

the Gregorian

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Life Story of Beatrice Murray

Bea Murray greeted us in the mornings, made sure we wore our winter coats when it was freezing out, and gossiped with us about the goings-on of Gregory. She was a House institution and will be dearly missed. Here are a few of Gregory College House's favorite memories of our beloved Bea...

For those of you that were unable to make it to Bea's funeral on February 23, 2008 at Church of God Through the Truth, we bring you the "Life Story of Beatrice Murray," as told by her family members that Saturday.

"Bea was born in Philadelphia on April 15, 1959 to Marlene Murray and Arthur Ford. On Saturday, February 16, 2008, Bea passed away.

Bea graduated from William Penn High School, where she played softball, her favorite sport. She was the heart and joy of her family and was truly loved.

She also met the love of her life in high school. Bea and her husband Jesse Williams have been together for over 30 years. They share three children — two daughters and one son. Bea loved to have fun and was filled with joy and smiles from her three beautiful grandchildren.

Bea was employed at Allied Barton. She spent the majority of 10 years as a security guard at Gregory College House. Bea loved her work. She was well known in her community and gave back to it with love, joy and happiness.

Bea is survived by her husband Jesse Williams; two daughter, Iesha and Jessica; one son, Jess "Man Man"; her mother, Marlene, and a host of siblings, nieces, nephews, and cousins."



Memories of Bea

Bea presided over the lobby of Van Pelt for more than a decade, helping to create a family atmosphere with her friendly, inquisitive and boisterous personality. She knew something about everyone who passed through the doors--and when she didn't know something, she often felt free to make up some stories to give us all more interesting lives! When I started here nine years ago, I relied on Bea for all the nitty gritty I needed to know about the House, and we still looked to her to be the first to learn the names of all the freshmen and other new arrivals. Many of us have favorite Bea anecdotes; it's hard to imagine this place without her.

I know many Gregorians were very close to Bea; if you need someone to talk to, don't hesitate to find me, or any of the GAs, RAs or faculty.

— **Chris Donovan, House Dean**

Donations to the Murray Family can be directed to:
Jessica Murray
2216 Bonsall Street
Philadelphia, PA
19148

Even when I was a newbie freshman, Bea knew who I was and made Gregory feel like a real Philly neighborhood on its own, not just a place I had to live in. She made such an effort to know who everyone was even though there were so many of us to keep track of year after year. She cared about what was going on in our lives and kept an eye out for us when we needed it. Even after I graduated and came back to visit Penn, she could spot me as I walked down Spruce Street, wave me down and give me a hug. She had a talent for always making you feel welcome and important. I'm really going to miss Bea. Anytime I step foot in Gregory, its her warm presence I'll remember. --**Irene Godoy, Former Gregory Resident**

What I will remember the most about Bea is the only time that I ever got to speak with her. I was coming back as usual from classes. Before I got to swipe in, I heard someone greet me. It was Bea. I admit that before that moment I had only thought of her as the woman at the entrance of my college house. She was very kind and asked me my name. When I told her it was Lorenzo she immediately asked where I was from. I told her that I was from Mexico, and her expression was like that of most people that find out that a 6-foot Caucasian is in fact Mexican. Then I asked for her name. She said Miss Bea. That was it. A simple interaction, an act of recognition, an everyday conversation. It's hard to be kind like that, at least for me. I never reciprocated by taking the first step like she did, and start another interaction that went farther than a simple "good morning!". I knew she was friendly because I saw many people having great conversations with her every time they came in. I regret not going beyond my seldom "good mornings". I never did...What I will remember the most about Bea is the kindness that I experienced that usual morning. It is a kindness that is sometimes hard to find. And I am sure that all of us that experienced it, even as briefly as I did, will deeply feel this loss. --**Lorenzo Lagos, Gregory Resident**

I remember moving in to Van Pelt this fall as a freshman. My parents and I, tired from the trip, dragged in all of my suitcases. I didn't know anything: where do I get my keys? Where are the mailboxes? Where is the dumbwaiter and the laundry room? More importantly, I didn't know what to expect from this place that would become my home away from home. I moved in early, so very few people were in Gregory and my biggest fear was being alone. My parents would leave in a couple hours and I didn't know anyone. But Miss Bea was right there in the lobby when I stepped into Gregory for the first time. As my parents and I were bringing in all of my things, she asked me what my name is, and I asked her for her name. There was just something about her that made me feel instantly at home, and I remember thinking, "I'm going to be just fine here." --**Masha Jones, Gregory Resident**

Before Bea knew my name (for like the first two weeks of freshman year) she just called me "Smiley"...but even after she knew it, she still insisted on calling me by her nickname. On more than one occasion she saw me running out the door in really inappropriate-for-

the-weather shoes, and she literally made me turn around and put socks on, even after I protested that I was late to class. --**Jenny Birnkrant, Gregory Resident**

My funniest memory of Bea is when I asked for the music practice room key. All of a sudden, an alarm went off, and Mary was at the front desk, and Miss Bea immediately blame it on Mary. Mary blamed it on Bea. It was so funny. I think that they would have had an excellent reality show. Another memory is of something very nice that she did for me. When I needed to buy a gift for one of my friends, Miss Bea let me borrow her Septa pass so I could take the bus to the Blockbuster on 48th and Pine. I really appreciate her kindness. I think that she always looked out for me. --**Nichole Nelson, Gregory Resident**

I moved out after regular move-out ended during my sophomore year and was one of the few people moving out that day. My dad and I spent almost all day moving things from my room (on the first floor!) out to our car and Bea was quite entertained by the arguments between me and my dad. My dad is old, was sweating so much that it looked like he went swimming, had to wear a back belt so he wouldn't hurt his back, and drank about five bottles of Gatorade. I felt guilty for putting my dad through that ordeal. I told Bea, "This is why my parents don't like me!" She then put a serious look on her face and said "Erica, your parents love you. They wouldn't move you in and move you out and come visit you a few times a year if they didn't love you." Bea's comment changed the way that I looked at the relationship between me and my parents. --**Erica Denhoff, Gregory Resident**



Bea dancing at Gregory Karaoke, Labor Day 2005

Every morning when I left for class, Bea wished me a good morning. This early greeting always brightened my day as I frantically rushed off to class.

This is what I appreciated most about Bea: her constant ability to be kind and infuse a little joy into the day. My favorite memory of Bea came late last semester. I was taking a class with Governor Rendell entitled "Who Gets Elected and Why" and we had to put together a fictional campaign. One of the components of this project was a series of political advertisements designed to promote our candidate's achievements. I asked Bea if she'd be willing to star in one of these political ads and she reluctantly agreed. I had written up a script (our fictional candidate was running for senate on his mayoral record in the fictional city of Riotville) and her line was "Al Johnstone [our candidate] made Riotville great again." She said it very genuinely and I used the footage in a number of our ads. When our team showed the ads to Governor Rendell, he said the lady at the end who said, "Al Johnstone made Riotville great again," really made the ads with her enthusiasm and authenticity. That was Bea!! Even the Governor of Pennsylvania recognized that she was someone special. --**Justin Sykes, Gregory Resident**