



## Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett

June 21, 1924 - January 20, 2023

YORKVILLE - Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett, age 98, peacefully entrusted her soul and being to her Lord as she passed away on Friday, January 20, 2023. She had been loved and cared for by her daughter Robbie, her blessed pearl whose soothing touch uplifted her mom through the years.

Born in Louisville, Alabama on June 21, 1924, Rachel was the daughter of the late Foy Martin and Bessie (Brown) Martin. She was raised and educated in Clayton, Alabama where she excelled in the sport of basketball. In 1943 her mother Bessie relocated to the Utica area to seek out better opportunities for her family. She felt there were positive prospects and pathways here even though the country was facing the pangs of World War II. Bessie then sent for her daughter Rachel, and her son William Brown, along with her granddaughter Robbie. Rachel was fortunate to get a job at Savage Arms during the War effort. In 1944 she married George Hamlett and they made a promise and pledge to each other to maintain a happy, harmonious life with a Christian foundation. They were so attentive and dedicated to their daughter, Robbie, and hoped she would embrace the virtues and strength they exemplified. What a blessing! They made it so important that their outside ventures did not interfere with the harmony of their home life.

In 1945, George and Rachel opened the Liberty Street Café at 118 Liberty Street, welcoming the community to patronize their new establishment. A year later, in 1946, they obtained a liquor license, and the Liberty Street Café became the iconic “Club George” adding to the booming multi-ethnic

businesses during the golden years of downtown Utica. In the 1940's and 1950's, some of the biggest names in show business would perform in Utica at the majestic Stanley Theater, including Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie who hobnobbed with patrons at the club after a performance. These well-known celebrities would come down to Club George after hours to jam. It was concurrently convenient for them, because they all stayed at the centrally located, grand Hotel Utica! It was in 1989, that Miss Rachel, privately grieved the loss of her husband George with whom she had shared 45 years. Due to her fortitude, she continued to embrace the vision they had started together. After an amazing 61 years in business, Club George closed in 2006, earning the title of the oldest black-owned business in this area!

An altruistic community activist at heart, Miss Rachel was a good listener and was able to assist and champion many whose stories are still told to this day. She was proud to be an African American, and as one who had acquired great knowledge and wisdom throughout years, it was known that she would speak her mind about issues. She was an independent woman who kept her advocacy intact to the very end. As a mom, Rachel taught her daughter Robbie to be her own progressive person, and make community acquaintances and alliances for the betterment of all. Being an only child, Robbie's parents welcomed her friends and their ideas, and were always prepared to offer parental guidance in a minute's notice!

A classy, stylish woman, Miss Rachel dressed to a tee, and that was her hallmark ~ dress to impress! Miss Rachel was ageless in her appearance and apparel ~ she always wore heels... until she couldn't anymore! She was a strong, self-confident, and sincere person who captured the attention of many people. She loved to be part of a good conversation and was respected by all who knew her. Miss Rachel and George traveled to any destination to visit their daughter and son-in-law, and family members who were living in various states over the years including Ohio, North Carolina, and California. It was important to Rachel to be close to her loved ones, even across the miles!

She was a fabulous cook, and seasoned everything just right, including her

specialties — dressing, and peach cobbler. Back in the day, dinner was a time to be together, discuss ideas, and settle things. They enjoyed a typical family life, and so much more, in their ‘village’ located in the area of Seneca Street, Liberty Street, Whitesboro Street, and the area near the tracks. Rachel and her daughter Robbie were great supporters of Levitt AMP Utica Music Series, and at one of their events on August 20, 2018, it was declared “Rachel Hamlett Day in the City of Utica”. She lived a dynamic life, graced by God with an unconquerable spirit and a tremendous faith in His Word. Rachel was one of the very first members of St. Paul’s Baptist Church and dedicated a lifetime of 80 years of devotion to her parish in several capacities, including serving as Deaconess, Trustee, Chairperson of countless events, Sunday School teacher, and Volunteer for any task that needed extra help; she was so organized and knew how to get things done with her own unique flair. She was recognized for many labors of love at the 100th Anniversary of her parish. Once again, “She was the one who held up the line because they all wanted to say hello to her”.

“She did the best she could and left the results to God”.

