



Winifred C. Rivers

October 25, 1929 – August 3, 2022



Reflections with Friends

& Family:

A Celebration of Life, Music, & Ministry

October 9, 2022 • 1:00 PM

Oakwood University Church

5500 Adventist Boulevard, NW | Huntsville, AL 35896

Pastor J. Alfred Johnson II, Officiating

Sr. Pastor Debleaire Snell, Oakwood University Church



I was born Winifred Carmen Rosetta Bailey on October 25th, 1929, at home on 125th Street in Harlem New York. My parents were Major's Lambert Augustus Bailey and Estava Maughn Bailey. My father was born in British Guiana, South America with Caribbean and Scottish ancestry. My mother was from Trinidad, West Indies. Theirs was a fascinating love story.

Many of you know that the Salvation Army is a charitable organization. However, most people don't realize that it is also a Christian denomination which evolved out of the Methodist Church. Both my mother and father served the Salvation Army as high-ranking officers. The story goes that my father heard great things about my mother trailblazing the "Army" work with the negroes in North Carolina. This piqued his curiosity, and he asked the founders for permission to write to her. Despite his skilled writing, cool British accent and good looks, my mother kept him on his toes before agreeing to marriage. Their partnership would garner them many notations in books written about the Salvation Army.

Out of this union came my older siblings: Cecil Bailey, Ruby Johnson, Doris Burton, Mabel Collins, and Enid Cassell, each one feistier than the last. I was the youngest. My parents recognized my interest in music early and allowed me to take piano lessons at a very young age. Despite having to play the obligatory French horn during our "street ministries", my interest in the piano increased. By the time my parents were stationed in Washington, DC, I had become recognized in my high school and within the local music community. At my senior recital, my classmates dared me to substitute the boogie-woogie, which I did, to my own surprise. You should have seen the look I got from my parents!

Upon my graduation from the renowned Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, my parents were sent back to New York. In 1954, after an evangelistic effort given by Elder Jeffries, I accepted the call of Christ and was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was an easy transition because my beliefs were similar. My sister, Doris, had also been baptized. In addition to being a skilled orator, she was a talented choir director. As soon as I arrived in town, she volunteered my services as her accompanist for the Mello Tones. We had some of the best singers in the city and traveled worldwide.

While continuing to support the ministry of my parents on Sundays at the Salvation Army, I also served at both Ephesus and City Tabernacle SDA Churches where I met some of my lifelong friends. My dearest friend was Ruby Charles, who would marry Gilbert Foster. They called us Lucy and Ethel. Her dry wit was a great complement to my sense of humor. Over the years, we supported and inspired each other, even in retirement. I will always cherish her last visit with me before she passed.

Playing for so many groups and choirs had its perks. When I heard a beautiful bass voice booming from the back row, it didn't take long for me to connect it to my future husband, Beryl Thomas Rivers, who had just returned from serving in the military. We married in June of 1956 and headed to Huntsville in the fall. He would enroll at Oakwood, and I would begin my career at Redstone Arsenal.

Getting hired in 1956, as an African American woman, in the south, on a military base was unheard of. People warned me that I would be denied even the application, but they forgot that I am a New Yorker...and a Bailey! There aren't many things that intimidate me and securing a job was not one. I will tell you though, getting that job was only The Lord. After taking the personnel tests, my scores were so high that I was hired on the spot, sight unseen. You should have seen the looks on their faces when they saw that I was Black. As one of the very few African American secretaries on the base, it was challenging. If you saw the movie "Hidden Figures", you can imagine what it was like. However, once they got to know me, I was highly sought after for the hardest assignments. By the time I left they, were sad to see me go.

During our Oakwood years, we were blessed to have our first son, Theodore, and a few years later, Gerald was born. We drove all the way to Nashville to have them at Riverside Hospital because I refused to trust any doctor in Alabama with my life or my children's. You think Black women have a high mortality rate now?

I am a very protective mother...some would say a bit over-involved. But, in my defense, that was born out of the worst scare of my life. We almost lost Ted when the dormitory where we lived at Oakwood College caught fire. He was in the apartment where it started. When I heard, I almost lost my mind! Thank God, he was rescued by Lance Shand, future dean at Oakwood. However, we lost all our worldly possessions, including all our wedding pictures and

gifts, my husband's cameras and photos that he had taken during the war, all our furniture, and my clothes. My clothes.

