



Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown

April 27, 1953 - December 12, 2025

OBITUARY

LERITA COLEMAN BROWN

APRIL 27, 1953 TO DECEMBER 12, 2025

Friends and Family Gathering will be from 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Memorial Celebration of Life starts at 4:00 PM followed by reception.

Lerita Marie Coleman was born on April 27, 1953, in Pasadena, California.

Lerita was

the second of five children from the union of Leroy and Elizabeth Pearl

Coleman: Leroy

Frank, Clarence Theodore, Andre, and Lisa Lynette. She was raised in

Pasadena and

later, Altadena, California.

Lerita earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California, Santa

Cruz and a PhD in Social Psychology from Harvard University. While

completing her

doctoral studies, she underwent open-heart surgery—an experience that reflected her

extraordinary resilience and determination.

She inspired countless students as a professor at the University of Michigan,

the

University of Tennessee, and the University of Colorado. Early in her career, she was a

Fellow at Stanford University's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.

She was quite proud of balancing her academic and career achievements with her

journey through the numerous medical advances that extended her life.

Just over a decade after her open-heart surgery, while living in Colorado, she received

a heart transplant. She remained deeply grateful to her donor, Jody Goetz, and her

family, honoring them always for the life-saving gift that extended her journey.

On August 21, 1999, Lerita married the love of her life, Columbus and moved to

Georgia. Together they were a beautiful team and shared a rich life filled with cooking,

beekeeping, nature walks, the arts, travel and culinary adventures. They frequently

traveled together in support of each other's professional endeavors and visiting family.

Through her marriage, Lerita gained a beloved son and daughter, whom she embraced

with intention and deep care, offering encouragement and unwavering support.

In 2000 Lerita became Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Agnes Scott College.

During her tenure she also held a range of fulfilling positions including Chair of the

Psychology Department and Director of the Science Center for Women, which included

the Generating Excellence in Math and Sciences Program (GEMS) and the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Med Program. In 2013, she retired as the Ayse I. Carden

Distinguished Professor Emerita of Psychology.

Lerita was blessed and honored to receive a kidney transplant from her Agnes Scott

colleague, Jennifer Lund. This extraordinary gift from her “kidney sister” extended the quality of her life an additional twenty years.

Always a spiritual seeker, Lerita graduated from the Spiritual Director Program at the

Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. Throughout her retirement, she served as a

spiritual director/companion, retreat leader, author and speaker. Guided by Spirit, that

she lovingly named “Sophia”—her practice included seekers from diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds.

Lerita also pursued her gifts as an author, publishing *When the Heart Speaks Listen: Discovering Inner Wisdom* in 2019. Following her own inner wisdom, Lerita

immersed

herself in the life and works of Howard Thurman which inspired her second book: *What*

Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Journey with Howard Thurman in 2023.

This book

has already become a classic, inviting readers across many faith traditions to deepen

both their spiritual lives and their commitment to action. Through her study of Thurman,

Lerita came to recognize her own mysticism.

Lerita found great joy in the rhythms of everyday life. Her hobbies included sewing,

watching college football, reading, and making popcorn. She delighted in calling

herself a culinary chemist and took pleasure in great food, music, dance, communing

with nature, collecting tea pots and sharing tea with friends. She also made the

absolute best brownies.

Early Friday morning on December 12, 2025, Lerita transitioned peacefully at home

accompanied by her husband and daughter.

Lerita leaves behind, her devoted husband, Columbus Hall Brown, Sr., son

Columbus Hall Brown II, daughter Camille Marie Brown, grandson Jordan

Amari

Brown, sister Lisa Lynette Wells, "kidney sister" Jennifer Lund, and a host of godchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friend

Friends and Family Gathering will be from 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Memorial Celebration of Life starts at 4:00 PM followed by reception.

Livestream Link: <https://vimeo.com/event/5851153>

Previous Events

Family & Friends Gathering

APR 11. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Presser Hall on the Campus of Agnes Scott College
141 E. College Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030

Memorial Celebration of Life

APR 11. 4:00 PM (ET)

Presser Hall on the Campus of Agnes Scott College
141 E College Ave
Decatur, GA 30030

The Brown family invites donations, in honor of Lerita Coleman Brown, to the Center for Action and Contemplation at 1705 Five Points Rd SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105 or online at <https://cac.org/support-cac/>

Tribute Wall

“ Memorial for Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown

December 18, 2025

Dear Columbus,

I, like everyone who knew and loved Lerita, was overwhelmed by the thoughts of her leaving us so soon. We can only imagine your grief and ache of sadness. But we can and will hold you up in prayer, as we know Lerita would want us to do.

