

Carleene Dei

Carleene Hope Dei passed peacefully in the morning hours on January 31st, 2022, in Colorado Springs, CO. She was surrounded by love in the home she shared with her daughter Ama Dei, son-in-law Paul Davis, and granddaughter Zara Davis.

Born on December 31st, 1944, in Kingston, Jamaica to Cynthia Claire and Wycliffe Samuel Bennett. Carleene Dei immigrated to New York City at the age of eleven. The faculty, quickly realizing that she was exceptional, placed her in the seventh grade. She played the piano though she attended the High School of Music and Art based on her gifts as a singer. There she began a pattern of forging meaningful life-long friendships. She earned a BA in Political Science from Cornell University, a Master of Education from Harvard University, and a PhD in Urban Anthropology from Columbia University.



After living in the Côte D'Ivoire for some years and having two daughters, Ama Otubia Dei and Ajowa Obeaku Dei (d.1989), Carleene went on to have a distinguished career with United States Agency for International Development (USAID). During her time with USAID, she served as an officer and Mission Director in Haiti, Ghana, Côte D'Ivoire, South Africa, and Mali. Carleene had an exemplary career. She continued to work as a counselor for USAID until just few short months ago.

Carleene was far more than her educational and professional accolades. Drawing on lessons learned in her childhood, she developed a profound need to be there for others. She often engaged in acts of kindness. She shared what she had, monetarily and mentally, with others and never wanted anything in return. She was a listener, a mentor. She changed the course of many people's lives.

She loved colors, patterns, jewelry, music, and art. She relished a good mango sorbet and a well-written story or tv show. She enjoyed long walks and crossword puzzles. She was witty and had the gift of repartee.

Everyone who knew her has a story to tell, and the theme is always centered on the fact that Carleene Hope Dei was a genuinely good and caring person. She will be missed and never forgotten.

Carleene is survived by her daughter Ama Dei, her son-in-law Paul Davis, her granddaughter Zara, her brother Wycliffe Bennett, her sister-in-law Dothlyn Bennett, her niece Kahrin Bennett, her nephew Kendal Bennett, her nephew-in-law Lenny Lefebvre, and her grand-nephews and grand-

niece Kahlayo, Keanu, and Willamina Lefebvre. A celebration of life will be held at the end of March in Washington D.C. and a private venture for the family will take place over the summer.