



Betty Tilman

December 20, 1933 - June 29, 2022

Photo: Melony MOM Betty and GodDaughter Shams AlBdoor

MY MOM Betty ASCENDED ONE MONTH AGO TODAY!

Betty J. Tilman

b. 12/ 20/1933 - d. 6/29/2022

International & Intercultural Bridgebuilder and Community Activist Betty J. Tilman Has Transitioned to the Heaven Realm!

Mark Your Calendars to Celebrate Her Life and Legacy at Heinz Chapel (University of Pittsburgh Oakland Campus) beginning at 9am on Friday, 7 October, 2022.

International & intercultural bridgebuilder and community activist Betty J. Tilman took her last breath on Earth at 9:15 pm on the 29th of June 2022. It has been recorded that Angels surrounded her and sang BREATHS, a Sweet Honey in the Rock song she loved. As they all ascended into the Heaven Realm, Angelic drummers and whisperers shared the news across the continents.

The brother of Betty J. Tilman, Alexander McGant was shocked with the

painful news that the family matriarch had left the Earth realm and said "I so Loved my sister and will miss her. I will always Love Her.

Virginia McGant Jones wrote "Betty, you are my Sister in Christ. A sister with so much love, joy, happiness and more. We will always remember your loving ways; you warm our hearts in those precious days. You will always have a place in our hearts that will never keep us apart. You reached out and traveled around the world. You gave so many your love and care. Even though God took you to his home. There is no place better than near his throne. We are glad we got to know you before God called you to his marvelous light.

In Riyad, Saudi Arabia, upon hearing the news, there were many tears in the heart of Dr. Khadeeja Ghozhee but she, Dr. Abdullah Al Nifay and their children rejoiced in believing that because it was 1st Dhul Hijjah in Mecca at the time of the transition, MOMBetty had gone on to Paradise.

Dear friend Valerie Njie wrote "Betty Tilman touched so many lives and was a source of inspiration to everyone who was blessed to know her."

"I know that MOMBetty is in the Heaven Realm, and that she and my Beloved Mother (Dr. Vernell Audrey Watson Lillie) are soaring and spreading their collective wisdom and love along with other Sheroes of ours.) said Charisse Lillie, Esq. in speaking to Rev. Melony McGant, daughter of Betty. J. Tilman.

Said renown retired sound engineer John Butler, "I will miss my friend Betty Tilman. She is a lady who would never stop helping others. May God keep his blessings upon her daughter and all the people she has helped in the past. I shall never forget her.'

When documentarian and filmmaker Ken Love (University of Pittsburgh A&S, 1971) heard the news, it caused him to return to the days of his youth) "Ms. B

was always getting me out of trouble. I will honor her with the Ghanian custom of spilling a Libation on the earth."

Oh dear. May God welcome her! She sure deserves the highest place in Heaven. What a wonderful person Betty was! They don't come any better. Let us know if we can do anything. And definitely let us know about services. In peace and prayers. Dr. Mary, Dr. Jerry and Katie McKinney

WHO IS BETTY J. TILMAN? Mother to Rev. Melony McGant as well as Sister, Friend, Aunt and Godmother to a Large Multicultural Tribe!

"Her leadership and significant contributions to the African Heritage Room Committee and to the Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs is a legacy on which the future of the program can rest. With love and appreciation to be a part of this special celebration of Ms. Betty J. Tilman" said Kati R. Csoman, Director, Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs, University of Pittsburgh

Retired PNC Executive John Brown, Jr. and his sons Jay and Ernie wrote... "A special person, a kindred spirit, a kind soul, and a great friend, who on this earth served others with kindness and compassion. She leaves a legacy of love and devotion, and now begins a new journey in the heavenly estate with her God and creator. Thank you. We love you. We will miss you!."

"I've met a lot of people in my life, and there have been very few that I would say that "knowing them made me a better person". Betty J Tilman was one of the few. I am proud to have had a long friendship with Ms. Tilman. Her kindness, her generosity, her quick wit, and unselfish nature was just part of this phenomenal woman. She was thoughtful, funny, well informed, and current on most issues. Betty J. Tilman was one of the most decent human

beings I have ever met. She will be missed terribly." said Bruce Blakey with wife Patricia Backers Blakey.

