again.

To Be Remembered – Rozena Graham Crawford leaves to cherish her memories here to meet her again in Heaven, her daughter, Deirdre Michele (Everett) Suggs, Clermont, FL; son, Gene (Dionne) Crawford, Jr., Bowie, MD; daughter, Kristen Crawford, Deltona, FL; a devoted sister Lynn “Von” Graham Ash, Heathrow, FL; brother-in-law, Otis (Valerie) Crawford, Lansing, MI; granddaughter and grandson, Kendall and Dylan Crawford, Bowie, MD; granddaughter, Cloe Potter, Deltona, FL; “Special Granddaughter”, Candace (Lonnie) Battle, Apopka, FL and “Special Grandson”, Brandon Ask, Austin, TX and a host of other family members and friends.

# Cemetery

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## Deleon Springs Community Cemetery

Deleon Springs, FL,

# Events

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**AUG 23** Visitation 09:30AM

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Mt. Olive Seventh-Day Adventist Church  
3350 Clarcona Road, Apopka, FL, US,  
32703

**AUG 23** Service 11:30AM

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Mt. Olive Seventh-Day Adventist Church  
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# Comments

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“ Our heartfelt prayers and condolences to the Crawford family. May our Lord send his angels to watch over you and give you comfort. Claude and Jude McKnight

**Claude V MCKNIGHT** - August 12, 2019 at 10:46 PM