Miss Rachel is survived by her beloved daughter, Robbie Jean Dancy and her special friend, James Brantly. Miss Rachel never forget her late son-in-law, Eugene Dancy, who passed away in 1992. She also leaves her grandchildren, Adrienne and Monoletto Wilborn, and David Dancy and Hilda Lowenstein; great-grandchildren, Elijah Wilborn, and Indira Wilborn; and Barry Dancy. Miss Rachel knew the love of a “second daughter” Vita Watson with whom she shared a truly harmonious relationship, as well as Vita’s daughter, January “Jan,” whom Miss Rachel embellished and helped to raise as her own; and her other two daughters, Desrey, and Natasha. Jan’s children were also included in her life as grandchildren, Jayhili, who was especially close to the Hamlett’s, Jaeron, Jaceon, Jurrell and Jarius. She was preceded by her brother and sister-in-law, William and Julia Brown. She also leaves her nieces and nephews, Andrea and Dean Westfal, William Brown Jr., and their families,

especially Jackie Womack and Carrie Wright who were so attentive to their Aunt Rachel's needs. She will be reunited with her best friends, Ann Berry, and Mildred Burke, as well as many others who preceded her.

The family extends sincere thanks to Dr. Ramzi Nassif and his Nurse Practitioner, Nancy;, and their staff including Mo, Michele, and their co-workers who always fussed over Rachel which made the medical challenges much easier; Pastor Marilyn Bell who was connected to Rachel through heart and soul, and knew each other's priorities; Pastor James Griffin who Rachel knew as a child and kept an eye on him. And now, as a beloved Pastor, in turn, he watched over her; the Church family who was so important to her. She served them with all her heart and they respected and honored her, never forgetting her good works; Missionary Phyllis Savage, who was Rachel's shopping partner, consistently called in to see what was needed; and Missionary Pam Maddox Williams who was so dedicated to Miss Rachel and always wanted to be by her side; and to the Abraham House of Utica who opened their doors and home at a time when additional help was needed to care for Miss Rachel ~ that front room gave her a chance to see the community she had been so committed to, one last time.

Visitation will be held Monday, January 30, 2023 from 10:30-12:00 noon at St. Paul's Baptist Church, 219 Leah St., Utica. Rachel's Home Going and Celebration of Life will commence on Monday at 12:00 noon at the church upon conclusion of visitation. Those unable to attend may be present for the services virtually on Zoom; Meeting ID: 835-638-95-256, Passcode: 179797. In lieu of floral offerings, memorial contributions in Rachel's honor may be directed to Mid Utica Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, P.O. Box 8639, 1709 Genesee St., Utica NY, 13505-8639. Interment will take place in New Forest Cemetery at the convenience of the family where she will be laid to rest beside her husband.

# Cemetery Details

## New Forest Cemetery

2001 Oneida Street  
Utica, NY

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 30. 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Baptist Church  
219 Leah Street  
Utica, NY

## Home Going Service

JAN 30. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul's Baptist Church  
219 Leah Street  
Utica, NY

# Tribute Wall

MD

“ *Marion Davis lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett*



Marion Davis - January 30, 2023 at 11:56 AM



“ *Robbie, we're sending our sincere condolences to you and your family on the loss of your mother Mrs. Rachel. She was really one of a kind and always had a smile on her face when she greeted you. Mary and Bobby.* 🙏🙏🙏

Mary Wells - January 30, 2023 at 09:39 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett.*



January 30, 2023 at 01:40 AM



“ 86 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



**Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.** - January 28, 2023 at 01:17 PM



“ *Flossie Bell-Lomax lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett*



**Flossie Bell-Lomax** - January 27, 2023 at 10:58 PM



“ *Elizabeth Patterson-Moyer lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett*



**Elizabeth Patterson-Moyer** - January 26, 2023 at 08:09 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett.*



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January 26, 2023 at 10:38 AM



“ *To Robbie Peace and Blessings to you, Aunt Rachel will be missed. Love Lois Murphy and family*

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**Lois Murphy** - January 26, 2023 at 09:03 AM



“ *Our deepest sympathies to the entire family. We will always remember Mrs Rachel as a woman with class, a beautiful spirit and of strong faith.*

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**keith and angela webb, Memphis Tn** - January 26, 2023 at 12:13 AM



“ *Beautiful picture of Aunt Rachel, she was a blessing to me and my grandmother Corrine as well. Whenever I had a chance to visit her, she would always call me little Co, & would always offer me a place to stay. She was a great cook too. Good night Aunt Rachel, Rest In Heaven you will be sincerely missed by all you have blessed with your presence. With love always little Co*

