



Emily Brown

March 25, 1939 - May 20, 2026

Deaconess Emily Sarah Brown, lovingly known as “Big Em,” was born on March 25, 1939, in Beaufort, South Carolina, to the late Abraham Brown Sr. and Marie Brown. Emily was preceded in death by her husband, Ezekiel Cohen Jr.; her parents, Abraham Brown Sr. and Marie Brown; and her brothers, Reverend Abraham Brown Jr., Elijah Brown, and Michael Brown. Emily peacefully departed this life surrounded by love, leaving behind a beautiful legacy of faith, service, family, and love.

Emily was educated in the Beaufort County School District and graduated from Robert Smalls High School. As the oldest of twelve children, she learned responsibility early in life and became an exceptional cook, often preparing meals for her siblings and extended family. The love she poured into her cooking became one of the many ways she cared for others throughout her life.

In June 1958, Emily married, Ezekiel Cohen Jr. They were married until his passing in 2009. In 1968, Emily moved to New York City with her children, where she built a life rooted in faith, family, and community.

Soon after arriving in New York, Emily became a devoted member of Caldwell AME Zion Church under the leadership of the late Reverend Carnes McKinney. She faithfully served the church for many years as a member of the

Gospel Chorus, Chair of the Deaconess Board, Class Leader, and member of the Traveltones. Emily was known for her powerful voice and spirit-filled solos that would “tear the church down,” especially when singing her beloved song, “Plant My Feet on Higher Ground.” She remained a faithful member until relocating to Georgia in 2022.

In 1970, Emily began her professional career with the New York City Board of Education and later continued her work with the Administration for Children’s Services. Over her 34 years of service, she worked as a paraprofessional, case worker, and eventually a supervisor before retiring in 2004. Dedicated, compassionate, and hardworking, Emily made an impact on countless lives through her work and leadership.

Emily was also deeply proud of her education and earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the College of New Rochelle in 1981.

Emily’s home was always filled with love, laughter, and unforgettable meals. Family and friends traveled from near and far to enjoy her famous red rice, a cherished traditional Gullah dish passed down from her ancestors and later shared with her eldest daughter. She was also known for her delicious pineapple upside-down cakes and sweet potato pies.

Emily had a true gift for nurturing life. She had a green thumb and filled her home with beautiful plants that flourished under her care. She loved hosting family gatherings and house parties where music, dancing, and joy filled the room. One of her favorite songs was “The Horse” by Cliff Nobles and she never missed an opportunity to dance and celebrate life with those she loved.

Above all, Emily was a woman of unwavering faith and deep devotion to family. She was stern yet loving, strong yet tender, and took immense pride in raising her children and supporting generations of family members with

wisdom, discipline, and love. She uplifted her church community, poured into her nieces and nephews, and created a foundation of strength that will continue for generations to come.

She leaves to cherish her memory her five children: Marilyn, Carol, John (Diane), Peter, and Wendy; seven grandchildren: Nakeya, John Jr., Jasmine, Akilah, Davonne, Brittany, and Desiree; and six great-grandchildren: Mekhi, Jaiden, Joel, Gavin, Charlie-Marie, and miracle baby Piper-Angel. Her 7 brothers, David (Sally), Leroy (Rebecca), Sam (Lisa), George (Collette), Arthur (Gloria), Caesar, and Luke. Her baby-sister Ruth. Sister-in-law, Vera Brown. Adopted daughter & grandson Eunice & Andre. Her aunt, Flora Brown. One of her best friends for over 70 years Anne Smalls, for over 60 years, Rose McFadden. Along with a host of nieces, nephews, extended family, church family, and dear friends whose lives were forever touched by her love and presence.

Though she will be deeply missed, her faith, wisdom, strength, and love will live on in all who knew and loved her.

Upcoming Events

Visitation

MAY 28. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home - Lawrenceville Location
914 Scenic Highway South
Lawrenceville, GA 30045-6353

Celebration of Life

MAY 28. 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM (ET)

Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home - Lawrenceville Location
914 Scenic Highway South
Lawrenceville, GA 30045-6353

Interment

MAY 29. 10:30 AM (ET)

Georgia National Cemetery
1080 Scott Hudgens Drive
Canton, Ga 30114

Tribute Wall



“ *Lavender & White Mixed Half Casket Cover was purchased for the family of Emily Brown.* ”



1 hour ago