I remember Lerita in a life which held many chapters and dimensions.

As a student at the University of California Santa Cruz she went far beyond traditional expectations, beginning her academic life as a scholar well before completing her undergraduate years. Working with faculty in the social sciences, Rita began interviewing community residents and authored articles about their attitudes and beliefs.

Faculty were impressed and excited as they encouraged her. She did not want to simply read books. On her own, she listened to lectures and answered questions with depth and detail. She studied intensely, learned and ultimately understood the deeper levels of human behavior. I thought of her as an innovative student who broke barriers with her confidence and abilities.

Rita did not let anything stop her from achieving the goals she set forward: not people, not time, nor illness. She was gifted with a heart that carried her through her battles and accomplishments. She kept her eyes on the prize as she drew us all into her mission, even including the family of the “giver” of the heart. As well she acknowledged the phenomenal act of love in receipt of a kidney transplant from a colleague.

God has taken home an angel and left the remaining goals and missions for us to complete. We will miss her but realize her journey with us has changed. It is now on our individual paths that we must achieve.

To you, Columbus, our message is the same one that has carried us over adversities, hardships and sorrows as an individual, as a family, as friends, as a congregation and as a people over many years,

“Keep your hand in God’s unchanging hands and Keep On, Keepin’ On.”

Dr. J. Herman Blake and Dr. Emily Moore

John Herman Blake - May 02 at 08:29 PM

JD

“ Dear Columbus, Family & Friends,

Lerita was my first mentor at Agnes Scott College, and she was a life saver. Soon after I arrived at the college in January 2005 as the newly appointed Associate Dean of the College (and Lerita's successor), she called and invited me to lunch off campus. After discovering that I shared her love of Japanese food, she arranged for us to meet at Sushi Avenue in downtown Decatur. While savoring miso soup and sushi, we discovered other common interests: reading literature; travel; cooking; exploring nature. We also compared notes about our experiences in Michigan; while she was teaching psychology at UofM in Ann Arbor, I was teaching English at Albion College, some 50 miles to the west.

As our conversation turned toward the college, and the considerable demands of working as an academic dean, she offered some advice rooted in both her psychology background and her experience working closely with faculty in various disciplines. She noted the importance of recognizing and supporting the individual expertise and accomplishments of all faculty, but added that it is worth remembering the role that personality plays in all human interactions. Getting to know individual personalities, and exercising empathy, goes a long way to improving relationships with faculty. As Columbus said at Lerita's memorial service on April 11, listening and patience were fundamental values for Lerita, and during our lunch Lerita was gently schooling me in the value of these two principles. As someone prone to impatience, eager to bring closure to discussions when daily schedules are filled to overflowing, I needed to hear her, and further cultivate these virtues. They helped me lower the temperature during many difficult conversations. And they made me a better dean.

As I got to know Lerita better, and had the pleasure of getting to know Columbus at various on and off-campus gatherings, I came to recognize that Lerita and Columbus were, and are, true soul mates. They inspired one another, lifted one another up, and lifted up those

around them. Human helium! On the Sunday I am writing this, knowing their love of nature (as well as Columbus's love of photography), I spent part of the morning walking the forest trails at Legacy Park in Decatur, listening to the songs of wrens and vireos, taking the occasional photograph, and silently honoring Lerita's legacy. Her example will continue to inspire all of us who came to know and love her.



James Diedrick - April 12 at 05:23 PM

“ Yes, Lerita was a dear sister. I met her my freshman year when I entered Stevenson College in 1972. Our paths crossed because she was at Cowell College and we had the same major. I remember Lerita as driven, focused, a little intimidating and kind. I really didn't really know how kind until she was about to graduate and go to Harvard for graduate school. She dropped by my apartment, dumped a box of graduate catalogs on my living room floor and told me to pick some PhD programs to apply to. That was her quiet way of showing me she had confidence in me. That push was all I needed.

Lerita and my paths crossed after graduate school because we both had PhDs in Psychology, Lerita in Social Psychology and me in Counseling Psychology. We saw each other a few times at APA and followed each other's publications.

