



# Dr. Theora Evans

SEP 11, 1945 - MAY 7, 2018



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**MEMORIAL PARK**  
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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## **Dr. Theora Evans**

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**D**r. Theora Anita Evans passed away peacefully on May 7, 2018 in Memphis, TN. Dr. Evans was born in Chicago, IL on September 11, 1945 to parents Theodore Evans and Lucille (Jackson) Evans. On August 31, 1961, she married Victor C. Dodd and the couple had four children – Victor, Theodore, Kimberly and Karetha. She taught each of her children, through her own shining example, that education and hard work were key to a successful life. More importantly, she taught them that honesty, generosity and empathy were indispensable to a meaningful life. In 1976, Dr. Evans received a Bachelor of Science in Experimental Psychology from Loyola University of Chicago. In 1978, she earned a Master's Degree in Social Work from the same institution. In 1987, she earned her second Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 1996, she earned a Doctorate Degree from the University of Minnesota, focusing on Philosophy in Social Work. Dr. Evans started her professional career as a Social Worker in Chicago, IL, but later discovered that training the next generation of social workers was her passion. She went on to hold faculty positions at the University of Iowa, University of Minnesota and University of Tennessee, where she retired in 2011 as Associate Dean of the College of Social Work. While Dr. Evans' professional achievements were substantial, her personal triumphs are what defined her. She earned two of her graduate degrees as a single, working mother raising children. A two-time cancer survivor herself, she tragically endured the death of two of her children (Victor and Kimberly) during her lifetime, while showing the other two how to be their strongest when the unimaginable occurs. She was the face of bravery her entire life. Dr. Evans is survived by her children Ted Dodd and Karetha Dodd-Kavipurapu, her brothers Harold Evans and John Randolph, her son-in-law Gautam Kavipurapu and grandchildren Aditi and Ram, as well as a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends who will miss her dearly. A celebration of life will be held at 2:30 p.m.,



## Obituary

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Saturday, May 19 at Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery. Arrangements have been entrusted to Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery, 5668 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38119 (901) 767-8930. "Celebrating Life... Behind the Stone Wall".



## Tribute Wall

**Dr. Theora Evans**

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BH

**Belinda Hardy** posted:

Theora was a dear friend. Words cannot express the loss I feel. We shared so many wonderful experiences. She loved her family and was a devoted caregiver to her aunt. I will always cherish the memories and hold those moments close to my heart. She was resilient, hard working, kind, adventurous, a great cook, dancer and eager learner. However, I choose to remember her at peace and still knowing that God is good. May the blessings of the Lord continue to be with you and your family.

May 29 at 5:37 AM

LT

**Lisa Thornton** posted:

For my Dear Aunt Theora, I will continue to hold onto the fondest memories of you and our special time together. I am so very thankful that I had the opportunity to be with you... just sitting, talking, laughing, dancing and singing our favorite old Blues songs. I always enjoyed our amazing conversations of your world-wide travels. I truly appreciate the encouragement and kindness that you lovingly gave to me as if I were your very own. My Dear Aunt Theora, I will forever hold all of those wonderful memories so very close to my heart.

May 21 at 4:06 PM

CE

**Chase Evans** posted:

My Aunt Theora was a remarkable individual whose personality shone brightly. Growing up, I was always amazed by her many personal stories and adventures, as well as the many goals she accomplished. As a current college student, I have my Aunt Theora to thank for my new found passion in social work and her support during my musical endeavors over the years. Her extensive knowledge and curiosity of people and places has also inspired me to one day travel and create new experiences around the world and always try something new. Aunt Theora was one of the many strong women who molded me into the young woman I am today. I will miss our conversations, laughs, stories, and her careful loving and guidance dearly.

May 20 at 5:22 PM



## Tribute Wall

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DH

**Dr. J. Camille Hall** posted:

Soror Theora Evans, Ph.D., former Associate Dean at the University of Tennessee, College of Social Work, (Memphis Campus) transitioned on May 7, 2018. Soror Evans shared words of encouragement and advice when I joined the faculty. One nugget of wisdom she shared with me, "Whatever you do, don't allow racism and sexism to destroy your health. Pay attention to your body (she'd noticed how much weight I was gaining) and take care of yourself." This nugget of wisdom has enabled me to maintain my peace and strength as I've journeyed through the professoriate. What I know for sure is that Dr. Evans remained true to herself as she fought breast cancer, bravely withstood racism and sexism, and she retired as a respectable scholar in the social sciences. Rest in love... Soror Evans????

May 19 at 9:50 AM

GC

**Gwendolyn Campbell** posted:

I will always remember Theora's smiles when she talked about her enjoyment of dancing and the fun times we shared at various theaters especially Hattiloo followed by dinner. I will miss her.

