



Joyce Lorraine Giddens

January 13, 1943 - October 8, 2025

Joyce Lorraine Watkins was born on January 13, 1943, in Englewood, New Jersey, to the late William James and Willie Ree (Blount) Watkins. The youngest of four children. Joyce was surrounded by family as she peacefully entered into eternal life on Wednesday, October 8, 2025.

Joyce grew up in Englewood, NJ and graduated from Saint Cecilia High School in 1960. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Jersey City State College, followed by a Master of Arts in Teaching Children with Learning Disabilities from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, NJ.

Joyce answered “The Call” to teach with unwavering passion. She became the first African American educator in Nahunta, North Carolina, during the early 1960s, after receiving her teaching certification for North Carolina Public Schools. Her commitment to education was matched only by her devotion to God. Throughout her life, Joyce served people of all ages and backgrounds, always guided by her faith and the belief that service is worship.

On August 13, 1966, Joyce married the love of her life, Robert Giddens of Harlem, NY. Together, they raised four children—Michelle, Stefanie, Tiffany, and Rodney—and eventually made their home on Beaumont Avenue in Teaneck, NJ. Their residence became a sanctuary of ministry, filled with Bible

study, worship, prayer, and the gifts of the Spirit. Joyce's love for the Lord was radiant and contagious, leading many to Christ through her words and witness.

Joyce was a steadfast pillar of her community, whose leadership and vision left an enduring mark on Teaneck and beyond. She served as President of the Beaumont Avenue Block Association and was an active member of the Northeast Teaneck Block Presidents Association, where she championed collaboration and positive change. She was also a member of the Enslaved African Memorial Committee, dedicated to honoring the legacy of enslaved Africans who helped build Northern New Jersey. As Chairperson of the Teaneck Road-Business-Community Alliance (TRBCA), Joyce advocated for local merchants and residents, working closely with government leaders to promote economic advancement. She was also instrumental in revitalizing Teaneck Road through the Streetscape initiative, breathing new life into the town's appearance and spirit.

Her tireless service was recognized with a Congressional Certificate of Recognition as a "Hometown Hero" by U.S. Congressman Josh Gottheimer, honoring her commitment to community and excellence in leadership. She later received the Legacy Volunteer Award from Rev. Dr. David Ireland for over 20 years of servant leadership at Christ Church in Montclair, NJ, where she and Robert were ordained as Deacons and later as Chaplains. They were life group leaders and marriage builders at Christ Church. Their home life group ministry continued to be a source of healing, worship, and fellowship for individuals, couples, and families.

Joyce retired in 2010 after a distinguished career teaching children with disabilities. Her daily prayer was, "Be Glorified in me, Lord God," and her life was a living testimony to that prayer.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 59 years, Robert Giddens; her daughters Michelle Squitieri, Stefanie Giddens, Tiffany Byrd; her son Rodney Giddens; and her grandchildren Gabriella Gonzalez, Giovanni, Angelica, Marcus and Olivia Squitieri, Jared and Brianna Byrd, Nathaniel Giddens, Alyssa Lang, and Deandre Brown and one Great grand-child Cairo Ortiz. She is also survived by her sons-in-law Michael Squitieri and Robert Byrd, daughter-in-law Mary Giddens, brother-in-law Harry Lyons, grandson-in-law Juan Gonzalez, and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, their families, and many cherished friends and spiritual children. Joyce was predeceased by her siblings Louise Johns, Catherine Lyons, and William Watkins.

A repast will be held by The Giddens Family on Friday October 24, 2025 from 2:30pm-6pm EST
at 201 Degraw Avenue, Teaneck, NJ

Previous Events

Viewing

OCT **23**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Volk Leber Funeral Home
789 Teaneck Road
Teaneck, NJ 07666
info@volkleber.com
<http://www.volkleber.com>

Viewing

OCT **24**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Church
68 Church Street
Montclair, NJ 07042
info@christchurchusa.org
<https://www.christchurchusa.org/visit/>

Funeral Service

OCT **24**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Church
68 Church Street
Montclair, NJ 07042

Repast

OCT **24**. 2:30 PM - 6:00 PM (est)

Teaneck United Methodist Church
201 Degraw Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Tribute Wall