Lerita and I reconnected when she moved to Georgia after her marriage to Columbus at the age of 50. I was so happy for her and admired how she waited for love. From then we strengthened our friendship by phone calls, texts and centering our Christmas social calendar around the Ward-Thomas Christmas brunch and the Coleman-Brown Christmas tree trimming celebration. We always tried to remember birthdays and celebrated milestones. We kept in touch on her trips to UA Birmingham for her annual heart transplant clinic. By my calculations she got 30 years out of that heart transplant. That is truly a blessing. I was there when she got her kidney transplant and I knew Jennifer, the donor, from my days working at Georgia State University.

Lerita was a very good friend. We bonded over our love of good food, the arts, good restaurants, and our spiritual life. Lerita introduced me to a better appreciation of tea. I loved the way she said "Connie Michele". It always made me feel seen and heard. She had a way of making you know you had her attention. It was such a gift. As we got older, life got harder. She lost a brother, I had a health scare, her sister's house burned down during the Altadena

fire and Lerita's health declined and she had repeated hospitalizations. BTW she and Columbus visited me when I was recuperating and she brought John and I a blanket she made for each of us with Turtles for me and space stuff for John. That is the type of friend she was.

In the last year, we have not seen each other because Lerita was repeatedly hospitalized and there were long periods of recovery, but we had continued to stay in touch through phone calls, when she was able, and texts, sometimes just a heart or praying hands. I was blessed to get through to her about 3 or 4 weeks ago and she had the strength to talk. I had just signed up on the UCSC ABC Alumni site and I told her about the tribute I wrote on my profile. We also talked about our friendship and our love for each other. We talked until she was tired but we didn't want to hang up. Earlier in late Summer 2025 when Lerita was going back into the hospital, she had told me that her heart lasted longer than expected. Gentle Lerita was preparing me.

I will miss my beautiful friend. I started re-reading "When the Heart Speaks, Listen: Discovering Inner Wisdom". I attended the very poignant celebration when Lerita retired from Agnes Scott. She was no longer able to meet the demands of full time employment. She was not ready to just do nothing. It was then that I learned about her regrets. She had wished to have face to face contact with clients. That has been my profession for 40+ years and we discussed the pros and cons. Lerita then found a path for herself as a Spiritual Director and Companion and was able to work individually with directees. This Pursuit led her to Howard Thurman and to her eventually writing "What Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman". She was a much sought after speaker on all things Howard Thurman. It gave her so much joy.

I will continue to support my brother Columbus.

Connie M Ward, PhD

CB

“ Dr. Brown was my professor 20 years ago when I was considering grad school in psychology. She knew my interests and told me about a program she thought would be perfect for me at the University of Michigan. Despite my hesitation, I applied because I knew she believed in me. When my advisor wasn't able to write a letter of recommendation, she stepped in. I graduated from the University of Michigan with a PhD and am now a professor myself. I will always carry her kindness and wisdom with me. I'm so thankful she was part of my life! I wouldn't be who I am without her.

Christy Byrd

Christy Byrd - April 11 at 04:39 PM

“ I have always considered Lerita to be one of my heroes. As a lowly undergraduate student at the University of Michigan in Psychology, I didn't know what I was going to do with myself. After taking a class with her I knew this was a person I wanted to follow however I could manage it. I learned that she was taking undergraduate research students and I immediately begged to join.

I spent two years working in her lab unpaid, delighted to do the work and totally unaware that I was supposed to expect a salary. Lerita was relatively new at U of M and didn't have funding, though she cobbled together something as a small stipend toward the end of my two years. I scored and analyzed her data on nonverbal behaviors in adults and designed my own study in nonverbal communication in children. It started me on a lifetime of research in children and nonverbal behaviors that I have continued ever since, and I am honored to count Lerita as my ongoing visionary and champion.

We both had sessions at a conference in England my senior year so Lerita was gracious enough to travel with me and another colleague for an extra two weeks beyond the conference. That was when she added the gift of friendship to her mentorship with me. I learned to appreciate her sense of style, love of good food, seeking for truth and beauty, and enthusiasm for the new and unexpected.

I credit Lerita for my success in gaining a masters/PhD program position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in speech-language pathology given her enthusiastic letter of recommendation and guidance. I was so grateful to keep up with her over the years of my study and beyond. My husband and I were honored to be in attendance at her wedding to Columbus, and a representative of her already lengthy legacy in teaching.