Replacing my clothes was a challenge but it was one that I was up for. You see, I grew up in Salvation Army stores, so I appreciate the concept of frugality and the value of quality. All the clothes that I replaced were purchased on sale. I just learned how to find the finest stores with the best sales and the highest quality. I also knew how to sew, which came in handy with 2 growing boys. I played at several Sunday churches to supplement our income and was honored when asked to play for the Oakwood College Church and the Aeolians.

After Oakwood College, we went to Seminary in Washington, DC, and in 1964 ordained and appointed to our first church. It was quite interesting how my life of service with my husband was beginning to parallel the lives of my parent's ministry together. With Beryl as the Pastor of the church and me as the Minister of Music; and often choir director, we were blessed to serve numerous congregations in the New York area. One of the highlights of the year was Northeastern Conference camp meeting at Camp Victory Lake. What was so ironic is that it was in Poughkeepsie, New York, right next to the Salvation Army's Star Lake, the summer camp where I attended as a child. I enjoyed playing for service, especially in the early morning. Noelette Leader Hutton always reminds me that is where she met me as a child. At that time, we were blessed with two little girls. Linda came first and Beverly arrived almost two years later. I called them my "old-age" children! That was the same year that I played in a tent effort in New York with Pastor E.E. Cleveland. Decades later, I would have the opportunity to accompany his niece, Michelle Cleveland, an accomplished singer in her own right.

We were soon commissioned as "missionaries" to Bermuda. If you think Bermuda is a paradise, then you haven't experienced the flying cockroaches. During my teaching at Bermuda Institute, I was blessed to discover a young Bermudian girl with an angelic voice, Edrene Malcolm. Just wait until you hear her sing... We reunited decades later when I moved back to Huntsville, and I was so blessed when she agreed to sing on one of my CD's. If you ask Ted, he can probably dig one of them up for you. I know he would get me for saying that...

One church that is still dear to my heart is Emmanuel Temple in Buffalo, New York. That is where I met my good friend for life, Elaine Willis McKnight. The music was already so rich that I thought that I could finally just sit in the audience and enjoy the service. But when the spirit began to move, I couldn't help but get up to help usher it in with some of those old songs that Buffalonians sing so well. Tina Glenn, I think you were only 3 years old.

If you talk to Ted, he will tell you that he rues the day that we ever left Emmanuel Temple. To his credit, that is where he sang in his first quartet with a young lady who would come to be the mother of his two daughters, Andrea and Angela, after reuniting while singing with the Aeolians. Let's just say that we never heard the end of it when we moved from Buffalo to Bakersfield, California. That's all I will say about that.

In 1973, Ted left for Oakwood College while Gerald opted to stay in California to attend Newbury Park Academy. It's amazing how they both flourished. Ted in music technology and Gerald in art. The girls and I moved to Loma Linda, California in 1974. That same year, I lost both my parents. But I thank God that years prior, upon her retirement from The Salvation Army, my mother was baptized and was an active member of The Mount Vernon SDA Church in New York until her passing. My father accepted the truth in his own time. Still grieving, I made the decision to return to Huntsville in 1975. There is something about Oakwood that just draws you back. Between the ministry, the music and the supportive retirement community; it has been such a blessing to me. It didn't take long before I resumed my role as organist for The Oakwood College Church, with Pastor E.C. Ward. As a newly single mother, it was comforting to come back to a familiar place. I went back to work at Redstone Arsenal where I also played at the Post Church on Sundays.

By the next year, I was fielding several offers within the denomination. In 1976, I decided to accept the call from President Luther R. Palmer to Allegheny East Conference, in Pine Forge, Pennsylvania to be his Executive Secretary. That is where I was reacquainted with my talented mentee, Luther Washington and met my coworker and friend, Marjorie Felder Taylor. Having a running buddy made living in the "country" much more bearable. Although I was overwhelmed with gratitude when they offered to house my family in the historic Manor House, when winter came, we found ourselves sleeping in our coats, hats and gloves. They neglected to tell me that they had-

After two years, Beverly and I left for Washington, DC for me to take a position at The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Linda stayed at Pine Forge Academy, but it took a whole lot of prayer and convincing for me to leave my daughter. However, I knew that it was the right decision for her. Sorry Ted. I see you shaking your head. EVERYONE knows you wanted to go to Pine Forge. You know whose decision that was...

