



Deacon Rosa Jeanette Scott Harris

1945-2012

Rosa was born on November 3, 1945, to the late James and Lettie Parrish Scott of Louisa, Virginia. As a child, she attended the Foster's Creek Baptist Church. At Foster's Creek Church she sang along with her sisters, The Scott Singers. In her early twenties, Rosa met and married the Reverend James Berry Harris Jr., of Waynesboro, Virginia. Rosa and Reverend James Harris organized a Gospel Choir. The Harris Singers were special guests in many different churches and venues on the East Coast. In 1986, Rosa and James and the family moved from Louisa to Lexington, Virginia, where her husband pastored the First Baptist Church of Lexington. Reverend Harris preceded Rosa in death; however, she remained an active member of the church until her demise in 2012. Rosa Harris became one of the first female Deacon's of the First Baptist Church of Lexington. She served faithfully until the Lord called her home. Rosa loved to sing for the Lord. Her favorite songs include: "My Soul is Anchored" and "To God be the Glory". She enjoyed gaining strength from reading God's Word. Her favorite passage was Psalm 23. She cherished time with her family and friends, but always went out of her way for her precious grandchildren, whom she adored. In her spare time, she collected porcelain angels and baked. She was always known for her delicious carrot cakes.



MARY JANE PATTERSON

Born into slavery in 1840, Mary Jane Patterson became the first African-American woman to receive a college degree when she graduated from Oberlin College in 1862. The daughter of fugitive slaves, she went on to have an illustrious career as an educator and was known to be a mentor to many African Americans.

She is believed to be the oldest of seven children, and that her parents, Henry Irving and Emeline Eliza Patterson, were fugitive slaves. In 1852, her family left Raleigh and moved to Oberlin, Ohio in 1856, in hopes that the children would be able to get a college education. Growing up, her father -- a childhood friend of Andrew Johnson -- supported the family through his work as a skilled mason. To help make ends meet, the family also boarded black students.

In 1835, Oberlin College admitted its first black student and two years later became the country's first coed institution of higher education. It was also the first college in the country to grant undergraduate degrees to women. These changes paved the way for Mary Jane Patterson, who studied for a year in the college's Preparatory Department. There were still only a few black students enrolled at the college during her four years leading to her graduation in 1862. By earning her B.A., Patterson became the nation's first African-American woman to receive a bachelor's degree. (Patterson's brother, John, and her sisters Emma and Chanie Ann, all would graduate from Oberlin and go on to pursue teaching careers.

After graduation, Mary Jane Patterson taught at the Institute for Colored Youths in Philadelphia, then accepted a teaching position in Washington D.C at the Preparatory High School for Colored Youths. In 1871, she became the first black principal of the newly-founded Preparatory High School for Negroes. Over the course of her career, she was known to be a mentor to many African-American women. She continued working at the school until her death on September, 24 1894.