I have copies of her books and relish her wisdom in her writing as well as Christmas letters we have kept up since then. I have tried to emulate her teaching and research wisdom as well as life lessons in my work as professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I can't think of a course I've developed or a student I've mentored or a plan that I've made where I haven't stepped back to think what Lerita would have done. I value her spirit, communication, resilience,

sense of joy, and gift for balancing priorities of what is important in life. She had a deep and abiding commitment to family - both born and found family - and they will be among the many people that will carry her legacy forward. My heart goes out to Columbus and the rest of her family and friends. There will always be a Lerita-shaped hole in our hearts that we will strive to fill with the joy and love that she brought to our worlds.

Cynthia Nipper

Cynthia Nipper - April 11 at 02:26 PM

“Dear Columbus, Family, and Friends,
Lerita and I met at the University of Colorado Boulder through a women’s faculty group organized by Elizabeth Gee. Along with Brenda, Mimi, Emily, Marianne, Glenn, Ceal and other remarkable colleagues, we gathered each month for lunch, sharing conversations about the university and our lives. From the beginning, I was drawn to Lerita’s intellect, her determined spirit, and her distinctive, knowing laugh.

During one of those fall lunches, Lerita shared that she would need a heart transplant. We listened as she described telling her graduate students about the impending surgery. One student, startled, blurted out, “But how am I going to graduate?” Lerita laughed gently and replied, “Oh, you will graduate—and I will walk with you.”

The call came early in the new year. As I remember, Marianne drove Lerita to the hospital in Denver after midnight. Seeing her then, I sensed that this would be a profound journey—one she would meet with characteristic courage.

Graduation arrived that June under a spectacular Colorado blue sky. Faculty gathered on the lawn before Norlin Library, processing toward the stadium. As we turned the corner, there was Lerita, walking in her Harvard regalia—a promise kept.

Later, Lerita met Columbus, and we celebrated their wedding. They exchanged vows at the altar, joined by the donor’s parents, with a single candle glowing brightly—a beautiful symbol of life, gratitude, and connection.

Lerita and Columbus eventually moved to Atlanta, where she served in on the faculty and in academic administration at Agnes Scott College. Though we saw each other less often than we wished, we shared the joy of marking a remarkable milestone: the twentieth anniversary of her life-saving transplant.

Thank you, Lerita, for your presence in my life. You always seemed to know the right thing to do and the right way to be. Godspeed on this next journey. As e. e. cummings wrote, "I carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)."

*With love and gratitude,
Kristina*

Kristina M Johnson - April 11 at 12:01 PM

KH

“ *It was a pleasure serving as Lerita’s Personal Trainer. I miss her kind energy and presence.*

Kristen Hester - April 11 at 08:43 AM

DA

“ *Dr A. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown.*

Dr A. - April 09 at 04:34 PM

“*“ROLE MODEL” Those are the words that first come to mind when I think of Lerita Coleman Brown. I met her early in her professional career when she signed on as a visiting fellow with Susan Harter, who was one of my faculty colleagues in the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver. Lerita had recently earned a Ph.D. from Harvard. She was ambitious. She had her sights set on a highly successful career as a research psychologist, similar to the path that Susan Harter, a world renowned researcher, had forged. But even then, in the many conversations I had with her, it was clear to me that she was searching for something deeper than public success and fame. And when it became clear that a serious medical condition would require her to make a decision about whether to undergo a very risky heart transplantation procedure, she decided on “yes,” and she entered into the surgery and recovery period in a deeply “contemplative” way, beginning a decades long spiritual connection with her heart’s donor and a supportive online community of colleagues and friends who she welcomed as intimate supporters of her beginning recovery process. Later in life she would frequently quote the mystic Howard Thurman who, when asked frequently how a person can make significant contributions to the world would always reply, “Do what makes you come alive!” So it is not surprising that I now think of Lerita as a role model for how one follows Thurman’s advice. An early, wise decision she made was choosing Columbus Brown to be her lifelong partner. I had the honor of singing at their wedding, and I will never forget the sparkle in Lerita’s eye during the ceremony! We all now know that Lerita made a number of other decisions in her life that all lined up beautifully with Thurman’s teachings, including becoming a treasured spiritual director and even publishing a beautifully written, accessible book that helped anyone curious about Thurman’s teachings to understand why this spiritual giant served as a spiritual mentor to many of the leaders of the Black-led freedom movement of the 1950s and 60s, including John Lewis and Martin Luther King, Jr. Lerita did NOT become a famous academic psychology researcher. She chose something far more meaningful: She lived her life fully “alive,” offering so many wonderful gifts to the world,*

and also living far longer than the survivor of TWO organ transplant surgeries could be expected to live. The loss is too soon for us, but we know she gave the world everything she had to offer! She was a true ROLE MODEL for how to live a meaningful life. THANK YOU, LERITA!

