



Wilhelmina Roxanna Edwards

MAR 19, 1927 - JAN 21, 2025



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Wilhelmina Roxanna Johnson Edwards, longtime resident of the Bay Area, passed away surrounded by the love of her family on the afternoon of January 21st 2025. She was 97.

Wilhelmina's life was defined by her diligence, determination, and love of her family. She was born the youngest of the 6 children of Wilhelmina and Arthur Johnson in New Orleans during the era of the great flood, on March 19th, 1927. Her earliest years she lived with her father and siblings near the Audubon Zoo, “under the Mississippi river”. Because she was the youngest and her parents separated soon after she was born, she didn’t typically live with all her siblings as she grew up. Yet she fondly remembered their protection. She said throughout the depression she may on rare occasion have only sugar water and bread but unlike her siblings she wasn’t hungry because they made sure “the baby ate first”. Her brother Gerald kept the bullies away. Her sister Alma eased her nighttime fears, and when they were all in the same place at the same time they felt like “we discovered the world”.

Wilhelmina was very proud to be a student of Gilbert Academy, the historic, private school for New Orleans Black children. She referenced their excellence whenever she was praised for her exceptional letter writing skills. However, she imagined leaving the muddy streets of New Orleans behind. She got her chance in her mid-teens when she moved with her mother to San Francisco. She finished her education at Girls High in San Francisco’s Western Addition.

Wilhelmina prospered in San Francisco. She married Hezikiah Edwards and over their 17-year marriage raised their family first in the Western Addition until the mid 1950s when they purchased a house large enough to comfortably shelter what became a family of 8. Wilhelmina Roxanna Johnson Edwards
Wilhelmina was a longtime federal employee first with Social Security then with the US Postal



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service. In the early 1960s she was named the first Black woman supervisor in San Francisco's post office. She frequently filled in as interim superintendent.

As her children grew and entered the world, Wilhemina resorted to the selfemployment strategizes of her mother who own a grocery store, and her father who owned a brick laying business. She maintained ownership of her house in the Inner Sunset while purchasing apartment units in Berkeley's flatlands, a bungalow in Oakland and a townhouse in the Oakland hills. The townhouse had the view she told her children they would enjoy someday. These investments made it possible for her to retire at 58.

Once retired she had time to join a book club, live for 4 years in Henderson near Las Vegas (she said Seniors rule in Henderson), travel to several countries in Europe with her daughter Arlene and to Boston, Seattle, New Orleans, Palm Springs, Maui, and Catalina Island with her daughter Valerie. She took a crosscountry road trip with her son Davey and went to Mexico with her grandson Gregory. She took delight in the company of her grandchildren and her nieces and nephews- especially the grandchildren of her late sister, whom had been her daily phone companion. In recent years she was slowed by dementia. However, continued to delight in her children's and grandchildren's kisses.

Wilhelmina was predeceased by her son Kye Davis, brothers Arthur, Felton, Wellington Johnson and her sister Alma Watts. She is survived by her children; Ronald and his wife Della, Douglas and his wife Elizabeth, Charles and his wife Yahaira and daughters Valerie and Arlene, grandchildren Gregory, Alex, Bryan, Heidi, Angela, Haileina, Emily, her brother Gerald Johnson and his wife Valerie, and a host of loving nieces and nephews in the Bay Area and New Orleans. Her family dearly loves and misses her. Wilhelmina's children thanks Golden Age Board and Care staff, especially Maricel, Rose, and Sandy for the comfort, safety, and joy they provided our mother over this last year.



Memories only last if you share them

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



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