

## GWENDOLYN G. SIMMONS



Gwendolyn G. Simmons died on January 26, 2024, in Monongahela, Pennsylvania. She was a native of Hampton, Virginia, and the daughter of the late Rev. Dr. I. G. Gladden, a Baptist minister, and Mrs. Elsie Harris Gladden, a teacher.

She attended the public schools of Hampton and graduated as an honor student from the George P. Phenix School. She enrolled in Virginia Union University in Richmond and graduated with honors. Subsequently, she attended Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts where she received her Master of Arts degree.

She completed postgraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin. She was appointed Instructor at Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina, and was later appointed Assistant Professor and Faculty Secretary. She taught there until her appointment as Associate Professor at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

She married Paul A. Simmons, who at the time of his death was a retired United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Following the birth of her first child, Paul Jr., she retired as a college professor. After she and her family moved to her husband's hometown of Monongahela from the Carolinas, she became an active civic volunteer.

She believed in service and that life's greatest reward is in benefitting the lives of others. She especially believed in supporting the growth and aspirations of young people.

Over the years she volunteered her support to many causes including those related to health and wellness, including the hospital system, social services, economic and community development, historical preservation, education, and young people.

She was a member of the boards of directors of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Easter Seal Society and Pennsylvania Easter Seal Society. She was a member of the Mon Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Eastern Area Advisory Council of the American Red Cross, and the National Nominating Committee American Red Cross.

She was a member and chairman of the Washington County Hospital Authority, which supported the financing of the Monongahela Valley Hospital by approving tax-exempt bonds; a member of MATCH (Mon-Vale Advances Total Community Health) Advisory Group at Monongahela Valley Hospital; and a member of the Partners in Health Committee, Mon Valley Hospital.

She was a member of the boards of directors for the YWCA, Washington, Pennsylvania; United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania; Group Home, Inc., Washington, Pennsylvania; Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc.; and the Mon Valley YMCA. She served as president of the United Way of Mon Valley and as vice-president of the Mon Valley Health and Welfare Council, Inc.

She was a member of the boards of directors of the Urban League of Pittsburgh, the Mon Valley Initiative, and the Monongahela Area Revitalization Corporation. She was a member of the Monongahela Chamber of Commerce, MARC (Monongahela Area Revitalization Corporation), and the Mon Valley Fund/Port of Pittsburgh Loan Advisory Committee.

She was a member of the Monongahela Women's Club, the Monongahela Historical Society, and the board of directors of the Washington County Historical Society.

She was a lifetime member of the NAACP, a local member of the Mon Valley NAACP, and a member of the board of advisors of the Pittsburgh Multicultural Arts Initiative.

She served as a member of the Presidential Search Committee for California University of Pennsylvania, and a member of the Council of Trustees of California University of Pennsylvania. She was president of the Ringgold-Charleroi Area PTA Council, and a member of the State Board of the Pennsylvania Congress of Parents and Teachers.

She was a member, Sunday School teacher, and president of the Lay Organization at Bethel A.M.E. Church, Monongahela, and a sponsor of Ladies Activities for Fun (LAFF) Club, a cultural enrichment club for teenage girls.

Additionally, she was a member of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission of Pennsylvania, and Judicial Campaign Advertising Board of the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

Although she never sought recognition, she was honored to receive numerous awards over 40+ years of volunteering including: the Joseph E. Simonin Memorial Award as the Outstanding Community Division Leader from the Mon Valley United Fund; the "Brace for an Ace" Award from the Easter Seal Society; the Pennsylvania PTA Life Membership Award from Ringgold-Charleroi PTA Council; being voted the Monongahela Outstanding Citizen of 1983 by the Monongahela Chamber of Commerce; the first Annual 22nd Congressional District Award; the Gibbons Award for Dimensions in Service for the Health, Social and Civic Well-Being of Area Residents; the Outstanding Volunteer Fund Raiser Award from the National Society of Fund Raising Executives, Western Pennsylvania Chapter; the Lillian M. Bassi Core Values Award from California University of Pennsylvania; Distinguished Service Award from Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc.; You Make a Difference Citation from the Consortium for Public Education; President's Award for over 40 Years of Service from the Mon Valley YMCA; Mon Valley Distinguished Citizen Award from the Boy Scouts of America Mon Valley District; Richard L. White Excellence Award for Board Service from the Washington County Community Foundation; and the Human Rights Award, NAACP Washington Branch.

She was a member of The Girl Friends, Incorporated, The Links Incorporated, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

She is survived by her three children, Paul A. Simmons, Jr., Gwendolyn D. Simmons, and Anne Simmons Scott; and her husband, Ron Scott; and by many members of her extended family to which she was devoted.

In lieu of flowers, for those who wish, memorial contributions may be sent to: the Paul A. and Gwendolyn G. Simmons International Studies Scholarship (#470), Foundation of California University of Pennsylvania, P. O. Box 668, California, PA 15419, or The Washington County Community Foundation, 331 S. Main Street, Washington, PA 15301.

Friends will be received Thursday, February 1, 2024, from 2-4 and 7-9 PM in the **FRYE FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 427 W. Main Street, Monongahela. A Funeral Service will be held at 11:00 AM, Friday, February 2, 2024, in **HEINZ MEMORIAL CHAPEL**, 326 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, 15213. Anyone planning to attend the funeral is asked to meet at the chapel. Interment will be private in the Monongahela Cemetery.