

## Acknowledgements

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All of us who are part of the family of Minerva Johnican have been deeply blessed by the Lord's gracious gifts. Her life touched each of us in so many ways that are now being demonstrated in your thoughtful, generous expressions. Your calls, cards, flowers, food, visits, and all other warm expressions of love helped to comfort and sustain us. Your generosity will always be remembered. Thank You.

## Special Thanks

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The family also wishes to offer special thanks to Methodist Hospital and staff, Parkway Gardens United Presbyterian Church, Congressman Steve Cohen, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Beta Epsilon Omega and Phi Lambda Chapters Mayor A. C. Wharton, M. J. Edwards Funeral Home, Shirley Burford and everyone who helped us celebrate "Aunt Jane's" homegoing today.

## Pallbearers

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### **Pallbearers**

Randy Wade  
Stevie Moore  
Greg Grant  
Hal Bland  
Michael Harps  
Mark Coleman

### **Honorary Pallbearers**

John Johnican  
Douglas Johnican  
Tony Williams  
Ronald Collins  
John Johnican III  
Manuel Johnican  
Christopher Burford  
Marc Burford  
Edward Marzique  
Johnathan Marzique

## Arrangements

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M. J. Edwards Funeral Home  
1165 Airways Blvd.  
Memphis, Tennessee 38114

## Interment

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Elmwood Cemetery  
824 S. Dudley Street  
Memphis, Tennessee 38109



# Minerva JOHNICAN

November 16, 1938 ~ March 8, 2013

Saturday, March 16, 2013  
12:00 Noon

Parkway Gardens United Presbyterian Church  
1005 East Shelby Drive – Memphis, Tennessee 38116

Pastor Brian Henderson



## *A Psalm of David*

Twenty-Third Psalm

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



## *The Life of Minerva Jane Johnnican*

Minerva J. Johnnican was born to the late John Johnnican Sr. and Minerva Rounsoville on November 16, 1939 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Minerva J. Johnnican is a well-respected community leader, who has used her success in the public arena as a means to open doors of opportunity for other women and African Americans. A native Memphian, Minerva attended both Hamilton Elementary and High Schools, graduating among the top ten percent of her class. She attended Central State College in Wilberforce, Ohio, on scholarship for one year before transferring to Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree. She did graduate studies and received Librarian Certification from Memphis State University. Minerva spent 18 years both as both a teacher and media specialist in the Memphis City Schools System. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and attends Parkway Gardens Presbyterian Church.

A political trailblazer, Minerva has gained a reputation of being a proven leader and administrator. Her first encounter with politics came as a child when she helped her father canvas the 26th Ward in a challenge against the powerful E. H. Crump machine. Mr. Johnnican went door-to-door in a voter registration and get-out the-vote campaign on behalf of Estes Kefauver, the "People's candidate" for U.S. Senate. Kefauver was running against Judge John Mitchell, E. H. Crump's hand-picked candidate.

Displaying the same resolve as her father, Minerva went on to construct an impressive political career of her own. Her first political victory came in 1975 when she became the first woman ever elected to the Shelby County Quarterly Court, which became the Shelby County Commission during her tenure. She served two four-year terms.

As a County Commissioner, Minerva continued to personify her namesake, the Roman goddess of wisdom. She spearheaded a successful campaign for the construction of the new public hospital, now known as The Regional Medical Center at Memphis - (THE MED). She also came to the aid of the citizens of Boxtown, who were not receiving basic utility services. Basic service is now available and furnished to the Boxtown area.

Her visionary and progressive leadership has helped improve race relations in Memphis and aided other causes such as crime prevention, downtown revitalization, and neighborhood stabilization. She helped lay the groundwork for an Enterprise Zone in North Memphis.

An impressive coalition of black and white support was the thrust that earned Minerva another historic victory in 1984 when she became the first African American elected at-large to the Memphis City Council. In that campaign she captured 38% of the white votes cast along with 87% of the African American vote. In demonstrating an uncanny ability to get all Memphians to look past race and focus on issues, she was able to return to public service two years after a stunning defeat in her reelection bid for County Commission. She served from 1984 through 1987.

While serving on the city Council, she founded the Building Bridges for A Better Memphis Task Force, an organization of 450 African American and Caucasian neighborhood leaders devoted to working together to solve community problems.

