



Elizabeth Odessa Williams

Elizabeth Odessa Williams passed away the night of January 13, 2021 at her home in Harlem, NY. She was born to the late Leon and Odessa Peterson, August 20, 1932 in Manhattan, NY. She was the youngest of three children. Leon Peterson and Willa Peterson preceded her in death. During her childhood years, she was affectionately called Bessie. In adulthood, friends called her Liz. She received a bachelor's degree from Hunter College and a master's degree from Teachers College, Columbia University.

She was married to Enoch H. Williams, former Brooklyn Councilman, which ended in divorce. Elizabeth is survived by three children Charisse (Nelson) Adamson (Silver Spring, MD), Kamau (Natalie) Kokayi (Brooklyn, New York) Robert (Heleen) Williams, (Hoogland, Netherlands). Her daughter Laurie Williams preceded her in death in 1975. She is survived by 15 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren, sister-in-law Leonilla Peterson, and friend Sally Ross.

Elizabeth enjoyed working with children. She was a reading teacher for over 30 years in New York City and finally in Bethpage, Long Island. She passed on her love of books to her children and grandchildren, visiting their schools for story time, showering them with books, and spending many evenings reading to them. Family was Elizabeth's top priority; she attended not only her children's sports, social, and educational events but also those of her grand and great-grandchildren.

Her dedication to her family was deep-rooted. She went to night school with the goal of becoming a principal, but she put this aside when she realized that her teenage children needed more guidance at home.

Elizabeth was always eager for adventure. At age 55, she decided to try skiing for the first time. Enthusiastic to learn the sport, she rushed off the ski lift and broke her wrist before her first lesson. But this didn't temper her bold spirit. At age 58, she climbed onto a motorcycle with her son Kamau to zip around NYC. Elizabeth was a free spirit. When she retired, rather than take up gardening or needlepoint, she joined the Screen Actors Guild and appeared in soap operas, commercials, films, and even a rap video.

Elizabeth had a vivacious personality and was the life of any party she attended. She always arrived dressed to impress. She was a member of the Friendship Club Inc. where her proudest moment was to be selected as the club's bon ami sweetheart.

AUGUST 20, 1932 – JANUARY 13, 2021