I began at ADRA, the SDA equivalent of The Red Cross. But I was often requested to play for morning worship, conferences and retreats. I also ministered at the First SDA Church on Sabbath and the Florida Avenue Baptist Church on Sundays. I even had the opportunity to play at the White House. I wasn't in DC long before I was approached by Elder Charles D. Brooks of Breath of Life to be the organist for the Breath of Life Evangelistic Crusade at the Warner Theater. In addition to serving as a musician I often filled in as a bible worker, counselor and administrator. After 6 weeks of daily services, hundreds of souls were saved, and the Breath of Life Seventh-day Adventist church was born. Our young pastor, J. Alfred Johnson can tell you about those first months, how hundreds of new believers blossomed into a full and thriving congregation that still exists today.

Word spread that I was a hard worker so the offers for new positions continued to come. In 1981, I received an invitation that I couldn't refuse. It was the opportunity to create the infrastructure for a completely new conference. South Atlantic conference had become so large that it decided that the constituents would be better served if split. The new conference was to be the Southeastern Conference, located in Orlando, Florida. The inaugural President, Elder James Edgecombe (which I knew from my early days in New York) asked me to be his Executive Secretary.

It was a lot of hard work building a new conference, so I tried my best to simply be a member of Mt. Sinai SDA Church. However, it wasn't long until I was recruited to the roles of Minister of Music, Choir Director, piano and voice teacher. A talented young Roger Ryan would often accompany me on the piano while I played the organ. I also enjoyed reuniting with my good friend, Elaine McKnight. We appreciated the many occasions we had to play together. But our favorite times were during Southeastern Conference camp meeting. There was something about the fresh air and meeting saints from all the churches that was energizing. I returned year after year, until 2010.

I could play that organ for hours. Carlton, you and Sr. Byrd can attest to this. I remember you running across the campground as a little boy. If I never told you, I am very proud of you and your ministry. Thank you so much for being here for me today. It was a pleasure serving with you at Berean SDA church in Atlanta, GA, and most recently here, at The Oakwood University Church, and full circle to The

Breath of Life Ministries. Both have greatly impacted my life over the years. It's ironic that this is where I would complete my service. But not before my final assignment.

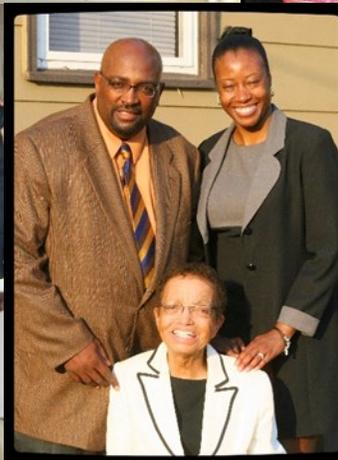
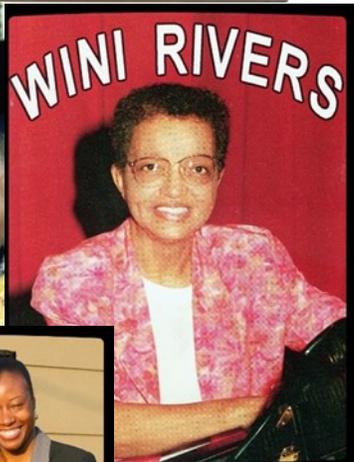
By the time I returned to Huntsville in 1992, Ted had become a professor. Gerald was stationed in Italy, increasing in military rank, and a runway and print model. Linda was an Accountant and Beverly had just graduated from Law School. I needed to feel productive, so I joined the Music Department where I was a departmental secretary and accompanist. I couldn't believe the talent. Even today, Juilliard can't compare. Then there was the Oakwood College Church where I had the pleasure of playing for Sabbath School. I continued to travel to Berean occasionally but on any given Sunday, you could find me playing at either First Baptist Church or St. Phillips CME Church. There was also the Evangelistic Conference, now PELC, then led by Dr. Mervyn E. Warren. However, as always, the highlight of the year for me was South Central camp meeting. I so appreciate Murphy (another Buffalo transplant) for including me every year. He doesn't know how much it meant to me. That's when I got to play all the songs from my heart. You know, those songs that we don't sing anymore. Oh, and how could I forget my escapades with T. Marshall Kelly and his wife. He was much sought after so we traveled extensively over the years, enjoying ourselves immensely on every trip!

