



## Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens

August 30, 1930 - May 15, 2020

UTICA - Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens, age 89, was glorified as she transitioned to glory on Friday, May 15, 2020 with those she loved most in her heart. Born in Elba, Alabama on August 30, 1930, Bessie was the youngest daughter of the late Columbus Alexander Smith, Sr. and Bessie (Harper) Smith. She was fortunate to be educated in the Coffee County Training High School because of her parent's determination and having set the bar high for their children. Bessie met and married Willie E. Steele, Sr., and their union was blessed with four children. He admired her Christian way of life and he was amazed by her musical abilities and interests. Willie passed away in 1952. A blessing fell upon Bessie when she met Claude L. Bowens and they began sharing their lives. He was a wonderful provider to their three children, and he cared for Bessie's children as his own. Claude passed away in May of 2005.

In the hopes of a better life, Bessie and her family moved to the Utica area. Her honesty, transparency and immaculate housekeeping skills afforded her to become a domestic for several local prominent families. She had the fortitude of not only rendering love and care to these special families, but she returned to her own home and was a beacon of light and continued to keep a watchful eye over her household. In retrospect, those who knew Bessie all loved and respected her for her core values of integrity. As a mother, Bessie led by example, and she never strayed from her ways. She always did the right thing. She had a radiant smile that uplifted your spirit when you were in her presence. Her children were so honored that she was their mother, and she was proud of each of them and hoped that they would seek out the Lord and serve in whatever capacity that they could. She was a sincere supporter of the Ministry and volunteered as pianist at St. Matthew's Temple Church of God in Christ, the Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church, and the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. She was a talented musician and had been anointed to play and she did so with grace and dedication. Bessie was the eldest mother of her church, Believer's Miracle Deliverance Ministries. She served as a Church Mother for women and men, and was a role model for many others. She lived the Bible and her stewardship was benevolent in her intention of seeing the church prosper. She praised the Lord and taught Sunday School, and spent the weekdays in between preparing and studying the Word of God. She saw good in all and sought out the better in everyone. She

also saw any failing and found the courage to transform it to good. It was upon the rock from which she stood that she proclaimed with great strength and conviction.

A great baker and outstanding cook, Bessie labored to prepare meals for her family, especially her boys because she loved them so much! Holidays were special to her, and she baked everybody's favorite pies and she was credited for being an incredible cake maker that were unforgettable. Many plants adorned her home, and she catered and nurtured them with pride. She saw the beauty in each flower, carefully planted her annuals and had beautiful rose bushes, all were a reflection of her holiness. Bessie was a provider on all levels. From the tender age of 14 years old she received Christ in her life, and she credited her parents with setting the example she embraced from her childhood to the end of her days. A mentor to many, her radiant spirit and loyal support were hallmark to Mother Bowens. She was respected and her pearls of wisdom as well as her life experiences are found in many relationships that she formed, especially with her Pastor Angela U. Carter. Her Pastor felt that Bessie took her under her wing and as the tables turned she began to trust in her opinions and decisions. She was the first one to say "Amen", and was so proud of the accomplishments of Pastor Angela and her children.

Bessie is survived by her children, Alexander and Debbie Steele, Chief Apostle Willie J. Steele with whom she shared her life, her heart, and a home. It was through her love and support that her daughter accomplished the many great graces in her ministry; Prophetess Eleanor D. McDonald, and Donald L. Bowens. She was preceded and held close to her heart the memory of her children, Helen M. Bowens (1993), Willie Edward Steele Jr. (2006), and Roger Lee Bowens (2015). She will be remembered by her special daughter-in-law, Victoria Steele; her grandchildren, Michele Steele Motley (Rev. Charles Motley), Alexander Steele Jr., Shandele Steele, and Nicole Steele; Stacey M. Airall (Ralph D. Airall), the late Stephanie Steele; Javelle Howard, and Alicia D. Chin; Shawanda Steele; William Steele, Kahil Steele, Qiaja Steele; Tyra Bowens; and Myrtle Lambright (Kevin); 31 great-grandchildren; and her sister, Ovia R. Stephens. She also leaves a host of nieces and nephews, including Margaret Hester, Earl Loman, Hazel Stephens, and the late Supervisor Mildred L. Loman Eason; great-nieces, great-nephews; cousins, especially B.F. Smith; in-laws, Ann L. Smith, Darnelle Scott, Johnny Scott, and Bill Taylor; the gift of her godchildren, Pastor Angela U. Carter, Apostle Troy Wallace, Rev. Arthur Gary, and Thomas Bryant; and her church family from Believer's Miracle Deliverance Ministries who meant the world to her. She was predeceased by her sister and brother-in-law, Ophelia and Clarence Loman; her brother who passed at childbirth; and brothers-in-law, Rev. Ceather Stephens, and Columbus A. Smith, Jr.

The family extends their appreciation to Bessie's physician of 25 years, Dr. Jerry Sloan; the 5th Floor Nursing staff at MVHS at St. Luke's Healthcare for their kindness and tender care during Bessie's last days; and extended family Pastor Angela Carter who was always by her side, Evangelist Kenneth and Yvonne Melchor who all came to the rescue, day or

night to assist in any way they could.

Due to current health concerns and in keeping with federal and state regulations, the immediate family will honor Mother Bowen's life privately. In following her devotion, memorial contributions may be directed to Believer's Miracles Deliverance Ministries, 207 Eagle St., Utica, NY 13501. Please take a moment to connect with Bessie's family through the "Memories" section of her obituary on our website. Our prayers continue to go out to all as a sign of our community support.