"Betty Tilman, you were all of these things to me and more: a friend and a mentor who was always special, giving, sharing, caring, including, encouraging, loving, praising, supporting, inspiring, involving, remembering, and real. You were truly a blessing in my life and while I will miss your presence here on earth, your love and energetic spirit will live within me forever." Shirley M Scott

She is among the elders who profoundly affected the trajectory of my life, as she did for so many. It will be an honor to join you there. She is not lost to us, as we are her living legacy. Rob Jones, Diversity Consultant

OMG, A beautiful soul has left a crater amongst the many lives she touched. I Loved her. She was one of my favorite friends. I'll miss her. May she rest in peace. Regina Chow McPhie

Said Fine Artist Brandon Jennings, "Ms. Betty is an important mentor who inspired me to collect African art. After seeing her collection, I became intrigued with art from Africa. I have a few pieces that remind me of Ms. Betty, I feel good knowing that she will always be in my Home. I love you Ms. Betty!".

Mark Lewis, President of the Poise Foundation wrote Betty Tilman was truly a woman of the community. I was deeply impressed by her connections to young and old. If you had any concern for our community, Ms. Betty knew who you were and would let you know how you were going to help her, help us. We thank you for being a guiding light, beautiful spirit, and example for us all.

Mashaiel AlNifay, who graduated from Pitt with a MS in civil engineering wrote "Whenever I needed a mother, a cool friend and even a partner in crime; she

was always there. Wherever she went, Mom Betty brought joy, love and her kindness was so contagious and for that her memory will live on forever with us. I must say Mom Betty believed in my dreams more than I did sometimes. She inspired me to become the woman that I am today and for that I will be always in her debt!."

For around 28 years Ms. Betty J. Tilman, worked at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania where she assisted thousands of International Students on both the undergraduate and graduate level as they negotiated learning and adjusting to life in the United States. She is a Founding Member of the African Heritage Classroom Committee at the University of Pittsburgh and with Jackie Mullins, she assisted in the founding of the Homer S. Brown Association for African-American Law students at Pitt and Duquesne Universities. She has also served as Vice Chair of the Pittsburgh Presbytery, Elder and Chair of the Community of Reconciliation and for many years was Chair of the Racial and Social Justice Committee for the Pittsburgh Presbytery. For more than 30 years she served on the boards of the Pittsburgh NAACP and the African American Music Institute and was an avid fundraiser for both organizations.

Ms. Tilman was well known for her activism not only in the Pittsburgh Community but also for her contributions to lives of many thousands of people in various parts of the World. Before it was popular and at personal risk, she worked tirelessly for civil rights in the United States, and actively raised funds for Nelson Mandela and the Free South Africa Movement Against Apartheid. She has been and is a mentor and friend to people of many cultures, religions and socioeconomic backgrounds. She has traveled to many more than 40 countries around the world and is passionate about our collective responsibility to use our personal resources to honor the legacies of those whose contributions have opened doors for others.

A Heritage Lifetime Member of the NAACP and over the years has received a plethora of awards for her activism including the Pittsburgh YWCA Women in Social Justice Award, the Maharishi Award for Community Service and the Venezuelan Grande Mariscale Award.

Upon hearing the news Ludwick "Luddy" Hayden (University of Pittsburgh A&S '66, EDUC '68) wrote "I was quite saddened to learn of Betty's passing but was immediately buoyed by the thought that we might find a way to celebrate her life and work at The University of Pittsburgh.

I first met Betty not long after entering Pitt as an undergraduate. I was fairly naïve then about international affairs, even as included in an academic environment. Betty was sort of my informal connection to the world of foreign students at Pitt and the true significance of the Nationality Rooms.

After spending several years as an undergraduate, graduate student, and staffer in the College of Arts and Sciences, I ultimately joined the private sector. I was working in Public Affairs at then Pittsburgh headquartered Gulf Oil Corporation, when Betty approached me with the idea of sponsoring a Pittsburgh speaking tour for Roots author, Alex Haley. We were successful in mounting this effort and ultimately raising the first major tranche of funding to establish the African Heritage Classroom as part of the Nationality Rooms Program. My work with Betty during this period was confirming of her long-standing passion for the Intercultural Exchange Programs, the Nationality Rooms, and the work of the African Heritage Classroom Committee. Betty was well known in Pittsburgh for her support to a number of groups and organizations. However, this work at the University was at the core of her passion. It is most fitting that her work with the Nationality Rooms, Intercultural Exchange Programs, and African Heritage classroom be at the core of any celebration of her life and legacy.

