

'Sister Gary' Is Mourned By City, Church, State

She Was 'A Living Sermon'

BY CHARLES R. JONES
Managing Editor

Raleigh's beloved 'Sister Gary' is dead!

The Rev. Mrs. Mabel Gary Philpot, 424 Peyton St., founder and minister of the Wesleyan First Church of Deliverance, Boyer St., fell victim to pneumonia some 2 weeks ago, and although she fought valiantly to ward off its effects, this dedicated Christian leader and preacher of the Gospel for the past 54 years, fell prey to the Grim Reaper at 5 a.m. Saturday, July 8, at Wake Medical Center, exactly 4 days after her 72nd birthday.

Although she was only 4 feet, 11 inches tall and weighed in at 124 pounds, 'Sister Gary,' as she was affectionately known, stood as tall as a giant in the worlds of Christianity, love, honesty, fairplay, frankness, and all of the other ingredients necessary to produce a human immortal, which, in our humble opinion, the Rev. Sis. Gary was. To us, she was "a living sermon."

Funeral Thursday

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, July 13, at the Wesleyan First Church of Deliverance, with the Rev. Dr. Paul Harold Johnson, a long-time friend and supporter, delivering the final eulogy. Burial will be in Hillcrest Cemetery on Garner Road.

In June of 1977, the right leg of this valiant servant of God was amputated, just below the knee. Two weeks later, she appeared, as usual, on her weekly Sunday morning television program. "The Sister Gary Spiritual Program," featuring her sister, Mrs. Sandra Gary Byrd, and the Wesleyan TV Choir. The program aired each Sunday from 7:30 to 8 a.m. She was fitted with, and used well, an artificial limb.

(See 'SISTER GARY,' P. 2)

Masons And Stars Set Sessions

FAYETTEVILLE — B. A. McGeachy, deputy, 18th district, Prince Hall Masons, issued a call to all affiliated brothers to meet at Freedom Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church, Raeford, off 401 by-pass at 6 p.m. Friday, July 14.

The auxiliary, Eastern Stars, and the Knights of Pythagoras will also meet. Workshops and business sessions will be featured at the opening session. The final session will be a joint affair, at which time Dr. Roosevelt Holmes, Fayetteville State University, will be the speaker.

The district is composed of lodges located in Cumberland, Harnette and Hoke Counties.



1906 REV. MRS. MABEL GARY PHILPOT 1978

'THE LAST MILE OF THE WAY'

(In loving memory of 'Sister Gary')
BY CHARLES R. JONES

The news of her death was so shocking,
I could hardly believe my own ears;
'Sister Gary dead? Oh, you're mocking,'
But why am I shedding these tears?

For 54 years, she's been preaching,
The rights and the wrongs from The Word;
A dear friend, counseling, teaching,
Now she's gone home to live with her Lord.

Each Sunday, I watched on TV,
As she prayed, sometimes sang with the choir;
She was true inspiration to me,
A lady whom all could admire.

She never rebuked the downtrodden,
Always good advice she would give;
Warning against all going ill-gotten,
Her memory ever shall live.

Last Sunday, she said on her show,
Her nephew would preach in the afternoon;
Little did this young minister know,
That 'Aunt Mabel' was going home soon.

'Always be ready,' she warned,
'For we know not the hour, nor the day.'
This evangelist lived her favorite song:
"When I've Gone The Last Mile Of The Way."

A full, Christian life she did live,
Of three score, ten year and then two;
Giving all that she had to give,
God sent her for me and for you.

Dear Father, we bow to Thy will,
You taught us, through her, life's true worth;
Though her lips are now silent and still,
We thank Thee for her time on this earth.

Family Therapy To Be Tested For Poor

National Black News Service
WASHINGTON, D.C. — Dr. Graciela Olivarez, director of the Community Services Administration, announced recently that the agency is funding a research and demonstration program to develop and test the Family Crisis Center as a new approach to the problems and needs of

low-income families.

The new program will apply to the low-income family the concept of "family therapy" which has been available to more affluent families for at least the last decade, she said.