Paving the way for African Americans and women is one of Minerva's trademarks. She was one of the first African American women to serve on the National Association of Counties' Board of Directors as well as the first African American and first woman to serve as President of the Tennessee County Commissioners Association. She was a delegate to the Democratic Party National Conventions in 1972, 1976, and 1980. She served on the State Democratic Executive Committee from 1978 to 1986.

In 1987, Minerva became the first African American woman ever to be considered a "serious" candidate for City Mayor of Memphis. Several political analysts predicted she would not fare well in this race noting, although Memphis was a major city, it was still controlled by mostly conservative white males. Once again, however, Minerva proved the political experts wrong. In a field of six candidates, she finished second behind incumbent Mayor Richard Hackett.

In August of 1990, Minerva recorded another astounding first when she beat out 10 other candidates to replace retiring J. A. "Bubba" Blackwell and assumed the office of Shelby County Criminal Court Clerk. Thus, she became the first African American and the first female to hold this position in the City of Memphis and the State of Tennessee. Since her election, Minerva has completely automated the Clerk's Office and implemented innovative computerization which is on the cutting edge of courtroom modernization. These much needed improvements have made it possible for the Clerk's Office to better serve the citizens, lawyers, and the judges of the 10 Divisions of Criminal Court in Memphis. Another striking result of these innovation changes is a 500% increase in the collection of outstanding fees over previous Clerks. The most crucial aspect of the modernization program can be seen in the additional millions of dollars generated by the Clerk's Office which is being disbursed to 14 agencies of the Shelby County Government.

Members of the National Association of Counties were so impressed with Minerva's performance as Shelby County Criminal Court Clerk that they presented her their Achievement Award for 1992, 1993 and 1994.

At 9:00p.m., Friday, March 8, 2013, Minerva peacefully made her transition into eternal life.

Left to cherish her life of memories are her siblings, John Johnnican Jr. (Gwen), Paul Johnnican, Douglas Johnnican, Annie Sue Burford, her nieces and nephews, Deborah Williams, Lisa Johnnican, Adrian Johnnican, Manuel Johnnican, John Johnnican III, Patricia Rogers, Anne Burford-Johnson (Charles), Judith Burford-Mazique (Edward) and preceded in death are her sisters Ouida Johnnican, Hazel Rogers and nephews Peyton L. Burford Jr. (Shirley) and Andrew Rogers; and a host of other family and friends.



## Order of Service

Invocation

Dr. James L. Netters, Sr  
Senior Pastor, Mt. Vernon Baptist Church

Scriptures:

Old Testament Reading  
New Testament Reading

Melvin Burgess, Sr  
Reverend Rosalyn Nichols

*Musical Selection*

*The Peacemakers*

Expressions and Tributes:

(Please limit to 2 minutes)

Randy Wade  
U.S. Congressman Steve Cohen  
Mr. & Mrs. David L. Acey Sr.  
Judge Karen Williams  
Kathryn Bowers

*Musical Selection*

*Jennifer Mason, PGU Minister of Music*

Expressions and Tributes Continued:

Hazel Moore  
Rickey Peete  
Eloise Silmon Brown  
Stevie Moore  
Shelby County Commissioner, Henri E. Brooks

*Musical Selection*

*Ruby Wilson*

Silent Reading of the Obituary

Eulogy

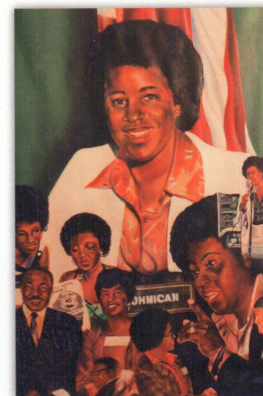
Reverend Brian Henderson  
Parkway Gardens United Presbyterian

Recessional

Interment at Elmwood Cemetery immediately following

## "I Am Free"

Don't grieve for me, for now I am free.  
I am following the path God laid for me.  
I took His Hand when I heard Him call.  
I turned my back and left it all.  
I could not stay another day,  
To laugh, to love, to work or play.  
Tasks left undone must stay that way,  
I found that peace at the close of the day,  
If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with remembered joy.  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Oh yes, these things I too shall miss.  
Be not burdened with time, of sorrow.  
I wish for you the sunshine of tomorrow,  
My life's been full, I've savored much,  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.  
Perhaps my time seems all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Lift up your heart and share it with me,  
God wants me now, He set me free.  
To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die.







# Minerva JOHNICAN

