10-25-1989

1989-10-25; Pamphlets; Memorial Service for Karen Andrea Clapp Graves

Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church

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Karen's span on earth was brief and rich. If it were to be captured in print as a biography, "The Story of a Short, Happy Life" would be an appropriate title. It is appropriate to characterize the life of one who spent just forty-one years among us as short. To describe as happy the existence of a person who achieved fulfillment by bringing happiness to the lives of so many is at least an understatement.

Karen's children, parents, sisters and family have been blessed and will be forever thankful for the Short Happy Life of Karen Andrea Clapp Graves. They appreciate the love and support of all her friends through this difficult time.

Arrangements

H. Alfred Lewis Mortuary, Inc.
968 Jefferson Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14208
— Order of Service —

Prelude . . . . “He Knows Just How Much You Can Bear”
Mrs. Joyce Mathis and Mrs. Mamie Johnson

Selection . . . . . . . “Lead Kindly Light”
Mrs. Lauretta Anderson

*Hymn . . . . . . . “We’ll Understand It Better By and By”
Songs of Zion 55

Prayer of Hope . . . . The Rev. Leslie Braxton
First Shiloh Baptist Church

Selection . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . “Oh Paradise”
Lincoln Church Choir Members

Silent Reading of the Obituary
(Music loved by Karen, Aziza and Akili)
“Get On Board, Little Children”, “No, Never Alone”

Scripture Reading . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . John 1:1-24

Selection . . . . . . . “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind”
Lincoln Church Choir Members

Eulogy . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . “The Soul Seeks its Solace”
The Rev. Melba Chaney

*Congregational Hymn . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . “God Will Take Care Of You”
Book of Hymns 207

Blessing and Dismissal . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . The Rev. Leslie Braxton

Recessional Hymn
and Postlude . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . “For All The Saints, Alleluia”
Karen Andrea Clapp Graves was born on Mother’s Day, May 9, 1941, in Buffalo, New York, the first child of Claude and Ouida Harrison Clapp. Karen completed part of her high school education at Klosterschule in Hamburg, Germany and graduated from Bennett High School in Buffalo. She began college studies at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan and later attended New York University and studied at Lennox Hill Hospital in New York City and Aquinas College in Grand Rapids.

Christened at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Buffalo, she was subsequently a member at Bethel Church, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo and All Saint’s Episcopal Church in Detroit. In Grand Rapids, she joined St. Philip’s Episcopal Church where she was a faithful, active member until her death on Friday, October 20, 1989.

Her lively mind, joyful spirit and special gift to bond strongly with people wherever she met them endeared her to friends around the country. An avid reader, talented writer and organizer. She belonged to the Black Writers Guild and was a co-founder of the International Black Peoples Foundation, a U.N. sanctioned group that worked to feed famine victims in Ethiopia. She held memberships in the NAACP and the National Council of Negro Women.

Drawn to priesthood, Karen was in the midst of a decision about entering seminary training. Her love for her church was deep and strong, and she lived her call sincerely each day. In the Spring of 1989 she was elected to the forty-member National Executive Council of the Episcopal Church and was appointed liaison to the National Committee on Racism and to the Episcopal Commission on Black Ministry. She was also a member of the Committee to Restructure the Diocese of Western Michigan and served on the Diocesan Outreach Committee. A champion of minority causes, she was vice president of the Bishop John Burgess Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians which she organized in Western Michigan. In 1988, as a lay deputy to the General Convention, she authored and worked to pass legislation committing that group to support a boycott of Shell Oil Company to help end apartheid in South Africa.

She moved from Detroit with her family to the Grand Rapids area in 1976 and became employed as an Engineering Aide for the City of Kentwood.

Karen’s son, Akili Udaka and her daughter Aziza Ouida, aged 16 and 9 respectively, are the children of her marriage to Gary B. Graves. She is survived by her adoring children and her former husband; her devoted parents; her loving sisters: Dr. Karla Clapp Holloway of Raleigh, NC and Dr. Leslie Clapp Ezie of Buffalo; their husbands: Russell Holloway and Michael Ezie; her nephews: Bern Holloway and Daren and Canar Graves; her nieces: Ayana Holloway and Andrea Chinyere, Lisa Kelechi and Valerie Chisara Ezie; aunts, uncles and cousins—all of whom are sustained by precious memories of her.

Karen Andrea Graves’s sudden and tragic death is a loss to the many people, organizations and communities whose lives she touched.