

The Buddhist View of Death

"Cycles of life and death can be likened to the alternating periods of sleep and wakefulness. Just as sleep prepares us for the next day's activity, death can be seen as a state in which we rest and replenish ourselves for new life. In this light, death should be acknowledged, along with life, as a blessing to be appreciated."

"Death will come to each of us some day. We can die having fought hard for our beliefs and convictions, or we can die having failed to do so. Since the reality of death is the same in either case, isn't it far better that we set out on our journey toward the next existence in high spirits, with a bright smile on our face, knowing that in everything we did, we did the very best we could, thrilling with the sense that 'That was truly an interesting life?'"
"Never give up."

Daisaku Ikeda

Gloria's Favorite Buddhist Quotes

*"Practitioners of the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter; but winter never fails to turn into spring."
"Enjoy what there is to enjoy, suffer what there is to suffer. Regard both joy and suffering as facts of life and continue chanting Nam-Myoho-Renge Kyo regardless of what happens. Then you will experience deep joy from the Law."*

Nichiren Daishonin



Acknowledgement

Our family wishes to extend its profound and sincere gratitude for the outpouring of love, support, and prayers. Through our cherished memories, **GLORIA** will live on in our hearts forever. May we continue to celebrate her life by living freely and with gratitude and true respect for others every single day.

Arrangements Entrusted to:



BENTA'S
Funeral Home, Inc.

630 St. Nicholas Avenue
New York, NY 10030
Phone: (212) 281-8850
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Celebrating the Life of



Gloria Lorraine Duncan

SUNRISE: MARCH 19, 1949 ~ SUNSET: MARCH 24, 2022



Memorial Service

Saturday, April 9, 2022 • 2:00 P.M.

JOSH JOFFEE, SGI_USA, Officiating

PRIYA GUNASEHARAN, Mistress of Ceremony

Order of Celebration

WELCOME AND EXPLANATION OF PRAYER EMCEE

GONGYO BUDDHIST PRAYER SERVICE WITH INCENSE OFFERING FOR THE DECEASED

MUSICAL SELECTION

MESSAGE FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR

READING OF THE OBITUARY

VIDEO PRESENTATION GLORIA'S LIFE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUTTERFLY

MUSICAL MEDLEY/SING ALONG

TRIBUTES AND REMARKS SELECTED FAMILY & FRIENDS

REFLECTIONS IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL GUESTS (2 MIN. MAX PLEASE)

CLOSING WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT JOSH JOFFEE

Gloria Lorraine Duncan

SUNRISE: MARCH 19, 1949 ~ SUNSET: MARCH 24, 2022

GLORIA LORRAINE DUNCAN passed away peacefully in New York City on March 24, 2022. Despite a long battle with a rare, degenerative disease, Gloria was determined to live life to the fullest, and she did! Born Gloria Lorraine Thompkins to Vincent Louis Thompkins, Sr. and Margaret Cecelia Koger Thompkins on March 19, 1949 in Pittsburgh, PA, she spent her childhood and teen years in northeast Washington, DC in the Mayfair Mansions community. She quickly became the oldest of five siblings that included Nadine, Cecelia, Vincent and William ("Billy" and later "Saleem").

Gloria was a pretty, but very petite youngster, always full of energy. Despite being quite thin, she loved to eat. In fact, she ate everything in sight, except peas. She also loved to talk -- so much so that her mother would often sing a popular 1950's song to her, "You Talk Too Much".

Gloria attended DC public schools, including: Neval Thomas Elementary, Carter G. Woodson Junior High, Calvin Coolidge High, and then McKinley Technical High, from which she graduated in 1967. During her teen years, she proudly attended Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic 1963 "March on Washington" with her mother, and remained an advocate for civil rights thereafter.

In 1967, she married Ronald Christopher Duncan, and had one son, Ronald Christopher Duncan, Jr., whom she loved dearly. Although her marriage ended five years later, Gloria continued along her path as a loving, single mom and spent her college years at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). Gloria's IQ was high, and she was a great writer and administrator, working for corporations like Xerox, Merrill Lynch and legal firms while in DC. She also pursued entrepreneurial ventures like a matchmaking dating service, and independent product sales. Her last job was with St. Joseph's Children's Services in Brooklyn, NY.

Gloria was also a "party girl" who frequented popular DC clubs like the Foxtrappe, and The Channel Inn at the Wharf in southwest DC. Nicknamed "Glo", later changed to "Go Go Glo", she loved rock and roll, jazz, rhythm and blues, dancing, and good times. In her 20s, 30s and early 40s, she could often be found hanging out with friends or at the beach. She also loved the color pink, butterflies, art, flowers, poetry, cooking, jewelry and fashion.

Gloria was raised in the Christian tradition, but at the age of 26, she was introduced to SGI Nichiren Buddhism, a faith she maintained for the rest of her life. She always expressed her deep appreciation for having been introduced to Buddhism, and often stated that it changed her life for the better. She introduced many people to her faith.

At the age of 38, Gloria moved from DC to New York (Queens and Brooklyn). After an accident and the onset of her crippling illness in her mid 40's, she began experiencing chronic pain and ill health, and moved with family to White Plains (in Westchester, NY). However, she was determined to stay positive and remained active in her Buddhist practice and her new community. There, she frequented The Lazy Boy Saloon to hear live jazz music each week, and could often be seen "flying" down White Plains streets in her motorized wheelchair (decorated with signs, butterflies and flowers) to attend Buddhist activities, visit friends, or go shopping.

When her illness became more severe, Gloria made her final home at River Spring Health (a.k.a. Hebrew Home), a lovely senior facility on the Hudson River in Riverdale, from 2016 until her passing. There, she made many new friends, blossomed as a creative artist, and was welcomed by her new Buddhist district, Spuyten Duyvil. She also met a new love there, Albert Capiello, who recently became her fiancé. Despite frequent COVID-19 quarantines, their love continued to thrive. In fact, they were featured in a New York Times article about love at nursing homes during the pandemic.

Gloria remained devoted and loyal to her family throughout her life, often reaching out with cards, delightful texts and emails. Her fondness for living a full life led to her final request that her memorial ceremony be a joyful celebration. She was predeceased by her parents, her beloved aunt Lillian Peagler and two uncles, Ralph and Henry Koger. She was also predeceased by her two brothers -- Vincent Louis Thompkins, Jr. and William "Saleem" Koger Thompkins (wife Bintou), two brothers-in law, Timothy Dennis and Henry Wimbish, Sr., and one nephew Henry "Rocky" Paige Wimbish, III.

Gloria is survived by her son Ronald, her fiancé Al, her two sisters, Nadine Thompkins Dennis Woodson (husband Byron), and Cecelia Thompkins Wimbish (partner Eddie), and many cousins including Doug Peagler (wife Princess), Lillian, Ann, Ralph, Linwood and Todd Koger, and Aunt Corrine. In addition, she leaves behind four nieces -- Asiya Thompkins, Cherie Dennis, Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (husband Muhsin), and Tiffany Dennis; four nephews -- Jamal Wimbish, Bilal Thompkins (wife AlNisaa), David Dennis (wife Xiaoyan) and Ryan Dennis (wife Kelly); and several great nieces and nephews -- Dayanna, Paige, Isa, Noah, Ethan, Adam and Linnay. Many other relatives, friends and fellow Buddhists across the country will miss her dearly.