I will tell you that this denomination has been such a blessing to me. It broke my heart when I had to give up my churches. However, the pain I endured over the years became unbearable and it was necessary for me to have hip replacement surgery. I'm forever grateful to my daughter Linda and her husband Hallbrook Polite for their decision to move to Huntsville in 2016. Although I may have initially been resistant to give up my independence, they made sure that I was well cared for until I was too tired to go on. Now, I sleep peacefully in Jesus. I pray that I see all of you "In That Great Getting' Up Morning". But "Until Then", "May The Works I've Done Speak For Me".

I leave my 4 children in your care. Ted (Beverly), Gerald (Belinda), Linda (Hallbrook), and my independent daughter, Beverly; my 4 grandchildren, Andrea (Ty), Angela (Dennis), Atlantis, and Kara; my 4 great-grandchildren, Tyler, Marcus, Alex, and Ava Marie; my remaining nieces and nephews, Barbara (Ben), Arnold, Richlene (James), Kenny (Judith), Brett (Denise), and Bart; my niece and nephew-in-law, Laverne (Parris) and Larry (Antwona); Amber and my other grand and great grand nieces and nephews; along with the Rivers, Strother and Nixon families.









“REFLECTIONS” With Friends

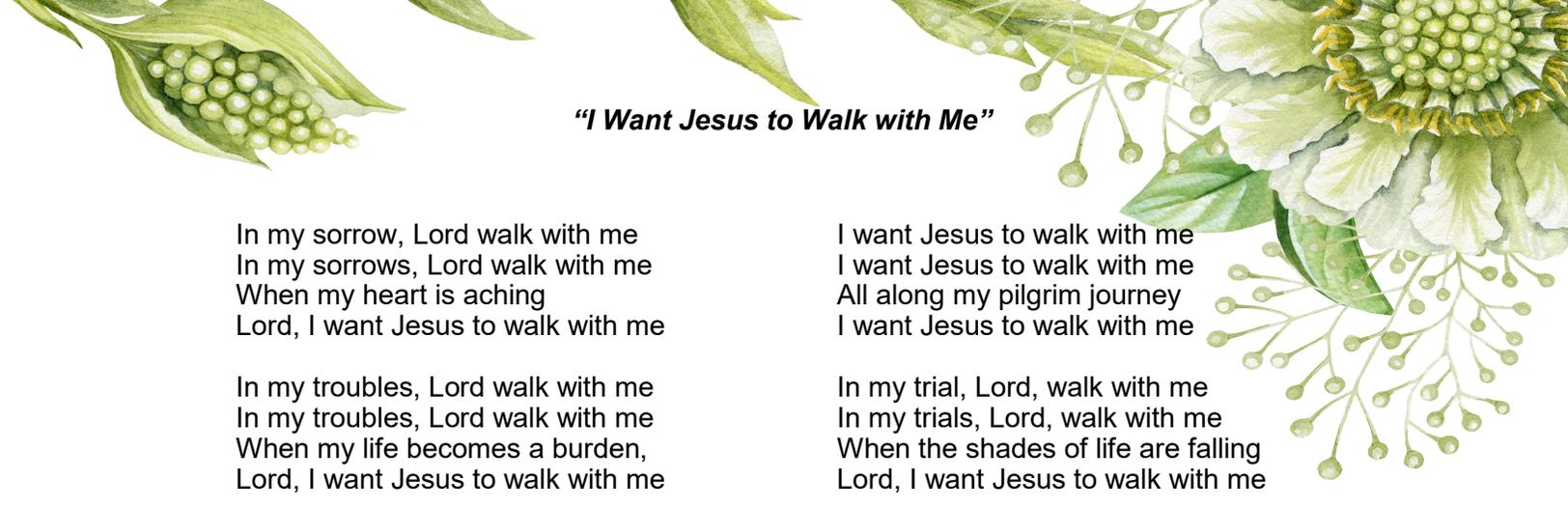
Wini Rivers



Winifred C. Rivers – “Reflections with Friends & Family”
Pastor J. Alfred Johnson II, Officiating
Organist – Luther Washington II
Pianist – Roger Ryan

