



## Dr. JoAnn N. Spencer

April 19, 2020

Dr. JoAnn N. Spencer, a native of Allentown, PA, died Sunday, April 19, 2020 at home. She was the daughter of the late James Wilson Spencer and Elizabeth Farmer Spencer Beville. She had one sibling, the late Lt. Colonel James Wilson Spencer, Jr. Dr. Spencer graduated with honors from William Allentown High School in Allentown, PA. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Cheyney University, Cheyney PA. She received her Master's of Science Degree in Education and her Doctorate Degree in Education from Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA. Dr. Spencer was certified in Elementary Education, Special Education, Reading, and Supervision. All of Dr. Spencer's collegiate training was accomplished as a consequence of scholastic awards. The National Fellowship Fund of Atlanta, GA and the Ford Foundation Scholarship of NY are among several scholarships that she received. She was the first African American female certified teacher to be employed by the Allentown School District. She received her first teaching position at Roosevelt Elementary School, where she taught grades 4-6 as well as Gifted and Special Education classes. During her tenure at Roosevelt, Dr. Spencer was awarded the Valley Forge Foundation Medal of Honor Teacher of the Year award. Following her elementary school teaching at Roosevelt, Dr. Spencer's teaching career centered on training teachers within the collegiate environment. As an instructor at Lehigh University during the riot years, she was sent to Cheyney University, where she taught courses in Reading, Language Arts, and

Children's Literature. Dr. Spencer's teaching continued at Moravian College, Bethlehem PA and 38 years at Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA. She served on the Board of Directors for KidsPeace Nation Hospital for Children in Crisis and for the Swain School. She was the President of This Is Your Life Association of Lehigh Valley. She was a charter member of the Lehigh Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Past Daughter Ruler of Mary Alice Temple 108, Berks Lodge of Reading, PA, local past President of Soroptimist International, Past Worthy Matron of Virginia E. Holland Chapter 86 of Bethlehem, and past president of the Allentown branch of the NAACP. Her religious affiliation was Methodist, and she was a member of St. James AME Zion Church, Allentown. The following represents some of Dr. Spencer's societal achievements: She was the first African American to be hired at The Moring Call. She was the first guest speaker for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Holiday Celebration held at the former Negro Culture Center. She coordinated the First Black History Week Celebration of Allentown. Dr. Spencer initiated the renaming of Lawrence Street to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and she was the first African American playground instructor to be hired by the city of Allentown. She was inducted into Delta Kappa Gamma Honor Society for women and Phi Delta Kappa Gamma Honor Society of Philadelphia. Dr. Spencer's organizational membership and civic services are varied. She was a board member of the former Allentown Negro Cultural Center, Negro Cultural Association, Inc. (coordinator of Allentown's first Black History Week Observance in 1968). Within her church, she was the former Supervisor for Buds of Promise, Youth Deaconess, Missionary, Sunday School Teacher, and Director of the Pearls of Joy Choir of St. James AME Zion Church, Allentown. In addition, Dr. Spencer has been the recipient of numerous scholastic awards, such as, the Allentown- Bethlehem Blue Ribbon social Club Scholarship, Allentown School District Kift Mullen Scholarship, Cheyney State College Richard Humphrey Scholarship, Lehigh University Fellowship, National Fellowship Fund of Atlanta, GA, and also the Ford Foundation Scholarship of NY. She is survived by her son, Mr. Jacque Christian-Spencer

Darrell, sister-in-law, Ms. Sandra Jean Spencer, niece, Mrs. Chelsea Nichole Spencer-Smith, and nephews, Mr. Steven Derrick Spencer and Mr. James Wilson Spencer, III. Private graveside services were held at Cedar Hill Memorial Park, Allentown. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Contributions can be made to St. James AME Zion Church, (memo line: Stain Glass Window), 410 Union St, Allentown, PA 18102.