

**FOCELLA O'NEIL
BROWN DAVIS**

Mrs. Focella O'Neil Brown Davis was the seventh child born to William Melvin and Andie Brooks O'Neil. Mrs. Davis was the youngest and last remaining sibling until her passing on September 27, 2005.

Mrs. Davis often spoke of how much she loved and missed her sisters and brothers. Focella loved God and the fellowship she experienced in her church. Mrs. Davis received Christ at an early age and was faithful throughout all her years. Mrs. Davis was very proud of the fact that she belonged to the United Methodist Church and "so did everybody in her family."

In her later years, she often spent many of her evenings reminiscing and sharing, with her children and grandchildren, the good times she experienced with her brothers and sisters, along with her mom and dad.

Mrs. Davis attended school with her older sisters in Red Branch, Texas. When she completed high school, she assisted her sister, Lula Mae, in the classroom, teaching grade school children. She soon realized that she also wanted to become a teacher. Mrs. Davis attended college at Prairie View, Wiley, as well as Texas Southern where she earned a B. S. degree in Home Economics.

Mrs. Davis returned home to begin a teaching career near Lovelady. Mrs. Davis soon met and married Paul Edward Brown, who was principal of a school near where she worked. Paul also worked in a sawmill in his spare time. They eventually bought a home in Trinity. Mrs. Davis and Paul were very happy in their marriage and they soon gave birth to a son, Paul Edward, and two daughters, Norma Belle and Carol Ann.

Shortly after Carol was born, Focella suffered the traumatic loss of her husband in a work-related accident in 1946. Within a few months, Focella's brothers and friends assisted her in moving to the Houston area where she lived until 1968. During this time, she returned to Texas Southern University where she earned her Master's Degree in Education while she worked as a teacher and, with the help of God and relatives, who lived nearby, raised her three children. Mrs. Davis retired from teaching in the Oakland Unified School District (Garfield Elementary School) in 1977.

Music, as many of you know, was one of the special gifts God gave Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. Davis sang in the choir

and played the piano "by ear." Mrs. Davis enjoyed participating in church activities, and took her children with her most of the time. Mrs. Davis also encouraged her daughters to take dance and piano lessons when she found out "they could not play by ear." Carol and Norma enjoyed playing piano and dancing very much. Mrs. Davis was proud to have her daughters play the piano and dance when family and friends came to visit.

When Mrs. Davis moved to Oakland from Houston in 1968, she met and made friends within the Oakland school district and her new church home, Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church. Many of her new friends were sisters of the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority. Mrs. Davis was delighted when asked to become a member of this sorority, which served the community in so many positive ways. In addition to her love of music, Mrs. Davis also enjoyed cooking.

Mrs. Davis loved to entertain her relatives, bridge group, sorority, and minister and church family. Everyone, without exception, enjoyed dining at Focella's table. Mrs. Davis specialties were peach cobbler and home-made rolls. The rolls were considered by many to be the best in Houston and Oakland. Hot from the oven, they practically melted in your mouth.

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