Musical Prelude		Luther Washington II
Processional		Family and Ministers
Introit	<i>“The Lord is in His Holy Temple” ~ (Response)</i>	Congregation
Prayer of Comfort	<i>“Hear Our Prayer Oh Lord” ~ (Response)</i>	Pastor Toussaint Williams
Pastoral Greetings		Pastor Debleaire K. Snell
Hymn	<i>“Blessed Assurance”</i> <i>Sing-a-long with Video of Winifred C. Rivers and Pastor James “Pop” Willis</i>	Congregation
Scripture ~ Proverbs 3:5, 6 & 1 Corinthians 15:20 -26, 53-58		Pastor Paul Goodridge
Introduction of OUC Tribute Video for Winifred Rivers’ 85 th Birthday		Pastor J. Alfred Johnson II
Video Tribute for Winifred C. Rivers 85 th Birthday (<i>Oakwood University Church, 2014</i>)		Produced by OUC Media Department
Singspiration	<u>Medley</u> <i>“I’ve Found Him”</i> <i>“God is so Good to Me”</i> <i>“Yes, God is Real”</i>	Friends, Family, and Congregation
Reflections – <u>Denominational Organizations</u>		
	<i>Marjorie Felder Taylor – Allegheny East Conference & General Conference Worker, Retired</i> <i>Carol Byrd - Superintendent of Education, Southeastern Conference, Retired</i>	
Musical Selection	<i>“Oh, for a Faith”</i>	Oakwood University Aeolians Jeremy Jordon - Director
Homily		Dr. Carlton P. Byrd President, Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Musical Selection	<i>“Calvary Covers it All”</i>	Elder T. Marshall Kelly
Reflections - <u>Fellow Musicians</u>		
	<i>Dr. Julie Moore Foster – Chair, Oakwood University Music Department</i> <i>Dr. Eurydice Osterman - Oakwood University Music Department, Retired</i> <i>Dr. Lloyd Mallory – Video Tribute – Director of Vocal Choral Studies, Kentucky State University, Professor of Music</i> <i>James Wilson – Oakwood University Church Music Department</i>	

Musical Selection	<i>"I'm Bound for Higher Ground"</i>	Ted Rivers, Jonathan Snodgrass, Nnamdi Bryant, Armand Hutton
Reflections	<u>Churches</u> Tina Glenn – <i>Emmanuel Temple, Buffalo, NY</i> Gale Jones Murphy (Video ~ Musical Tribute) – <i>Mt. Sinai, Orlando, FL</i> Stephen Manders (Dennis Baptiste) – <i>OUC Music Department</i> Pastor J. Alfred Johnson – <i>Breath of Life Church, Maryland</i>	
Musical Selection	<i>"I Sure Do Love the Lord"</i>	Angela Baptiste, Andrea Balogun, and Beverly D. Rivers, Esq.
Musical Selection	Piano Medley	Roger Ryan, Producer, Aftertouch Music
Reflections	<u>Friends and Colleagues</u> Pastor Lloyd Wilson – Oakwood College Years Edrene Malcolm – Bermuda Years Cleveland Wilson – First SDA Church Years	
Singspiration	<i>"Jesus Christ is the Way"</i>	Friends, Family, and Congregation
Musical Selection	<i>"There is a Balm in Gilead/It Is Well"</i>	Michelle Cleveland
Reading of Winifred Rivers' Life Sketch		Beverly D. Rivers, Esq.
Video of Highlights of Winifred Rivers' Life		Produced by Ted Rivers
Singspiration	<u>Medley</u> <i>"Make Me a Blessing"</i> <i>"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"</i> <i>"Lead Me, Guide Me"</i> <i>"Precious Memories"</i>	Friends, Family, and Congregation
Reflections	<u>Family</u> Arnold Burton, Dr. Barbara Collins, Richlene Frost, Kenneth Burton, Bart Burton, Bret Burton (Bailey Nieces and Nephews) (Video Tribute) Jake Nixon (Cousin) Preston Foster (Godson)	
Musical Selection	<i>"A Better Day"</i>	Noelette Leader Hutton
Musical Selection	Organ Medley	John Stoddart
Words of Comfort		Pastor Debleaire K. Snell
Musical Selection	<i>"Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior"</i>	Tina Glenn, Vicki Miller, Linda Polite
Congregational Hymn	<i>"The Glory Song"</i>	Congregation
Benediction		Pastor Lloyd Wilson
Benediction Song	<i>"The Lord Bless You and Keep You"</i>	Family and Friends
Recessional	<i>"I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"</i> <i>"Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty"</i>	Luther Washington II