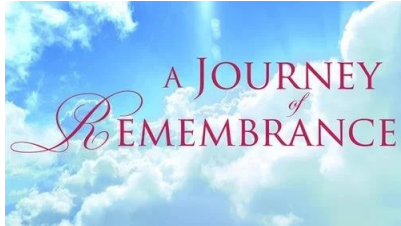
“ Volk Leber Funeral Home created a YouTube link for tomorrow's service at Christ Church in memory of Joyce Lorraine Giddens



Volk Leber Funeral Home - October 23, 2025 at 03:14 PM



“ Volk Leber Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Joyce Lorraine Giddens



Volk Leber Funeral Home - October 20, 2025 at 03:50 PM

GG

The first time I met Mrs Giddens, she left a beautiful impression on me. I always sent my love and kisses when Tiffany went home to visit. Every time I would get a chance to see her...her spirit just made me smile. Such a lovely lady I will always remember. Surely you are a bright light in Heaven right now.

Grace Garvin - October 20, 2025 at 05:40 PM

DB

Mrs. Giddens can always be depended on to extend a warm smile, a compassionate hug, and an appropriate word. I will miss her dearly. My thoughts and prayers are with the family. God bless and keep you always.

Demetrisha Barnes - October 22, 2025 at 03:24 PM

RM

“*Joyce will truly be missed. I am so glad to have met her and do ministry with her in the Bridges Special Needs program at Christ Church in Montclair.*

She was a Catalyst in me praying for people on the spot not when I get home. Sh one said Reva when someone share their problems pray for them right there don't say I'll pray for you when I get home because you will probably forget.

I appreciate what she said and I took it to heart and I act upon that advice until this day.

*Rest in the arms with God my sister in Christ Jesus. There is truly a only one way and that way is through Jesus as Savior and Lord. ❤️
❤️❤️*

Reva Mosley - October 24, 2025 at 07:06 PM

CH

“*Love and prayers to the family. Will never forget that infectious smile and how Joyce allowed Jesus to shine through everything that she said and did in her life's journey.*

Carol Henry

Carol Henry - October 24, 2025 at 02:13 PM

CH

“ Carol Henry lit a candle in memory of Joyce Giddens



Carol Henry - October 24, 2025 at 01:58 PM

HT

“ I extend my sincere condolences to your entire family. Sister Joyce was a demonstration of her name "joy." When she would come to Hope to visit Tiffany and Robert Byrd and their family, she always had a smile and she just exuded joy. I marveled she remembered my name and we always hugged. She indeed was a joy. May the peace of God rest upon each family member during this time of sadness. May the promise of joy come in the morning. Not necessarily tomorrow morning, but in the morning of the day you can rejoice without the tears of sadness.

Helen Trice

Helen Trice - October 24, 2025 at 11:44 AM

CN

“ Hi Stephanie and Family,
I only had the opportunity to speak with Mrs. Giddons a few times, but I enjoyed being in her warm and loving presence. I thank God for the gift of her life to family, friends and associates; keeping you all in prayer.

Love you!

Cynthia Nicholson

Cynthia Nicholson - October 24, 2025 at 08:19 AM

DF

“ The day I met Joyce at Jackson Avenue School in Hackensack was very memorable. She was walking through the cafeteria with a student on the way to resource room. The student was in Kindergarten and loved music. He started to cry because he wanted to come to my music class and because this was his first time working with Joyce. Joyce quickly reassured him that he would get to come to music after resource class and she won him over instantly with her gentle voice and warm demeanor. Not only did she win over her student, but she won me over as a friend. We have been friends ever since!

We have had quite the journey as two dear sisters in faith and friends. We have prayed together, cried together, laughed together and have done life together, all of these years.

Joyce loved to go Christmas caroling at the Dunkin Donuts in town. Many a year she would recruit my husband and I to go with them! I am so glad I went. I have many warm memories.

My favorite memory was January birthdays in the teacher's room. Both our birthdays are in January so we would put out the goodies together. The custodians came in on their break, as was the invitation, to get some goodies. Joyce convinced them that we were related . We pranced around the teacher's room singing "Sisters, sisters" while they laughed and laughed.

