



Ruth Thomas

July 23, 2008

Obituary for Ruth Thomas

Ruth Ann Roberts Thomas departed this world for the next on Wednesday 23 July 2008 having lived a full life of 91 years. She spent her last moments on earth in the gentle care of the staff at Hospice of Northwest Ohio in Toledo, Ohio.

Ruth was born to Charles and Lulu Roberts near Morrilton, Arkansas in 1916. She had two sisters, Bee and Fannie and two brothers, Cal and Charles. All her siblings have preceded her in death. The family moved from Morrilton to Canada then to Tulsa, Oklahoma. They finally settled in Gary, Indiana.

Ruthie, as her family called her, was a very intelligent young girl who loved learning. At the age of 14, she was a member of the inaugural graduation class of Roosevelt High School in Gary. She continued her education at Knoxville College. She culminated her formal education in an area in which as a woman and a black she was a pioneer by earning a Masters Degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Michigan.

While teaching 5th grade mathematics in Gary, Indiana, she met her eventual husband, William N. (Bill) Thomas. It was through the machinations of one of her students that she met Bill who was stationed at the naval base near

Chicago, Illinois. He was a friend of the parents of the student who decided that this was the man for her teacher, Ruth Roberts. When asked what attracted her to Bill, she would say that he was her opposite. She was shy while Bill never met a stranger. She was captivated by his intellect and also noted that he was pretty good looking! They were married in 1944 and moved to Bill's home, Toledo, Ohio.

Ruth continued her teaching career in Toledo, teaching mathematics at Robinson Junior High School and Stewart Elementary School among others. She culminated her professional career by serving as the Coordinator of Math Labs for the Toledo Public Schools. Though her professional career came to an end, she continued to serve by tutoring children of family and friends until she was well into her 80's. Many a successful professional today would readily admit that his or her achievement is due in part to the firm but loving tutelage in mathematics by Mrs. Thomas. She told her students that even if they planned on being a criminal, she was going to make sure they were a smart one!

In addition to her professional career, Ruth was much involved with her beloved church, St. Paul Baptist. She played the organ and piano, directed the choir, served as a deaconess and was involved with many other of the church's activities. In addition, she was an active member of the American Baptist Women's Ministries. She was also active in the community. She was a member of the Study Hour Club which involved many of the prominent black women in the Toledo community.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband William N. (Bill) Thomas and her son Michael John Thomas. She is survived by her son William N. (Bill) Thomas Jr. and her daughter Susan Diane Thomas. In addition her son and daughter mourning her passing, her son's wife Connie B. Thomas and their daughter and Ruth's only granddaughter Charity Ann Thomas mourn her

passing as well. She is mourned by many nieces, nephews, and friends. But they weep not, for she is resting in the bosom of Jesus.

Visitation will be 4 to 6 p.m. Monday July 28, 2008 at Dale-Riggs Funeral Home Chapel, 572 Nebraska Ave., Toledo, Ohio 43604 followed by wake service from 6 to 8 p.m. Funeral service 11a.m. Tuesday July 29, 2008 at St. Paul Baptist Church, 1502 N. Detroit Ave., Toledo, Ohio, 43607. Rev. James H. Willis Sr. officiant burial Historic Woodlawn Cemetery.

The family thanks the staff at the Glendale, St. Anne Hospital, and Hospice of Northwest Ohio for their love and care of Ruth in her final days. The family requests that any donations be made to the William Thomas Memorial Scholarship in honor of Ruth Thomas at the University of Toledo Foundation, 2801 West Bancroft MS 319, Toledo, Ohio, 43606.