"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

In my sorrow, Lord walk with me
In my sorrows, Lord walk with me
When my heart is aching
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me

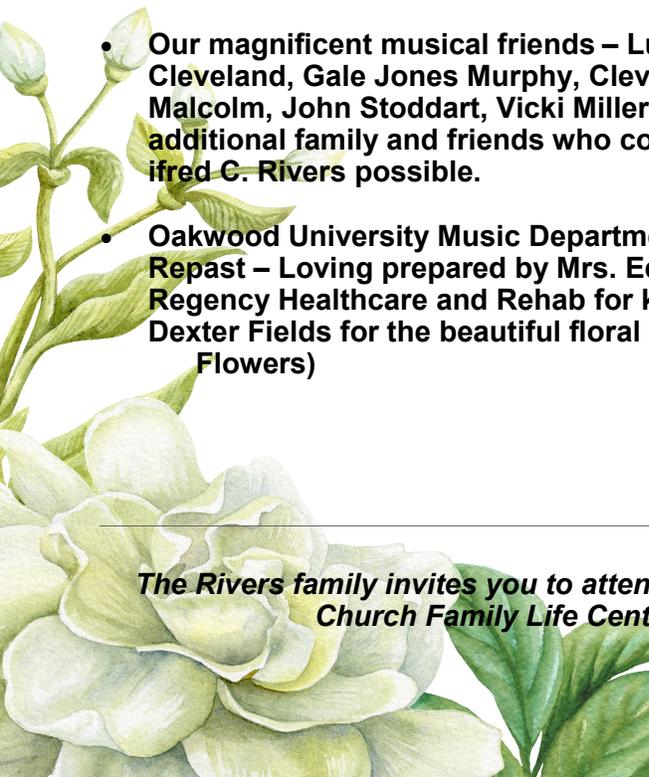
In my troubles, Lord walk with me
In my troubles, Lord walk with me
When my life becomes a burden,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me

In my trial, Lord, walk with me
In my trials, Lord, walk with me
When the shades of life are falling
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me

SPECIAL THANKS

The family of Winifred C. Rivers would like to thank....

- **Pastor Debleaire K. Snell and the Pastoral staff of Oakwood University Church Pastor Paul Goodridge, Pastor Toussaint Williams, Pastor Kimberly Mann, Pastor Lloyd Wilson, Pastor Marc Raphael for their spiritual support during our time of bereavement.**
- **Oakwood Administrative Staff – Shavavian Allister, Marilyn Lang
Oakwood University Media Team – Dwayne Cheddar, Edmund Alexander
Oakwood University Music Department – Stephen Manders, Dennis Baptiste, Jr.**
- **Dr. Carlton P. Byrd – President of Southwest Region Conference of Seventh day Adventists for always offering support and spiritual guidance through the years and during our mother's end of life journey.**
- **Pastor J. Alfred Johnson II for helping us honor our mother's life by officiating her memorial service.**
- **Our magnificent musical friends – Luther Washington II, Roger Ryan, Dr. Lloyd Mallory, Michelle Cleveland, Gale Jones Murphy, Cleveland Murphy, Noelette Leader Hutton, Tina Glenn, Edrene Malcolm, John Stoddart, Vicki Miller, Jonathan Snodgrass, Armand Hutton, Nnamdi Bryant, and all additional family and friends who contributed to making this musical Celebration of Life for Winifred C. Rivers possible.**
- **Oakwood University Music Department – Dr. Julie Foster, Dr. Eurydice Osterman, Jerme Jordan
Repast – Loving prepared by Mrs. Edna Dailey, a dear friend of our mother's
Regency Healthcare and Rehab for keeping mom safe and comfortable in her latter years.
Dexter Fields for the beautiful floral arrangement to honor our dear mother. (Owner, Dexter Fields Flowers)**



REPAST

The Rivers family invites you to attend the repast which will take place in the Oakwood University Church Family Life Center, immediately following the memorial service.

