



Dorothy Walker Dennis

April 17, 2010

Dorothy Lorraine Walker Dennis

April 25, 1920 – April 17, 2010

Dorothy Lorraine Walker, the older of two daughters, was born to Oscar Leon and Ethel (nee Machen) Walker of Louisiana on April 25, 1920, in Chicago, Illinois. In high school, Dorothy was popular, worked hard and graduated at the top of her class. Unlike today, there were no visits to prospective schools and collegiate options for African Americans were limited. Dorothy enrolled in West Virginia State College, a premier African American college. Her parents were unable to take her to school, so the ever-confident and intrepid woman she remained took the train alone. Ever popular, Dorothy was an AKA (Alpha Kappa Alpha) and again, did well in school.

On August 29, 1948, Dorothy married Harry Edgar Dennis in a double wedding ceremony with her sister, Yvonne. Harry had been a roomer at her parents' home, which led to a marriage that lasted 35 years. Following the wedding, the couple made their way to Institute, West Virginia, where Harry taught school. On May 15, 1953, they welcomed their daughter, Sherri Kay. Not satisfied with a bachelor's degree, Dorothy did two things very few women (or men) of color did in the 1950s. First, she pursued a master's degree, in social work, and second, she earned that degree from the University of Chicago. While obviously proud of her graduate accomplishment, she was always modest and never indicated the significance of having attended a

major university at a time when the civil rights movement was in its nascence. Dorothy and Harry subsequently moved to Toledo where Harry had an offer to teach in the public school system, and Dorothy began a long and distinguished career as a social worker. The hallmarks of her career at Child and Family Services, a private non-private agency, were her professionalism, objectivity, and ability to motivate her clients. She treated every one fairly and worked tirelessly to make each client independent and self-sufficient.

Sharing her father's belief in civic responsibility, Dorothy served as a member and president of the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority for 17 years. She maintained an active social life and was a life-long member of Girl Friends and Study Hour. Although reared Baptist, Dorothy embraced the Presbyterian Church, becoming a member of Grace Presbyterian.

Travel was a long-time passion of Dorothy's. She and Harry traveled by ship and by air throughout the United States and to many countries, including China, Thailand, Greece and Italy.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her husband Harry. She is survived by her daughter Sherri D. Ealey (Chuck); three grandchildren, Damon Ealey (Kafi), Skye E. Bowen (Orlando), and Jael E. Richardson (Mark); six great grandsons, Asher Hosea and Zuriel Charleston Ealey; Dante Isaiah, Justice Daniel, and Marcus Josiah Bowen; and Edan Joshua Richardson; a niece, Derryl D. Stewart of Washington, DC, to whom Dorothy was both loving aunt and friend; and a number of relatives and friends.