Dr. Bill Tita, Northeastern University Professor, (Retired) wrote "I am a humble and cheerful adorer of BJ! "Betty J" was always pursuing one unifying theme (Intercultural Exchange -appreciation) from several angles!! She was a pillar of our "intercultural House" project (ICH), assisting us to meet and surpass the 20 international students quota! She worked tirelessly with us to identify and arrange destinations, notably, Ghana, Afghanistan et al. for the travel/work program of the ICH project. The Nationality Rooms/ African Heritage Classroom initiative was the sweetener from my perspective! She was also my cheer-leader as I sought to integrate the Pittsburgh Black Business Community into the fabric of PITT's B-School and the University as a whole-the SCP! As you can see, it matters less the angle from which we choose to honor and celebrate her life and legacy! We will all end up at the core, a champion of Intercultural Exchange!!!! I am pleased to be an aspect of this movement!

For me Ms. Betty was my guiding authority on the history of the African Heritage Classroom Committee and was very supported of me when I began AHCC Chair. She was the first scholarship director. I watched and took notes on how Ms. Tilman made personal contacts with the faculty, staff, and students regarding scholars' presentations, becoming new members and adding funding to the endowment. Ms. Tilman was the ultimate organizer and work on numerous committees, one event was to bring in Alex Haley, the author of Roots to the University of Pittsburgh. This event showed Ms. Tilman visionary skills. This was also my first introduction to the AHCC wrote Donna Alexander, AHCC Secretary.

Dr. Sandra Murray, President-elect of the American Society for Cell Biology and Professor of Cell biology at the University of Pittsburgh wrote "Betty, the queen mother of Pittsburgh, shared her wisdom and gifts for organizing and bringing about change with those all over the world. Her global impact on our

lives will be missed. In her position as an international liaison she worked with students that arrived from many different countries to teach, mentor, guide, and advise them on the culture of academia in the USA. They learned from Betty how to survive and thrive while away from home. She opened her home and heart to friends as well as strangers and taught them great lessons on living. She was a community organizer, and she brought the momentum needed to get a project started. She was an organizer and producer who brought many groups to perform in Pittsburgh thus increasing the communities' awareness of different venues. Her concern for others was boundless and she cared for and helped so many.

Now she has gone to be with the ancestors, the words of a song that Betty liked are brought to mind and I picture Betty softly singing the words of the song "BREATHS" performed and composed by Betty's friend, Ysaye M. Barnwell and the group that she brought to Pittsburgh several times, "Sweet Honey and Rock." The words in the song are, "listen more often to things and not beings . . . the ancestor's voice is in the sound of water . . . in the sound of the wind . . . in the sound of rustling trees . . . tis the ancestor's breath when the fire's voice is heard . . .

Betty, before joining the ancestors, let her light shine for others and raised her voice to help the next generations achieve their goals and now that she is with the ancestors we need to listen because as the words of the song suggest, tis the ancestors voice that can be heard, if we listen!"

#Ancestors #Ascended
#Death #ForeverLoved

Please Mark Your Calendars to Celebrate the Life of International & Intercultural Bridgebuilder and Community Activist Ms. Betty J. Tilman at Heinz Chapel (University of Pittsburgh Oakland Campus) beginning at 9am on

Friday, 7 October 2022.

What is written here is a small portion of acknowledgements received.
Tributes Continue to Pour In.

In Honor of Betty Tilman, donations to the African Heritage Room Committee
Scholarship can be made online by visiting

www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu.

Select the About button at the top left and then select Donate to the
Nationality Rooms!

To donate by check, make the check payable to the University of Pittsburgh
and mail to: University of Pittsburgh, PO Box 640093, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-
0093.

Donations online and in the check memo line can be notated as: African
Heritage Room Committee Scholarship in memory of Ms. Betty J. Tilman.

Tribute Wall



“ *Betty Tilman*

October 09, 2023 at 09:55 AM



“ *Betty Tilman*

October 06, 2023 at 11:36 AM