



Mrs. Iris A. Thomas

July 8, 1951 - February 3, 2026

Obituary for Iris A. Thomas

Iris A. Thomas, a devoted woman of faith, educator, and beloved matriarch, peacefully transitioned from this life on Tuesday, February 3, 2026. She was born on July 8, 1951, in South Bend, Indiana, to the late Columbus T. Smith Sr. and Ethel Harris.

Iris received her early education in the South Bend Community School Corporation and graduated from Washington High School. She pursued her lifelong passion for teaching by earning a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Indiana University South Bend and a Master's degree from Purdue University. She faithfully served as an elementary school teacher and Instructor at Ivy Tech College until her retirement, finding her greatest joy in teaching kindergarten, often sharing that she loved "teaching eager students to read."

A woman of unwavering faith, Iris was a gifted pianist, songwriter, and author. She was best known as a praying woman of God—steadfast, compassionate, and powerful in prayer. Her life was a living testimony of faith in action, touching many through her music, wisdom, and quiet strength.

In August 1974, Iris married the love of her life, Raphael Thomas Sr., and

together they built a life rooted in faith, family, and ministry. She was a faithful member of Saints Memorial Church of God in Christ until 2001, when she joined Faith Temple Church of God in Christ following her husband's appointment as pastor. Iris served faithfully alongside him with humility and grace.

Following the passing of her beloved husband in July 2020, Iris relocated to Charlotte, North Carolina, where she united with Historic Sherman Memorial Church of God in Christ. There, she continued her service to the Lord as a devoted member of the Mother's Board, offering prayer, encouragement, and Godly counsel.

Iris A. Thomas leaves to cherish her memory her children: bonus son, Brian (Liz) Edwards of Ville Platte, Louisiana; Krishna (Jerry) Walker of Portland, Oregon; Linda (Terrance) Foster of Rock Hill, South Carolina; Rachel Thomas of Charlotte, North Carolina; and son, Raphael (Patricia) Thomas Jr. of Kansas City, Kansas. Sisters: Siesta Butler of Indianapolis, Indiana; Regetta Goins of Bolingbrook, Illinois; Ethel (Michael) of Merrillville, Indiana; Brother: Columbus (Darlene) Smith Jr., of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Sister-in law: Gloria (John)Green of South Bend, Indiana, Dorothy Thomas of Ville Platte, Louisiana; Lahoma Thomas of Seattle Washington; Brothers in law: Jerry Thomas of Houston, Texas; Harry (Mary)Thomas Sr., of Chataigner, Louisiana, Nathaniel (Emily)Thomas of Renton, Washington and Donald (Theresa) Brown of Crosby, Texas. She also leaves 18 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and a host of extended family, friends, former students, and church family who were blessed by her life. Preceding her in death was her loving husband, Pastor Raphael Thomas Sr.; Parents Supt. Columbus and Ethel Smith; Mother and Father-in law: Edward & Mildred Thomas.

Her legacy of faith, education, music, and love will continue to live on through all who knew her. Though she will be deeply missed, her impact and example

will never be forgotten.

Family and friends are invited to pay their respects during visitation on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM at Williams Funeral Home in Ville Platte, LA. A committal service will follow at St. John Memorial Gardens. The Reverend Freddie Jack, Pastor of St. John Baptist Church, will officiate the committal service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cora's Intergenerational Center, 3301 Beatties Ford Rd, Charlotte, NC 28216.

Family and friends are invited to share words of comfort and remembrance at www.williamsfuneralhomes.net

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to Williams Funeral Home of Ville Platte, 337-363-8111.

Tribute Wall



“ *Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Mrs. Iris A. Thomas.* ”



February 12 at 09:41 PM