

Reflections from the Virginia Association of Ministers' Widows Ministry
to Dr. Ellen Jamerson, President

President Jamerson there is joy and sadness in my heart as this message is being prepared to go into the Memory Newsletter highlighting your years of loving, efficient, dedicated, untiring leadership as our esteemed President. Working with you will always be a cherished memory.

Reflecting on our conversation following the State Convention in April 2022 when we discussed the need for a Widows Ministry, you did not hesitate to voice your approval and appointed Eleanor R. Morris to be the Chair of the VAMWMW Widows Ministry. Prior to being given the official appointment, my voice for our widows was heard at the Conventions in workshops, round tables and retreats.

Our first assignment through prayer and your guidance, we formed the Widows Ministry Committee with five members, two widows, and three other Ministers' Wives not local presidents.

COVID had us homebound, so Zoom became our means of holding meetings having President Jamerson always included with valuable words of wisdom.

The first committee was Sister Ida Dyer; Sister Arie Gray; Sister Karen Minor-Turner; Sister Eleanor R. Morris, Widow; Sister Doris Pinkard, Widow. Dr. Jamerson was Ex-officio.

Our next assignment was to have the local presidents send in the names, addresses, phone numbers emails of their widows. Later their birthdays were added. President Jamerson made contacts with the local presidents, and they very willingly responded.

We discovered that there were 70 widows in VAMWMW. They were divided among the committee members to stay connected with them and report to the Chair.

We drew up plans to reach out to the widows once a month. In August 2022, beautiful cheer cards were sent with an encouraging message. Responses were overwhelming that they were being remembered and shown love.

Our goal has been to contact each widow with cards, prayers, bookmarkers and other small mailable gifts.

The highlight of 2022 was an elegant Stay-at-Home Tea on November 12th from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. It was a memorable event with our sisters decked out in their finest dresses, suits, hats, fascinators and gloves. A game was directed by Sister Karen Minor-Turner and a demonstration "How to Make a Perfect Cup of Tea" by Sister Morris. Sister Ida Dyer read the Scripture; Sister Doris Pinkard offered the prayer; and Sister Arie Gray, Gospel Music Recording Artist; blessed us with the music. Sister Erica O'Neil Scott and Sister Karen Minor-Turner worked together on Zoom Technology. President Jamerson added much to this first event with her remarks and words of wisdom. Several of our state officers and local presidents, enjoyed the fellowship also. Dr. Edna Griffith showed off fancy gloves which she has enjoyed for several decades.

By December we had 76 Widows.

We began January 2023 with phone calls to our widows. We were sad to learn of the death of Sister Bertha Woods from the Northern Virginia MWMW. Sister Margaret Colander of Suffolk MWMW reached the beautiful age of 98 on January 29 and went home to be with the Lord on November 12, 2023. On a brighter note, Dr. Naomi Chambers, at the age of 90 was installed as the Pastor of Pleasant Union Baptist in Suffolk where her late husband was the pastor. Congratulations to Sister Chambers.

Our VAMWMW Convention was hosted by the Fredericksburg MWMW, and they did an outstanding job. As a result of the Widows Ministry, we were able to have a box on the Registration Form for our widows to check. We honored 15 widows from ages 90 to 98. A beautiful certificate with red roses was presented to each along with a pretty floral handkerchief. For those absent, their local presidents will deliver them later. Sister Valarie Thomas, President of Richmond MWMW and Sister Morris had the pleasure of delivering to Dr. Mary Gordon West, Sister Marian Garrard, Sister Mary Green, and Sister Patricia Solomon. When we left Sister Green, she was saying, "What a beautiful handkerchief. It warmed our hearts". Each widow was thrilled with the gifts.

The Fredericksburg MWMW also gave all widows present a gift including President Jamerson and Sister Morris. We thank Sister Erica O'Neal Scott and President Jamerson for their expertise in helping design the certificate. Our sincere thanks to the Fredericksburg MWMW for their excellent hospitality.

We continue to remember our widows each month. We are so grateful to VAMWMW for this ministry of love.

Fall came and we fell right in line getting ready for the retreat and encouraging our widows to attend if possible. Thirty-four registered and 32 were able to attend. What a great showing of love and gratitude. The retreat was held in person at River View Baptist Church, Richmond and Sister Sylvia Hathaway and President Jamerson did an excellent job. Due to an unexpected, pinched nerve in the neck, Sister Morris was not able to attend, but Sister Ida Dyer stood in the gap and presented the gift bags to the widows.

As we drew closer to the end of the year, our minds turned to Thanksgiving and Christmas. We sent beautiful Thanksgiving and Christmas cards, each containing a special gift and message. It brings so much joy to our widows and to the committee members. The responses are so heartwarming which gives us the incentive to keep thinking of ways to SHOW LOVE.

Moving into 2024, calls were made in January, and for Valentine's Day, every widow received a special tea bag in their Valentine. Once again, the responses were heartwarming. Valentines with a tea bag were also sent to President Jamerson, her officers and local presidents.

This has truly been a wonderful journey for our committee and widows. We look forward to seeing this Ministry grow and "Bind Us Closer Together with Cords that Cannot Be Broken."

Historical Note: The first Ministers' Widow of the Year was Mrs. Helen Alexander, the 5th President of the VAMWMW from Hampton, VA. Mrs. Marie Wise was the president at the time in 1985.

Since establishing the Widows Ministry, we have seen eight widows make their heavenly transition Sister Bertha Woods, Sister Dorothy Brown, Sister Beulah Lawrence, Sister Mary Green, Sister Malinda Jones, Sister Margaret Colander, Sister Lois Anderson, and most recently Sister Deborah Robinson, President of the Martinsville—Henry County MWMW. They live on in our hearts.

This has truly been a wonderful journey of love, and we look forward to seeing this ministry grow and “Bind Us Together with Cords that Cannot Be Broken.”

May God continue to bless you President Ellen Jamerson as you find your next assignment as the Lord leads you.

In Faith, Love and Prayer,

Submitted by the Widow Ministry Committee. Dr. Eleanor Morris, Chair; Sister Karen Minor-Turner, Co-Chair; Sister Ida Dyer, Sister Arie Gray, and Sister Doris Pinkard.



Pearl Washington, Ida Dyer, Delores Hubert-Christmas