Shirley Townsend

September 14, 1949 - February 23, 2026

On Monday, February 23, 2026, Shirley Jean Little Townsend, the eldest child of the late Furman E. Little, Sr and Essie Little Lowery entered eternal rest. Her life's journey began on September 14, 1949, in Chesterfield, South Carolina.

Shirley Jean’s early years were spent in South Carolina until she and her brother, Furman, moved to New Haven, Connecticut to live with their paternal grandmother, the late Hallie Little. Her formative years were full of love, guidance and transition. She was surrounded by family, especially her Aunt Shirley Mae and Uncle Roosevelt who were in the home. The relationships that were forged in her grandmother's home laid the foundation for how she would show up in the world.

She was educated in the New Haven Public School System and was a lifelong learner. Shirley was independent, strong willed, and industrious. She held a vast array of positions in the NHPS, Hill Health Center, and CHCP. Her final role was medical secretary at the Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center, a place that afforded her the opportunity to work and serve until her health declined.

She was united in marriage to the late Ivory Townsend. They shared over 30 years of marriage before his untimely death in 2005. She was an active member of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church for the last 28 years, where

she served on the Trustee and Mother's Boards.

Shirley was an extraordinary cook, an impeccable dresser, and an exceptional hostess. She held many titles, but mother was the one she cherished the most. There was nothing she wouldn't do for her children, Bernard and Ronnie.

Her memory will be cherished by her children Maurice (Kimyatta) and Veronica Wilkins; her siblings: Johnnie Frazier, Anita Durham, Anita Springfield, Robin, Dale and Michele Little; her grandchildren, great grandchildren and stepmother, Dorothy Little; stepson, John Townsend and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins.

She was predeceased by her parents, seven brothers, Furman Jr., Benjamin, John, Eric and Anthony Little, Bobby and David Durham, and Furman Collins, and one sister Carol Durham and son-in-law, Kerwin Wilkins, Sr.

Cemetery Details

Evergreen Cemetery

769 Ella T Grasso Blvd
New Haven, CT 06519
(203) 624-5505

Previous Events

Calling Hour

MAR **5**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
26 Edwards Street
Hamden, CT 06517

Funeral Service

MAR **5**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
26 Edwards Street
Hamden, CT 06517

Tribute Wall

TB

Todd & Kim Bivens lit a candle in memory of Shirley Townsend

Todd & Kim Bivens - March 05 at 11:59 AM

My mother (Patricia Herring), Shirley and I were employees at CHCP (Community Health Care Plan) on Long Wharf. Afterwards, I was pleasantly surprised to see her at the Arthritis & Osteoporosis Group, while I was a patient there. Shirley was no-nonsense, but she also had a kind heart and a big ole smile. My mother and I will remember her fondly.

Dawn Rogers - March 04 at 11:36 PM

TT

Shirley you will be missed along with your kind heart and family you have my deepest condolences. Toni Tyler

Toni Tyler - March 04 at 01:56 PM

Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Shirley Townsend.

March 04 at 12:31 PM

A Memorial Tree was planted in honor of Shirley Townsend.

March 04 at 12:31 PM

OJ

Praying for my family in the passing of my dear cousin. Can't be there bodily, but know that my spirit is with my family. Love Always ❤️ Junebug

Overseer Thurston Little Jr - March 03 at 10:14 PM

CS

Cedric, Maurice, LaShun & Shirlean purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Shirley Townsend.

Cedric, Maurice, LaShun & Shirlean - March 03 at 06:24 PM

MW

Deepest sympathy .Shirley was a very friendly person Well liked She will be missed🌹😞

Mimi Weir - March 03 at 05:57 PM

LW

Sending my deepest condolences to the family!

Laura Thompson Williams - March 03 at 05:54 PM

SN

Sister-in-law Cheryl & Niece Natalie planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Shirley Townsend.

Sister-in-law Cheryl & Niece Natalie - March 03 at 11:25 AM

SN

Sister-in-law Cheryl & Niece Natalie purchased the Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses for the family of Shirley Townsend.

Sister-in-law Cheryl & Niece Natalie - March 03 at 11:25 AM

I'm so saddened to hear of the passing of my former co-worker. Shirley and I worked together at the Hill Health Center in the medical records dept. She was a pleasure to work with and a true fashionista. RIP Shirley

Denise McCoy Ashe - March 03 at 10:26 AM

LC

Our family's sincerest condolences. What a beautiful and elegant woman!

Sincerely,

The Charles Family

Letitia Charles - March 04 at 11:45 PM

KF

Kelvan Fitzpatrick lit a candle in memory of Shirley Townsend

Kelvan Fitzpatrick - March 02 at 10:23 PM

BE

Sending our Prayers and condolences🙏🙏🙏May God strengthen you all during this time and the days ahead❣️

Brenda and Carl Edwards - March 02 at 10:17 PM

SH

My condolences to Bernard and Veronica. Your mom and I were good friends before I moved away. May the Lord who is acquainted with grief comfort you in this time of sorrow. I pray He will give you the strength needed in this time.
Sylvia Covington Hagler

Sylvia Hagler - March 03 at 01:10 PM

LP

Love, Johnsie, Maurice, and Peaches purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Shirley Townsend.

Love, Johnsie, Maurice, and Peaches - March 02 at 09:18 PM

LH

Love, Gerald and Crystal Hannah planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Shirley Townsend.

Love, Gerald and Crystal Hannah - March 02 at 09:12 PM

LH

Love, Gerald and Crystal Hannah purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Shirley Townsend.

Love, Gerald and Crystal Hannah - March 02 at 09:12 PM