# Comments

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“ My deepest and most sincere condolence for the earthly loss of such a precious member of your family, your spiritual community, and a great example of a life shared, and lived richly for the benefit of others!!

Alexander, I think of you often, going back to our younger days of Potter School baseball, which you organized almost weekly during summer breaks. Gathering up as many kids as were interested, from Washington Courts and Goldbass Apts. Whenever someone would ask me "you are left-handed, so why do you play baseball right-handed?" I always reply, "because the guy who taught me to play baseball was right-handed, and I wanted to play like him." What an inspiration your Mom was, shining, even back then, as a beacon through her children.

Know that I'm thinking of you during this time of transition, my friend!

Ernest Jones

Ernest Jones - May 26, 2020 at 01:51 PM

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“ So sorry to learn of Bessie's passing. I have such fond memories of her and her whole family. She was like a second mother to my brother and me. Her legacy will live forever in her children especially Willie Jewel. God bless you all. Our loss will be heaven's gain.  
Bill Morris

William Morris - May 26, 2020 at 08:42 AM

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“ Willie and family, Just read about the passing of your mother. What a wonderful woman of God. Unfortunately we seem to learn about a life well lived after their passing into the arms of the Lord. Knowing you, Willie I can honestly say your mom did an exceptionally wonderful job. As a Christocentric mom, grandma, teacher, and friend we know she has achieved her heavenly rewards. All our thoughts and prayers to you and yours. Eddie&Annette Moore

annette moore - May 24, 2020 at 12:19 PM

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“ We Are So Sorry To Hear Of Mother Passing Praying For You All Cousin's God Bless Jackson Prince & Workman Families



**Jackson Prince Workman Families** - May 24, 2020 at 09:22 AM

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“ my deepest sympathy and condolences. Bessie was such a wonderful person filled with love and kindness. except sometimes when claude would go on an extended fishing trip!:) many wonderful memories.  
God bless you all.  
Bob Morris

**bob morris** - May 24, 2020 at 08:19 AM

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“ Thinking of you family during this difficult time. May God Comfort your hearts.  
  
Mark and Loretta, Virginia

**Loretta Mims** - May 23, 2020 at 10:39 PM

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“ Louis & Donald purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens.



**Louis & Donald** - May 22, 2020 at 02:34 PM

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“ May God bless you and your !during this time.May he bless you and keep you and grant you peace.



**Crissy** - May 21, 2020 at 02:54 PM

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“ To God be the Glory For the Life of Mother Bessie Ruth Bowens  
Major Prophet W.Stanford Curtis  
SC

**W. Stanford Curtis** - May 21, 2020 at 10:59 AM



“ Best Auntie ever, I will miss you. Hazel

**Nea Hazel Stephens -Tyler** - May 24, 2020 at 01:56 PM

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“ Family, Mother Bessie Ruth (Smith) Bowens: aunt Bessie Ruth one whose price was far above rubies, may the love she shared, the service she gave, & life she lived continues to show through the integrity of the many lives she's touched. Praying for the family may the strength of the Lord comfort & keep us all.



**Veronica Nevith** - May 21, 2020 at 09:28 AM

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“ James Griffin, Jr lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens



**James Griffin, Jr** - May 21, 2020 at 08:44 AM



“ She would have that smile and say Junior Griffin come here. She will never be forgotten.  
My sincere condolences to the family. Love you

**James Griffin, Jr** - May 21, 2020 at 08:48 AM

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“ My sincere condolences to the families of Mother Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens, May God give you all the love, peace, comfort, and understanding that you may need at this difficult time. May God wrap His loving arms around my dear friend Prophetess Eleanor McDonald and all of her siblings, and family!! Love Peter and Vornette Simons Family!!



**Vornette Simons** - May 21, 2020 at 08:40 AM

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“ Brenda Dallas Fudge lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens



**Brenda Dallas Fudge** - May 21, 2020 at 07:57 AM

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“ Susan Greene Bynum lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens



Susan Greene Bynum - May 20, 2020 at 07:59 PM

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“ Lisa Jenkins lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens



Lisa Jenkins - May 20, 2020 at 06:46 PM

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“ In deepest sympathy,to the Family,, I am family as well,,So many great memories,,I myself is deeply saddened..I Love you All...Rest Ma,



Grace Susie DeCastro - May 20, 2020 at 02:07 PM

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“ Rev. & Mrs. Arthur Gary lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bessie Ruth (Smith) Steele Bowens



**Rev. & Mrs. Arthur Gary** - May 20, 2020 at 10:06 AM



“ Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal. Look to the hills for all of your strength. I will truly miss Mother Bowens but I know if I live right and keep God's commandments, I will see her again!

**Rev. & Mrs. Arthur Gary** - May 20, 2020 at 10:10 AM

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“ To the Steele-Bowens Family,

Death holds no power over love, especially the love of a mother. For this reason, we can never completely lose our mothers.

With heart-felt sympathy,

The children of the Late Sister Pinkie Engram:  
Sis. Pearl Thomas, Bro. Jim W. Engram, Johnny B. and Berthell Bembry, and  
Qunnon and Christine McClean

**Pearl Thomas** - May 19, 2020 at 04:32 PM

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“ With deepest condolences prayer for comfort throughout this trying time. May God wrap your family in the love of heaven as we know she is a woman of God. Dedication and praise throughout her time on this earth was and is a ministry to all in her presence.

We love you. Look to the hills which cometh your help for God is ever present to sooth you.

**Iesha Alpheaus** - May 19, 2020 at 09:55 AM