

Celebration of Life



MARY LOIS POTTER BARBER

July 9, 1944 – August 23, 2025

Saturday, August 30, 2025
11:30 ante meridiem

New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
1110 Allen Road
Dothan, Alabama 36303

Dr. Walter Bowers Sr, Pastor
Officiating

Order of Service

Musical Prelude

*A Charge to Keep I Have / What a Friend We Have in Jesus
Peace Be Still / Angels / The Lord is My Shepherd
Jerusalem / Total Praise*

Processional

Musical Selection

Choir

Centering Prayer and Invocation

Rev. Eddie Walter Thomas

Scripture Readings

The Holy Bible, Old Testament Rev. Dr. Larry D. Norton
The Holy Bible, New Testament Rev. Dr. Daryl M. Wynne

Musical Medley

Choir with Lawrence E. Jackson, Jr. and guest musicians

Obituary

Two Wings Paul Porter & The Christianaires

Storytelling and Reflections

Rev. Dr. Tony Lamair Burks II, *Storyteller Guide*
Sis. Doris Potter Hickman
Ms. Jamekia Chambers / Ms. Hannah Barber
Mr. Karon McClendon / Mr. Jabre Barber
Ms. Da'Yonna Barber
Ms. Glenda Barnes / Bro. Jesse Mitchell
Mr. Dennis Chambers / Rev. Kita S. Moss
Mr. Al Melton / Dr. Rochester Johnson Jr.
Rev. Robert "Bob" Knight

Resolutions and Acknowledgments

Sis. Delia Reynolds

Musical Selection

Choir with Sis. Vanessa Potter Wynne, *Soloist*

Eulogy

Dr. Walter Bowers Sr., *Pastor*

African American Spiritual

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me Lois Barber

Recessional

Going Up Yonder Choir with Sis. Denise Bowers, *Soloist*

Honorary Pallbearers / New Bethel Deacon Ministry
Pallbearers / Nephews and Cousins
Flower Attendants / Nieces and Cousins

Appreciation

We are grateful to God for blessing us to have family and friends who are giving us loving support, fervent prayers, and encouraging words. We are thankful for the flowers, cards, calls, text messages, social media posts, food, and love you continue to send our way during this season.



Interment

Gates of Heaven, 2106 Starling Road, Dothan, AL 36303

Repast

New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Final Arrangements Entrusted To Scott's Chapel Hill Mortuary

814 Headland Ave, Dothan, AL 36303
www.scottschapelhillmortuary.com

Obituary written by Rev. Dr. Tony Lamair Burks II
Member, *The Society of Professional Obituary Writers*



Videos and Photos: www.leadrighttoday.com/loisbarber



MARY LOIS POTTER BARBER

July 9, 1944 – August 23, 2025

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. – Psalm 23:6



It is estimated that 15,000 children were born every hour on July 9, 1944. No parents; however, were more delighted that day to bring home their child than Mary Etta and Monroe Lee. Born in Dothan, Alabama, Mary Lois came into this world with a God-given genius for healing and the musical arts. When her sister-friend–JoAnn–welcomed a piano into their home, she naturally took to the instrument, played by ear, and ultimately convinced her own family to buy a piano. Her family and that of her sister-friend embraced the good news of Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way [she] should go: and when [she] is old, [she] will not depart from it.” She was raised with a strong belief in God, was saved at Southside Church of God in Christ, and served God at her family’s church, New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. She remained a faithful and devoted member of New Bethel until her death, serving over the years in various capacities from organist to minister of music. Indeed, she was drawn to God and to the piano as a child and the three would forever be joined in blessed assurance.

A lifelong learner, she was educated in the segregated schools of the City of Dothan and taught by iconic Black educators who poured into her and her schoolmates empowering them to be difference makers wherever life would take them. As a high school student, she enjoyed painting, supported the athletic department as a trainer for the basketball and track teams (word is she was competitive and could run quite fast), played trumpet for the marching band, and formed her own musical group. She graduated from the historic Carver High School in 1962 and immediately enrolled in *The School of Life*. *The School of Life* empowered her to never be content with someone else’s definition of her. More than anything, *The School of Life* affirmed what she knew in spirit and in truth: she was a Child of God who was promised the desires of her heart.

She desired a family and a career. She met and fell in love with Earlie D. Barber. They united in holy matrimony on September 17, 1969, and raised a family. She shared a mutual love for soul and gospel music with her brother and her sisters and launched a career as a performing artist and created a family music entertainment business managed by her enterprising mother. Dubbed *Little Lois and the Fabulous Caprees*, she performed with a cadre of gifted musicians including her child prodigy nephew and her soon-to-be brother-in-law from their home base, *The Soul Makossa* (They had residencies at *The Capri Club* and the *Wiregrass Elks Lodge #810 & Temple #566*, as well). The band actively toured the chitlin’ circuit and played at NCO Clubs, performing original music and covers of soul, funk, and R&B hits. A road-tested recording artist, she released her own music (*Kung Fu Lover*) and shared the stage with or

opened for Shirley Caesar, James Brown, Ike and Tina Turner, Dorothy Norwood, Millie Jackson, Patti Labelle, Milton Bigham, and many others. She was a multi-instrumentalist: She was a highly-regarded organist (and you know she’s making that Heavenly Hammond B3 talk that talk as only she could). She also was gifted at guitar and drums! Legend has it that she stopped her nephew and demanded he get up from his drum kit so she could show him a beat or two!

