

Sunrise: December 7, 1928

Sunset: May 9, 2022

Obituary

Ms. Erma Martin was born in Detroit, Michigan on Friday, December 7, 1928 to the union of Precious and Paul Martin. She spent the earliest years of her life living in Chicago with her grandmother, Ms. Kizzie Stoval, before returning to Detroit where they both rejoined the family. Known in those days as “Erma Jean,” “Jeanie,” and later “Roughneck,” she spent her formative years growing up in “the Bottom” ... a neighborhood on Detroit’s east side. A 1948 graduate of Miller High School, Ms. Erma was already aware of and attuned to the ideas of integrity and work ethic. She got her first job at age 13 and maintained steady employment until she retired from the U.S. Postal Service in 1991.

Ms. Erma loved her family. She was the second of eight siblings. An older brother, Edward Paul (born in January, 1928) died suddenly as an infant. She was also preceded in passing by her mother and father (Precious and Paul); brothers: James “Buck” Starks (Peggy), Arthur “Sonny” Ray, and Kenneth Ray (Etta); a sister, Precious Elizabeth Starks (“Baby”); grandmother, Ms. Stoval; and great-great-granddaughter, Lila. Her strongest and closest bond was with her grandmother. She was filled with stories and memories of their times together. She learned the value of a grandmother’s love from *her* grandmother and she, in turn, gave that love to all generations who came after her.

Ms. Erma’s legacy remains with us to be celebrated by her loving daughter and best friend, Jody Brooks; two sisters: Loretta Ray and G. Nadine Carpenter; six grandchildren: Eric Martin, Erica Ragland, Kenneth Brooks, Jr. (Angela), Marsha Beaudoin (Tyler), Clinton Brooks and Rachel Brooks; twelve great-grandchildren: Ciara, Aaron, Allen, Deandre, Andrea, Maya, Dennis IV, Daniel, Ken III, Brielle, Bella, Tyler, Jr.; one great-great-grandchild, Neveah; thirteen nieces and nephews and countless friends, colleagues, neighbors, and “adoptees”. You see, Ms. Erma gave anything she ever had to anyone she ever loved. Sometimes all she had was encouragement or a joke to tell... and she was FUNNY! Sometimes it was a place to stay. Sometimes it was a couple dollars or a hot meal. Sometimes it was a ride to work or school or a job interview. Her care for friends and family alike knew no bounds.

She was a woman of strength, of standards, of faith and of doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord, whom she accepted as her Savior long before her passing. She was one of two spiritual guides in the family, the other being Ms. Delilah Brooks with whom she formed and enjoyed a sisterhood with over many decades. For more than 93 years and five generations, Ms. Erma was a person who took care of business and took care of people. She loved her Detroit Tigers (and hated them too). She never made anyone feel like an interruption, no matter what she had going on. May we all be so blessed to live for almost a century and maintain our capacity to love and be so loved.