Arthur Jones

Dr Arthur C Jones - April 09 at 04:32 PM

SR

“ *My condolences to the family. Lerita was my new faculty mentor when I first started working at Agnes Scott College. She was the kindest and wisest mentor anyone could imagine. I deeply cherish our conversations, and walks around the campus where she would share her insights into all sorts of topics. Whatever the topic was, she would always approach it in a calm and compassionate way. I miss her as a colleague and mentor but I am so grateful I got to know her. May she rest in peace.*

Srebrenka Robic - April 09 at 02:27 PM

LF

“ *Rita, as she was affectionately referred to during our college days will always be in my heart. I will always remember her positive attitude and her ability to bring a smile to brighten a dark situation. I love you, I miss you and thank God for putting you in my life.*

Linda Ferguson - April 09 at 10:53 AM

JE

“ *Jacqueline E. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown.*

Jacqueline E. - March 07 at 09:24 AM

RL

“ A TRIBUTE TO LERITA

*An ember glows from afar. Who or what is it?
Upon approach, a spark of light, shimmering in seeming diminutive form.*

First here as a spouse of a friend.

There as a professor to kin.

Yet so many more sightings: at home, dinner, book signings, lectures.

The ember grows into a light of enlightenment.

She became fully herself.

We became more because we saw & heard her.

Hello good friend.

Goodbye teacher & mentor.

Hello sister in our next meeting.

Amen

Ruth Lawhorn - 3/3/2026

Ruth Lawhorn - March 03 at 10:24 PM

DR

“ David R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown.

David R. - January 13 at 07:59 PM

ST

“ ST lit a candle in memory of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown



ST - January 11 at 03:58 PM

RY

“*Courageous, honest, brilliant, down-to-earth, thoughtful, and really funny, Lerita engaged life with extraordinary verve, openness, and generosity of spirit. A truly remarkable and awe-inspiring individual whom I’ll miss.*

Richard Yarborough - January 05 at 05:23 PM

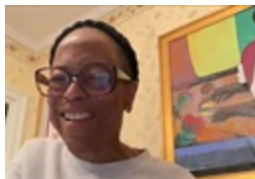
JP

“*Dr. Coleman Brown was an indispensable figure in the creation of Black Lives & Contemplation.*

I'll share a brief, personal note: I was really nervous when I first learned Dr. Coleman Brown wanted to attend the Black Lives & Contemplation class this past fall; after all, she should have been the one teaching it! Yet, her engagement with the class when everyone shared why they were here perfectly captured her spirit of lifelong curiosity. She insisted that she was always a learner, and this was no different. This was just a little over month ago:

“I am a person who discovered Howard Thurman late in life, and was very disturbed by the fact that I didn't know anything about him, and continued to meet people who didn't know anything about him. And just loved his contemplative approach to life, and being contemplative. And I am always curious and I'm just delighted that there's a whole new generation, and a generation after that, that are interested in contemplation, and particularly Black folks. I'm really excited, but I'm also always curious to learn more things about what people are doing. And so, when I heard about the class, I said, oh, yes, I absolutely want to participate in this, because I'm gonna learn something. So, I am so grateful for you and the work that you all are doing, and, just hope to learn and contribute as much as I can.”

Her presence in the class was a profound gift.



Josue Perea - January 05 at 02:01 PM

TL

“ Knowing Lerita was a great gift and privilege to people who knew her, myself included. I recall first having a meaningful conversation with her during a retreat for sophomore Agnes Scott students at Jekyll Island years ago. Her presence, her ability to listen, her compassion, and sense of humor were all qualities that I have hoped to emulate in small ways ever since. Lerita demonstrated an abiding joy in being alive and in nurturing connections with others that make life meaningful. Her spirit lives on.

