

Louise Carter Gibbs *by Greg Gibbs*

Louise Carter Gibbs, a life-long resident of Hinton, WV, was born on November 26, 1922. She was the daughter of Hattie Law Carter Moon of Hinton and Fitz Jerald Carter of Alderson, WV.

Louise was just five years old when her parents separated. She and her mom, a teacher in a one-room school at Hungart's Creek, made it through that difficult circumstance with the help of a loving and supportive family. Hattie eventually remarried. She and her husband, Robert Moon, Sr., gave Louise two siblings, Robert, Jr. and David.

As a young girl, Louise taught herself to play piano from an insert she discovered in a *New York Times* newspaper. A student of Lincoln School on Hill Street in Hinton, Louise enjoyed music and singing in the chorus. After high school, she began working as a domestic for several prominent individuals and families in Hinton. She then was offered a long-term position with the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company where she worked for nearly 30 years until her retirement in the mid-1970s.

Louise concluded that she was too young to retire permanently so, at age 54, she accepted an offer to become an emergency dispatcher for the City of Hinton during Mayor William "Bill" Humphries' tenure. She held that job for six years until deciding to retire permanently in 1982.

Louise was married to William M. Gibbs, an employee of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, who preceded her in death in 1970, and was the mother of Swanson D. Carter, Ph.D. (deceased, 2018) of Williamsburg, VA; Mischa E. Carter of Washington, DC; William L. Gibbs (deceased, 2002) of Atlanta, GA; Joy L. Gibbs Baker of Washington, PA; and Gregory L. Gibbs of Bethesda, MD. A sixth child, Cindy, died shortly after her birth in 1962.

Louise was very proud of the fact that each of her children graduated from high school and then went on to earn college degrees as well, something she never imagined possible when her children were young. She was equally proud to be "Nana" in her lifetime to her six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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A faithful and devoted member of Camon Baptist Church, Louise was pianist and musical director for several decades. Tragically, the church building that her grandmother Artie Jones helped to establish, as an original church founder, was destroyed by an arsonist's fire in 2009. This was particularly difficult because Louise's grandmother also had donated the land upon which the church was built 90 years earlier, in 1919. The devastating fire had occurred just nine months after Louise's Herman Street home of 51 years and her birth home on State Street had fallen victim to fires, just two days apart, resulting from a gas explosion at a neighbor's house and an arsonist's deliberate act, respectively.

Despite these tremendous setbacks, Louise never stopped "looking on the bright side." As a result of the home fire, she experienced a feeling of homelessness at the age of 85; yet, rather than giving up her independence by moving away from Hinton to live with one of her children or becoming discouraged by her new reality, Louise moved forward with the dignity, calm and grace she always exhibited. She simply purchased a new home in Bellepoint and started over with head held high. Following the Camon fire, Louise was elected church leader and oversaw the creation of the Camon Baptist Church Memorial, which was completed in 2013.

In addition to her many church activities, Louise served as president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1969 and was appointed to former Governor John "Jay" Rockefeller's State Advisory Council on Vocational Education on November 25, 1977.

A variety of hobbies kept Louise busy during her retirement years but none gave her more satisfaction than crafting. Residents of Hinton and beyond have enjoyed the crafts she displayed at "Railroad Days," the West Virginia Water Festival and other community events in and around Hinton.

Louise made many friends, and was a friend to many, during her lifetime. She also was a mentor, especially to the youth of her church who sang in the choirs and pageants she directed. Her friendly, humble nature, Christian faith, integrity, work ethic, positive outlook and commitment to the town she called home for all of her days made a lasting impression on all who knew her.

Louise was 90 when she passed on August 15, 2013.

Louise Carter Gibbs We Salute You!

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