To her four beautiful children I would like to say how wonderful, intelligent, loving and kind was their beloved mom. She loved everyone of you. You were her pride and joy. She never would say a negative word about any one of you. She would always pray for you.

I will miss my dear friend and sister. The good news is that one day, thanks be to God, we will meet again on the other side.

Donna Fuscaldo - October 24, 2025 at 02:02 AM

KS

“ *Dear Stefanie, Tiffany, and Michelle,
I was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of your beloved mother. Please know that you remain in my heart and prayers during this difficult time.
Your mother was a truly sweet, caring, and anointed woman. Her warmth and grace touched so many lives, including mine. She carried herself with such love and strength, and her legacy will continue to shine through each of you.
May you find comfort in the beautiful memories you shared and in the love that surrounds you. I am here for you and lifting you up in prayer.
With love and deepest sympathy,
Deaconess Karen Sweeting*

Karen Sweeting - October 23, 2025 at 11:12 AM

LP

“ *Dear Stefanie and Family, May God's presence bring you strength, His love bring you peace, and His promise of eternal life bring you hope. Though your hearts are heavy today, remember that love never ends. She lives on in the kindness you show, the love you give, and the memories you cherish. Love Denise, Chris, Lisa and The Miller Family*

Lazette Pierce-Miller - October 22, 2025 at 07:44 PM

LP

“ Dear Stefanie and Family, May God’s presence bring you strength, His love bring you peace, and His promise of eternal life bring you hope.

Losing a mother is one of life’s deepest sorrows. I pray that your heart finds peace in the cherished memories you shared. Love Denise, Chris, Lisa and The Miller Family.

Lazette Pierce-Miller - October 22, 2025 at 07:23 PM

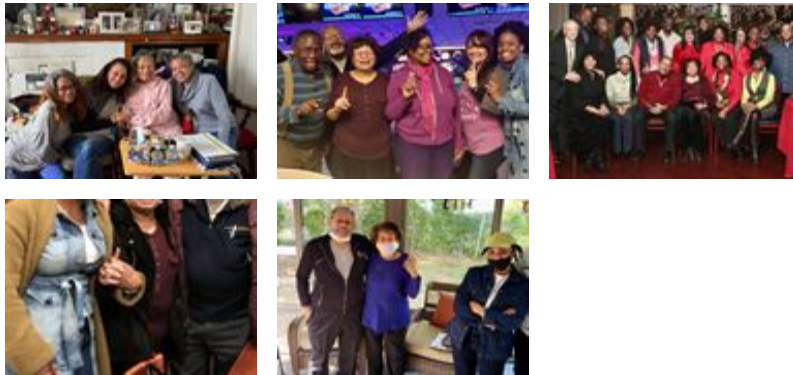
TN

“ My sincere condolences to Rodney and the family. This is your old friend Tristan, from elementary school. I learned of the passing, as I, too, am a member of Hope Christian Church in Beltsville, MD, like Tiffany. May God grant you all strength and solace in these times.

Tristan N. - October 21, 2025 at 06:14 PM



“ 151 files added to the album LifeTributes



Volk Leber Funeral Home - October 20, 2025 at 02:27 PM

MA

“ I thank God for bringing me to Joyce. Her faith and deep love for the things of God always encouraged and inspired me. She was like a spiritual mom to me and played a special role in my leadership journey. Joyce was never shy to correct me when it was needed, always doing so with her soft, gentle voice and loving heart. I will forever be grateful for her guidance and will deeply miss her presence in my life.

Madeline - October 18, 2025 at 10:13 AM

TB

“ I loved how she could approach a stranger and ask, "do you know Jesus?"

TB - October 18, 2025 at 08:20 AM

SA

“ So many years of wonderful memories from my elementary days to this time. Joyce and family were such a Godly bright light. Condolences to all children, grandchildren and so many that were blessed to know Joyce.

Such gratitude to have spoken recently....lost for words. You will truly be missed by so many. Loved your sense of humor.



Sandra - October 17, 2025 at 11:46 PM

EM

“ Joyce was such a Precious Pearl. She had a million dollar smile and she was always so encouraging to the body of Christ. She will be greatly missed. My Love and prayers are with the the family. Ember

Em - October 17, 2025 at 03:54 PM