An encourager, helping others overcome challenges and setbacks came naturally to her. In many ways she was an Insightful Judge and a Wise Counselor who gave practical advice. Whether she was in “The Hole” at the end of Short Atlanta Street, on Montana Street, at the Lincoln Community Center, or in Young America, she was a true friend who kept it real. She loved God’s people and she found ways to connect with them whether presenting the *Little Lois Funk Factory Disco Show* or DJing dances for boys and girls at the Hawk Houston Boys Club. Even as her music career blossomed, she never stopped learning. She enrolled at Wallace College to study instrumental music; though an adult student, she found herself teaching her craft knowledge to fellow students and professors alike. She was recently featured in three “Dothan Entertainment History” videos on the *Wiregrass Black History Channel* and in *28 Black History Makers: Dothan, Alabama*, a book by Dr. W. Charles Lewis. She was ever grateful to those who didn’t count it robbery to give her flowers during her lifetime. An entrepreneur, she and her husband operated *Barber’s Grocery*, a staple of the Lakeview Community. She also operated and managed *Games Unlimited*–aka *The 8 Ball*–with pride. It was stocked with the latest video games of the day, good snacks and food, great music, and–most importantly–family and friends. She made the game room a safe haven for children in the Baptist Bottom Community. When she wasn’t singing and playing as a sought-after musician at Sunday services, funerals, revivals, church anniversaries, pastor’s appreciations, or workshops, she could be found at *ABC Academy* raising our youth as tomorrow’s leaders.

Mary Lois Potter Barber IS a beloved musical legend, matriarch, aunt, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, mentor, and friend. She transitioned from this life to eternal joy and peace on Saturday, August 23, 2025. She was preceded in death by her parents, Monroe Lee Potter and Mary Etta Matthews Potter; her brother, James Earl Potter; and her granddaughter, A’Kera Scott.

When we think of her, let’s remember the zeal with which she lived for 81 years. Think of her when you witness a person grow in their faith walk. Remember the passion with which she advocated for human and voting

rights. Think of Lois when you savor a strawberry bon bon knowing the candy was her favorite (she always had some to share!). Remember her when you walk through your neighborhood, soaking in God’s handiwork. When we think of her, let’s remember her ability to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds as a passion-filled vocalist and keyboardist. Let’s remember how Little Lois created unforgettable moments with her musicianship. For her, ALL music–blues, jazz, hip hop, gospel–is God’s music. Regardless of the genre, she let The Spirit guide as she played. Think of her when you celebrate Easter and Christmas, seasons she envisioned as holy. Think of her when you hear “Two Wings” or when you sing with your choir or praise team. When we think of Lulie, let’s remember how she loved laughing, singing, and caring for us all. Think of her when you see the colors red and black and how they reflected her faith and her people. When we think of her, let’s remember “family” for her was both by blood and by heart. Let’s remember the feel of her hugs. Think of her when you read God’s word–especially Psalms 23, 70, 91, and 121. If we listen close enough, we’ll hear her voice guiding us from the Heavens: “You know, back in the day…” and “Mama said…”

Her memory will be cherished by her husband, Earlie D. Barber; and her son, Earlie Deacon Barber. Her legacy will be sustained by her grandchildren, Jamekia Chambers, Hannah Barber, Karon McClendon, Jabre Barber, and Da’Yonna Barber; their mothers, Dawanna Chambers, Kimberly Jones, Natasha Rodgers, Shankell Kinsey, Candice Taylor Stuckey, and Alexis Scott; her great-grandchildren, Connor Davis and Cairo Davis; her daughter, Jennifer Barber; and her siblings and their spouses, Doris Jacqueline Potter (the late Rupert) Hickman, Dorothea Potter (the late James) Melton, Yvonne Potter Lee, Janice Potter Burks, Nettie Potter (Elige/Bo Dilly) Scott, Vanessa Potter (Daryl) Wynne, Linda Walker, Brenda F. Walker, Sharon Walker, and Darion Walker. Others who count it a blessing to have known her are best friends, JoAnn Britt and Glenda Barnes; her goddaughter, Janice Brown; her in-laws, Barbara Ann Boatwright, Cora Eatmon, Gwendolyn Baker, and William (Mary) Arnette; her nieces, nephews, their spouses, and their children; her cousins, their spouses, and their children; members of choirs and ensembles across the Wiregrass–especially the Male Chorus; alumni of Carver High School; the St. Mary District Association and its Congress of Christian Education; the children and staff of ABC Academy; members of the Anglin, Barber, Bray, Burks, Carter, DeShazor, Durdin, Griffin, Harris, Hart, Haywood, Hickman, Ingram, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Lee, Leake, Matthews, Melton, Potter, Scott, Smith, Stewart, Thomas, Trawick, Tunstall, Walker, Williams, and Wynne families; and a host of extended family, friends, and loved ones.