Tracey Laird - December 31, 2025 at 02:27 PM

CH

“ The first time I heard Dr Coleman Brown speaking about Howard Thurman, her voice and words resonated so deeply with me I felt compelled to ask her if she would consider being my Spiritual Director. She smiled in the way she does and said, “I’ll ask Sophia.” Herein lay my first moment of spiritual direction! (Spoiler alert: Sophia thank goodness said yes)
The loss, bewilderment, and shock knowing she has returned to Spirit has me looking everywhere for her. Listen and trust in her deep wisdom now just off stage. I was blessed and remain profoundly grateful for Lerita. My love and undying affection will remain, Cathy Harmon-Christian

Cathy Harmon-Christian - December 24, 2025 at 02:46 PM

JJ

“ Ready Rita was ready for anything. I met her at a Harvard house party in November 1977. I helped her proofread her PhD thesis in Harvard’s Psychology Dept. We have been besties since and always will be. She was one of the most spiritual people I met during my lifetime. She will be missed but never forgotten. I will sense her spirit when I least expect it, in days to come. ❤️ Merry Christmas 🎄 in Heaven Ready Rita! Just James

James Henderson, Jr. - December 24, 2025 at 12:56 PM

RR

“ I was introduced to Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown and her lovely husband in recent years by a dear family friend. What a blessing it was to meet and get to know them! Talking with them was a joy as I witnessed their inspiring love for one another, learned of their travels and adventures. Dr. Coleman Brown brought a joyful and curious approach to life that I originally attributed to her experiences as a heart surgery patient and heart transplant recipient. I now believe her inspiring approach to life was inherently her. I am thankful for the lasting gifts she shared through her books. She will be well-remembered and dearly missed by all who loved her.

Regina Roberts - December 24, 2025 at 06:29 AM

DF

“ Doug F. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown.

Doug F. - December 23, 2025 at 04:12 PM

DF

“ I knew Lerita through my association with Columbus as a supervisor and colleague of mine in the US Fish and Wildlife Service and a lasting friend to this day, but I really gained a deeper appreciation for Lerita's life, challenges and achievements through reading her two books “, *When the Heart Speaks Listen . . .* “ and “*What Makes You Come Alive . . .*”. She was an amazing person and an inspiration to all of us in the challenges we face our lives. My sincere condolences go out to Columbus and their entire family. I'm confident the angels surrounded Lerita and the saints welcomed her as she entered the eternal light and peace or our Creator and Lord.

Doug Frugé - December 23, 2025 at 04:06 PM

JB

“ I met Lerita through her book on Howard Thurman. So taken with the book was I that I encouraged a group I facilitate to use it for a year of reflection. Then I encouraged another group to consider bringing Lerita to Guelph, Ontario, Canada, at least virtually and we had a short Zoom call with her just weeks before she died. The members of the group were electrified by her presence, one saying, "We have to get her!" Not to be but Lerita has graced many of us. Thank you Lerita. And thank you, family and friends of Lerita for being willing to share her light far beyond her physical presence. I will long remember her words on the Zoom call, "I seek to live by the Spirit." John Buttars, Guelph, ON, Canada

John Buttars - December 23, 2025 at 12:26 PM

VH

“ Victoria H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown.

Victoria H. - December 21, 2025 at 07:54 AM

JS

“ I was inspired by Dr. Coleman Brown's book, "What Makes You Come Alive? A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman." She told her story alongside of his story. When I sought a spiritual director, I was pleased that she was available and said "yes!" We only had a sessions. On the day of our 3rd session, I learned that she had been admitted into.hospice care. Despite the brevity of our relationship, she imparted great wisdom with spiritual clarity and depth. She was a great light!

Jeffery L Tribble Sr - December 20, 2025 at 12:35 PM

MG

*“ I have wonderful memories of this elegant, courageous woman. I vividly recall standing beside her bed in the hospital after her transplant surgery in Denver and thinking: "She has a new heart! Absolutely amazing." As we traveled to/from Boulder and Denver to post-surgery appointments, she was as optimistic and positive as could possibly be. I will retain my memories for as long as my brain works. All who knew her should be very proud of a life well lived.
Michael Grant, Boulder, Co.*

Michael Clarence Grant - December 20, 2025 at 12:21 PM

CN

I would get updates from my mom about Larita being on the transplant list, and then as you said, having a new heart! She was always upbeat and caring, and giving. She took good care of her Boulder mothers.