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**Corrine** - January 25, 2023 at 10:48 PM

CS

“ SAFETY, BLESSING'S AND CONDOLENCES ROBBIE, VIDA, JANUARY, LOSING MS. RACHEL IS SUCH A GREAT LOSS. I REMEMBER GOING TO MS. RACHELS SINCE I WAS KNEE HIGH. MY AUNT MILDRED COOKED FOR MS. RACHEL WHEN MR. GEORGE WAS ALIVE. MS. RACHEL HAD SUCH A WONDERFUL SPIRIT WITH EVERYONE. GOD HAS CALLED HER HOME.MS.MATTIE SEND'S HER LOVE TO YOU ALL. REST IN PEACE MS.RACHEL. CINDY, MATTIE AND FAMILY.

CYNTHIA SLADE - January 25, 2023 at 05:06 PM

VR

“ Ms Rachel will be miss...I loved talking to her at our church functions..I remember the last time I talk to her at the church anniversary...R.I.P. Ms Rachel ❤️🙏



Vanessa Rucker - January 25, 2023 at 01:48 PM

VR

Robbie my deepest condolences to you and your family ❤️🙏

Vanessa Rucker - January 25, 2023 at 01:50 PM

DG

“ Mrs. Rachel gave me my 1st job at the INCO Center. What a beautiful woman. Rest on Mrs. Rachel. Love, Diana C. Greene



Diana C Greene - January 25, 2023 at 10:23 AM

RC

“ *Ruth Concepcion lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett*



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**Ruth Concepcion** - January 24, 2023 at 07:44 PM

DW

“ *Robbie and family. I remember Mrs. Rachel as a child. Always a beautiful lady. She was one lady who was determined to help the community. I remember my mom Betty Rucker worked at their bar as a bartender. Mrs. Rachel was honored last year at Utica Monday night at koepernik Park. Well deserved. She'll be long remembered for years to come. Reunited with her love Mr. George. Rest in Peace Mrs. Rachel. Job well done.*



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**Dawn Winston** - January 24, 2023 at 05:14 PM

PB

“ *Paulette Brown-Haithcox lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett*



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**Paulette Brown-Haithcox** - January 24, 2023 at 02:34 PM

TM

“ My condolences to Robbie Jean and family, Ms. Rachel was an amazing woman loved and admired by many, she will truly be missed but NEVER forgotten 🙏



Tarita Mills - January 24, 2023 at 12:06 PM

DH

“ Dietra Harvey lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett



Dietra Harvey - January 24, 2023 at 10:45 AM

GD

“ My deepest sympathy to the family, Robbie, Vida&January, you all are in my prayers, May God continue to give you strength during this difficult time. Much Love



Grace Decastro - January 24, 2023 at 08:08 AM

BM

*Without knowing Rachel was referred to as Miss Rachel this was how I addressed her at Abraham House ! Although she was challenged being taken care was because she was accustomed to be the one to take care of others . What was clear to me as a caregiver is that she was stoic, opinionated , confident as well as loving her Lord ! Her eyes spoke volumes ! She is someone you wish you knew before . It was my honor to spend even a short time with her at Our home before her eternal home ! God speed Miss Rachel !*

Bonnie Mccarthy - January 25, 2023 at 09:59 AM

BF

“ *Brenda L Fudge lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Rachel V. (Martin) Hamlett*



**brenda l fudge** - January 24, 2023 at 08:06 AM

DH

“ *Ms. Rachel was my Godmother. She will be truly missed. She was a wonderful woman and blessed. Prayers to the family*



**Dorothy Holloway** - January 24, 2023 at 12:20 AM

JG

*To the family of Ms Rachel, she was truly a special gift from God to us!! Rest In peace Ms. Rachel....we see you in the morning.*

*Rev. J.L. Griffin*

**Jimmie Griffin** - January 24, 2023 at 10:04 PM

DD

*Truly a remarkable woman. She and her husband George will forever be an invaluable part of Utica's rich history. Blessings to the family. Dave Dudajek*

**Dave Dudajek** - January 25, 2023 at 08:52 PM

"W

*What an honor and a blessing to have known the remarkable Ms. Rachel. Grace. Strength. Comfort.*

**"Doc" and Susan Woods** - January 30, 2023 at 07:22 PM