May 19 at 8:23 AM

SM

**Sandra And Eli Matias** posted:

In loving memory of our beloved Theora. You were not only our friend but also our mentor, giving us advice with love and care. We fondly remember our trip together in Vienna, Austria. We will cherish those memories forever. Your love for life radiated wherever you went. You are an example of a survivor. As you grace the portals of heaven with your beauty may your love continue to radiate to hearts of those you've left behind. We love you Theora and look forward to the day when we shall meet again. Thinking of you always, Sandra and Eli Matias.

May 18 at 5:13 PM

MK

**Michele Kelley** posted:

You are a bright shining star, wherever you are dear Theora. You lit up the world around you when you were in our midst. I held you as an example of how to live a life of professional and personal integrity—seamlessly; how to inspire and lead; and how to make a difference for justice. I was so fortunate to have known you. You are loved and missed. I hope I live my life a bit better for having known you. Love and prayers, Michele

May 17 at 7:14 AM



## Tribute Wall

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KK

**Kate Kemp** posted:

The University of Iowa School of Social Work Faculty, Staff and Graduates sends its deep respect and appreciation for Theora, who served as our Director of Field Education and Diversity Committee Chair. She shaped up our field program, and inspired many, many students and colleagues with her knowledge, wisdom and zest for life. We feel so blessed to have had her with us. Kate Kemp

May 16 at 9:44 AM

KM

**Kevin G. Merritt, Msw** June 30 at 3:20 PM

Dr. Theora Evans was a marvelous person. I met her in the Fall of 1996 at The University of Minnesota. She was my first professor in the School of Social Work teaching Social Welfare and History in the MSW program. She introduced to her students to think beyond what was written, look at the history of people, their culture and appreciate their lives. She brought a wealth of knowledge to the subject matter and also gave us a full appreciation of Africa. American contributions to social work and social welfare. She was my friend and mentor. She encouraged me to study graduate work on the doctorate level. I will miss her professionalism and poignant view of how people interact in life. I wish I had spent more time with her here in MN, but she went to Memphis, TN to move forward in her career. She left me with these words: "To study for the doctorate is arduous, but to complete the degree is empowering!" I will always remember her. I was not aware that she had been ill. Always your indebted student! Kevin Merritt, MSW.

TG

**Tom Gettelfinger** posted:

Oh my, I am so shocked to learn of Theora's death. I knew her as a patient and a tango dancer... and may she dance her way in the stars.

May 14 at 6:15 AM

LW

**Linda L. Williams** posted:

I was blessed to work with Dr. Evans for many years. She was truly committed to our profession and led by example for her students and colleagues. It was truly a shock for me since we planned to attend an important event together in June. My heart is heavy but I know that God's will is best. In our many conversations she shared what her children were doing and she was so very proud of both of you. May God's blessings help us all to say farewell to a wonderful soul who has impacted on the lives of so many!

May 13 at 11:51 AM



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KA

**Karetha** posted:

You were always there for me. Thank you for making me the woman that I am. I hope I have made you proud.

May 12 at 12:44 PM

JK

**Justina W. Knight** posted:

Dr. Evans may you always rest in total peace and you will be truly missed. I was a student of Dr. Evan's at UT Memphis College of Social Work. I had an opportunity to visit with her after I completed the graduate program. I had to inform her that "everything" that she said about social work (i.e., some good, some not so good), was absolutely true. I shall cherish my time of learning from her always. I express heart-felt sympathy to her children and family, and may The God Of The Universe provide each of you with peace and comfort during this time of bereavement.

May 11 at 10:14 AM

MT

**Martin & Patsy Tracy** posted:

We'll remember Theora with much joy and admiration as a scholar, colleague, and close friend. We'll also remember her for her quick wit, ability to cut to the chase, cooking skills, especially her gumbo, and her love of travel. Her Kentucky friends, Patsy & Martin Tracy.

May 11 at 3:25 AM

DD

**Dr. Vaughn Decoster** posted:

It seems like yesterday that I met Dr. Theora Evans and we shared our love of Naw'lins and good food! She was a wonderful colleague at UT, Memphis, incredibly intelligent, always supportive, helpful, fun, and truly a joy to be around. The social work academy sincerely grieves for losing her as I am sure her family and friends do too.

May 9 at 12:47 PM

LJ

**Laverne Jones** posted:

You will have the chance to see your loved one again. John 5:28,29 Look to God for comfort in your time of sorrow. 2 Corinthians 1:3,4

May 8 at 8:08 AM



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**Dr. Tequilla Banks** posted:

Dr. Evans was truly a great woman, leader, mentor, social worker, educator and public health expert. Her impact will live on. She truly made a difference for me personally, as well as the lives of many other younger professionals. I had the honor of being blessed to be one of her lifetime mentees. She pushed me to complete my doctorate, and I'm so thankful that she was present to share that joy with me last year. My heart is so heavy to hear of her passing, and she will be truly missed. My blessings and prayers go out to her living children and family.

May 7 at 2:15 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Theora by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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