

Kelly Bryant      A Celebration of The Life  
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Bryant



JOSEPHINE OPHELIA DOBBS CLEMENT  
1918 - 1998

*Sunday, March 29, 1998*  
*1:30 PM*

*White Rock Baptist Church*  
*Durham, North Carolina*  
*Dr. Reginald Van Stephens*  
*Pastor*

# Obituary

## Josephine Ophelia Dobbs Clement Humanitarian and Community Leader

Josephine Dobbs Clement, 80, died early Monday morning, March 23, 1998, of complications from Sjögren's Syndrome. Mrs. Clement was born in Atlanta on February 9, 1918, the fourth of six daughters from the union of John Wesley Dobbs and Irene Thompson Dobbs. Married to William A. Clement for 56 years, she was a wife, mother, teacher, politician, benefactor of the arts, civil rights activist, and advocate for the poor. She excelled at every undertaking in her life, from education to politics, from arts to the humanities, and along the way became an inspiration to many others whose life she touched.

Mrs. Clement was a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, and earned a Master's degree from Columbia University in New York. As an instructor of Home Economics, Mrs. Clement's teaching experience included positions at Savannah State College, in Savannah, GA.; Morris Brown College, in Atlanta, and North Carolina Central University, in Durham, NC.

In 1946, Mrs. Clement moved to Durham, NC, with her husband, Bill, who was transferred to the home office of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance company. During the 1950's and 1960's, her community activities initially focused on her six children—as a den mother for the boys, a Brownie Scout leader for the girls, and as a PTA president for schools where her children attended. Mrs. Clement's involvement in other community activities evolved naturally. During the early 1970's, she was a representative for Women-In-Action on the Durham Council Charter Commission. Although voters rejected consolidation, the Durham City Council appointed her to the City School Board in 1973. When the state legislature later made school board positions elective, she won two terms and served as chairman for five years. During her tenure as chair, she presided over the selection of the first black school superintendent in the state of North Carolina, Dr. Cleveland Hammonds.

In 1983, Mrs. Clement was elected to the Durham County Board of Commissioners and served for three consecutive terms. As a commissioner, she was a tireless citizens' advocate for education, public health, and family services. Described as a "peacemaker," Mrs. Clement was often able to keep both sides talking until a compromise was reached. Upon her retirement from the county commission in 1989, Mrs. Clement used the balance of her campaign dollars to establish a special fund with the Triangle Community Foundation Fund earmarked for Public Education.

Mrs. Clement continued her community works over the years by serving on numerous civic boards, among them the Women's Forum of North Carolina, the Negro Braille Magazine Project, the Durham County Library Board, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, The Wake Forest University School of Arts and Sciences Board of Visitors, the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People, the Greater Triangle Community Foundation, Shaw University, and M & F Bank. She was a recipient of the YMCA Woman of Achievement Silver Medallion, the Spelman College Founders Spirit Award, the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce Civic Honor Award, and honorary doctorate degrees from Shaw University (Raleigh) and North Carolina Central University (Durham). She held memberships in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., The Links, Inc., The Order of the Eastern Star, Jack & Jill of America, and was a life member in both the National Council on Negro Women and the NAACP.

Mrs. Clement also devoted much of her personal time and energies in fostering the arts in her community by serving on the North Carolina Arts Society, the North Carolina Symphony, and the Durham Arts Council. For more than 10 years, Mrs. Clement served as a docent for the Duke University Art Museum where she pursued her special interest in African and pre-Colombian art.

Survivors include her husband, William A. Clement, who now lives in Atlanta, and six children: Alexine Clement Jackson and husband, Aaron, M.D., Potomac, MD; William A. Clement, Jr. and wife, Ressie, Atlanta; Wesley D. Clement, MD Charlotte, NC; Arthur J. Clement and wife, Elizabeth, Atlanta; Kathleen O. Clement, Atlanta; and Josephine M. Clement, D.D.S., and fiancé Michael Smart, South Orange, NJ. The Clements have 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Clement is survived by four sisters; Dr. Irene D. Jackson, Atlanta; Willie D. Blackburn, Atlanta; Mattiwilda Dobbs Janzon, Arlington, VA; and Dr. June Dobbs Butts, Atlanta. She was preceded in death by her sister, the late Millicent D. Jordan. The cremated remains were interred in Beechwood Cemetery.

# Order of Remembrance

JOSEPHINE OPHELIA DOBBS CLEMENT

Prelude

*Dr. Paula Harrell  
Organist*

Processional

Congregational Hymn • N. 50 "Abide With Me"

Scripture Readings

Proverbs 31: 1, 8-12, 25-31  
Micah 6: 6-8  
John 14: 1-7, 12  
Psalms 133  
Isaiah 40: 29-30

*The Reverend Elizabeth Mitchell Clement  
First Congregational Church,  
UCC Atlanta, GA*

Prayer

*The Reverend Clement*

Musical Selection

"I'm Seeking For A City"

*White Rock Choir  
Margaret Goodwin, Solist*

## TRIBUTES

Dr. Cleveland Hammonds  
Superintendent of Public School, St. Louis, MO.

The Honorable Carolyn D. Johnson  
Former District court Judge

The Honorable James B. Hunt  
Governor, State of North Carolina

Alexine Clement Jackson  
Daughter  
National President, YWCA of the USA

Julia W. Taylor  
President & CEO  
Mechanics & Farmers Bank

Thomas Lambeth  
Executive Director  
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Musical Selection

"How Great Thou Art"

*White Rock Choir  
James Schooler, Jr., Solist*

Eulogy

*Dr. Reginald Van Stephens*

Congregational Hymn • No 6 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

Benediction

*Dr. Reginald Van Stephens*

Recessional

*The Clement Family will receive friends and well-wishers in the Fellowship Hall on the Lower Level  
immediately following the service.*

**“Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery.  
But today, well-lived, is a gift.  
That’s why we call it the present.”**

**As spoken by  
Josephine Dobbs Clement  
to her family on the occasion  
of her  
80th birthday luncheon,  
February 7, 1998**

**Before her death, Josephine Clement requested that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be sent to the  
Josephine Clement Fund For Public Education, c/o the Triangle Community Foundation,  
P.O. Box 12834  
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27709**

**Arrangements  
by**

**Fisher Funeral Parlor  
Funeral Service Licensees  
3137 Fayetteville Street  
Durham, North Carolina 27707  
Since 1963**