



**McCLENNEY, Frances Wood**, peacefully departed this world on November 18, 2011 in the comfort of her home. On January 22, 1942, Frances was born to Dyke and Mary Wood, farmers in Chase City, Virginia. She grew up in this rural south-central town stringing tobacco and harvesting vegetables as the youngest daughter of seven children: Albertha, Dan, William, Cleveland, Pearl, (Frances), and Ned. She received her primary education at Concord Elementary School. She attended St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia, known for excellence in training future educators. Frances moved to Richmond when she married her college sweetheart, Dr.

Earl H. McClenney Jr. She brought the excellence of her alma mater to Mosby Elementary in 1964 and later to Ginter Park Elementary School as its first black teacher hand-selected to integrate its segregated hallways. One of her first students was puzzled and asked his mother on the first day of school, "Momma, is the maid going to teach?" A few years later, Frances was described as a "highly effective and outstanding" instructor, who motivated children to reach their highest potential. Parents clamored for their children to be assigned to her classroom. Frances loved children and education. She believed in the strength, value and capacity of all children. She would say each child yellow, brown, black and white is "my child." Like many of Richmond Public School's teachers, among the finest teachers in the nation, she would often stay late after school to see children safely home or to take them home herself. She earned a Master's in Education with a concentration in Administration and Supervision from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1976. As its first black principal, Mrs. McClenney established Ginter Park as a model elementary school. New teachers found a caring and able mentor in Frances as the principal. If they entered her office frustrated and unsure of their methods, they left her office invigorated with new tools to engage energetic five-year-olds. She received national recognition in print and television for increasing parental involvement at Westover Hills Elementary School, where she was thought to be among the first principals in the state to grade parents for educational involvement. Frances was a deacon at Riverview Baptist Church. Also, she was an organizer of Chase City Connections. and was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Frances was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Dan, Ned and Cleveland; and sister, Pearl Bolden. She leaves to cherish her special memory and legacy her daughters, Madeline McClenney-Sadler (Rodney) and Jacqueline McClenney Wallace (James); Earl McClenney Jr., grandchildren, Ariyah McClenney Sadler, James Elliott-Wallace and Rashad Davis-Gladney; one brother, William Wood; one sister, Albertha W. Hayes; and a host of loving friends and caregivers during her illness such as Otherine Burgess, Ruth Goode and Margaret Walker and Jean McClenney. Remains rest at Joseph Jenkins Jr. Funeral Home, 2011 Grayland Avenue, where the family will receive friends from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. Funeral services will be held 1 p.m. Friday at Riverview Baptist Church, 2604 Idlewood Avenue, where remains will lie in state two hours prior to the funeral time. Dr. Stephen Hewlett, pastor, officiating. Interment Concord Baptist Church Cemetery in Chase City, Virginia. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in memoriam to Exodus [Foundation.org](http://Foundation.org), 13016 Eastfield Road, Suite 200-222, Huntersville, N.C. 28078 (the charity founded by her daughter), or to Riverview Baptist Church, 2604 Idlewood Ave., Richmond, Virginia 23220. Online condolences can be made at [www.jenkinsjr.com](http://www.jenkinsjr.com).