Dr. Olivarez said a \$620,455 grant had been made to the Community Relations - Social

'SISTER GARY'

(Continued from page 1)

Others who will participate in Thursday's 'earthly goodbye' to 'Sister Gary' include: the Rev. Ms. Muriel L. Dunn, presiding; the Rev. Odie D. Howard, words of assurance; the Rev. D. A. Peace, invocation; the Rev. Mrs. Ella Yarborough, Old Testament scripture; the Rev. J. A. Boyd, New Testament scripture; the Rev. William Spain, pastoral prayer; Mrs. Mae Frances Rogers, solo; Fred Fletcher, WRAL-TV; the Rev. Dr. Charles W. Ward and the Rev. Frank R. Banks, ministers of Raleigh and New York; the Rev. George Bullock, solo; Mrs. Bonita Powell Debnam, solo.

A native of Abington, Va., 'Sister Gary' was the daughter of the late Mrs. Joella Thornton Gary and William Gary. She received her elementary education in Abingdon, high school training in Bristol, Tenn., and seminary work was done at Knoxville College (Tenn.). She also attended what is now Fayetteville State University in this state.

Converted to Christianity at an early age in her native city, the Rev. Mrs. Philpot preached her trial sermon at the age of 17, and was later ordained as a deacon and an elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Her first pastorate was at the AME Zion Church of Chilliwhole, Va. Later, she was moved from the East Tenn. and Va. Conferences to the North Carolina Conference, where she was assigned to pastor Grace Chapel AME Zion Church, corner of Hill and E. Edenton Streets in Raleigh, in 1936. She remained at Grace until 1961, at which time the presiding bishop of the conference reassigned 'Sister Gary' to another pastorate, but she rebelled and refused to move from the city where she had made her home

ers and had firmly established herself as a minister, civic and political leader and humanitarian.

She founded and organized Wesleyan in October of 1961. The new church was incorporated, and with much prayer and dedication of herself and the members, property was

Everything

For

**BUILDING
REMODELING
REPAIRING**

LUMBER

MILLWORK

ATHEY'S PAINTS

BUILDING MATERIALS

RUSSWIN HARDWARE

At Our New Location On

RALEIGH BELTLINE

**Carolina
Builders Corp.**

Between U.S. 1 And 64

Ph. 828-7471 - Raleigh, N.C.

purchased and the building of the edifice was started. The congregation moved into the new church on the second Sunday in May of 1972.

Her sister, Mrs. Byrd, informed this writer Sunday afternoon at 'Sister Gary's' home, that the minister had told her on her July 4th birthday, that, "I've made it to another year through the Grace of Almighty God."

When Mrs. Byrd informed her that John Hervey Wheeler, president of Mechanics and Farmers Bank in Durham, had died that Thursday - just one day before her own homegoing - 'Sister Gary' said, "He was a fine, Christian gentleman. He helped us to get this church, you know and he will certainly be remembered."

Some other outstanding achievements include the organizing of the Women's Ministers' Conference of the Carolinas and Virginia, she ran for City Council, presented a Sunday radio program on WRAL for 20 years, and a Sunday television program on WRAL-TV for nearly 10 years. She received a Certificate of Merit from St. Augustine's College for outstanding work in the community, in 1975, the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority honored her as Woman of the Year.

'Sister Gary' was married to the late George C. Philpot in 1944. She leaves a legacy of love to all who knew her. She touched many lives, shared her love, devotion, and home with many young people who completed their education under her inspiration and guidance. Several young persons have entered the Christian ministry under her administration and are now holding pastorates. The last person that she heard deliver his trial sermon was her nephew, Otis Gary Byrd, on July 2, 1978.

Surviving are a brother, Charles William Gary, of Raleigh; five sisters, Miss Maggie L. Gary, Mrs. Alice A. Powell, Mrs. Ella McCollum, Mrs. Sandra G. Byrd, all of Raleigh, Miss Virginia M. Gary, Chicago, Ill.; four nieces, Almeta Gary, Brenda McCollum Cain, Deborah McCollum Clarkson, Bonita Powell Debnam; six nephews, William McCollum, Ben McCollum, George Frank McCollum, Robert McCollum and Warren McCollum, and Otis Gary Byrd; five great nieces, six great nephews, and a host of friends.

According to members of the family, "As a preacher, she stood forth in the pulpit with diction of exquisite simplicity, poetic references with power to strengthen the soul, and memorable thoughts undergirded by experience and study. As a sister, she was gentle loving, understanding, faithful, appreciative, and devoted. As a friend, she provided happiness, abated misery, doubled joy, and divided grief."

THERAPY

(Continued from page 1)