Charlie Nilon - February 26 at 05:26 PM



“ We have such deep gratitude for beautiful Lerita - the wisdom and kindness that flowed through her... Our deepest condolences to Lerita's family and loved ones! Big hug and many prayers during this time of grief, Bo Karen Lee

Bo Lee - December 20, 2025 at 09:30 AM



(I will never forget Lerita's teaching at Sewanee, on Thurman... my first deep dive into the wisdom of Thurman, feels like years and years ago now... So thankful for you, dear Lerita.....)

Bo Lee - December 20, 2025 at 09:29 AM

CR

“ My condolences to the family. Lerita was always warm and welcoming to me on many occasions. She will be missed.

Carolyn Rhodes - December 19, 2025 at 01:53 PM

CR

“ Carolyn R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Marie Coleman Brown.

Carolyn R. - December 19, 2025 at 01:44 PM

RK

“ Ms. Lerita embodied love, beauty, grace, sincerity. She has impacted my life in ways I cannot verbalize- it has been an honor to know her and call her my friend.

She invited my family (husband and 3 children) over to visit her and Mr Columbus on day. To the delight of my kids, she presented each of them with the most thoughtful gifts- complete with coloring books and crayons- that was the last time I saw her.

Ms Lerita made the most beautiful blankets for each of my children when they were born. She was so thoughtful and intentional and will be greatly missed, but will be held close to my heart always 🌹

Rosey Kuriakose - December 19, 2025 at 10:43 AM

LR

Columbus, our deepest condolences to you and your family. May God have mercy on her soul and give her a place in paradise. Your Mays Rams, Class 66 friends.
Lynda Blair Raheem

Lynda Blair Raheem - December 20, 2025 at 05:36 PM

BB

“ Barbara Blatchley planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Marie Coleman Brown.

Barbara Blatchley - December 18, 2025 at 09:21 PM



“ Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White was purchased for the family of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown.



December 18, 2025 at 09:21 PM



“ You were, and remain, an inspiration to me. I am a writer because of you and your words of encouragement. I don't know how else to put it – you looked straight ahead, clear-eyed and confident, no matter what, I hope to be able to live the rest of my life as you did. Peace.

Barbara Blatchley - December 18, 2025 at 09:15 PM



“ Offering my sincerest condolences to Dr. Brown's family and those of her indefinite circle of influence. She is strength, beauty, and grace. During my undergraduate years, Dr. Brown was my most encouraging mentor and I am forever grateful for her wisdom, calm guidance, and warmth she left as core memories for me from those years. Sending love and prayers to her family.

Thank you, Dr. Brown, for allowing me into your world and thank you for your kindness and the legacy which will continue to bring joy in this world.

Kara Williams - December 18, 2025 at 08:04 PM

JC

“ My most heartfelt condolences to Columbus and Lerita’s family. No words can adequately capture the impact that Lerita made on this world. Her calming demeanor, wisdom and warmth touched all who had the good fortune to know her. I remember so many wonderful conversations with Lerita and observing her in support to students and faculty & staff members at Agnes Scott. Her legacy is immense and she will be missed more than anyone can know.

Jennifer Cannady - December 18, 2025 at 06:14 PM



“ Carl, may God bless and keep you always. Condolences from our family during moments like these.

Warmest regards,
Brenda and Karen

Karen Redding - December 18, 2025 at 03:25 PM

VB

“ I have know Lerita for several years. She was kind, thoughtful, intelligent and always made you think you were special. She gave you her full attention. I was honored to cook for her every so often. I miss you.

valeri browne - December 18, 2025 at 02:06 PM

JR

“ To Columbus Brown and the family of Lerita Coleman Brown my most heartfelt condolences goes out to you. My prayers are that you will be comforted by the love and grace of the Holy Spirit, surrounded with love and God's peace. Lerita will be greatly missed. Heaven has surely gained an angel Her spirit will live forever. Sending hugs and prayers J. Sharon Roberts

Jeannetta Roberts - December 18, 2025 at 12:58 PM

CL

“ Connie L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Marie Coleman Brown.

Connie L. - December 18, 2025 at 12:43 PM

CB

“ Corey B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Marie Coleman Brown.

Corey B. - December 18, 2025 at 12:06 PM

JR

“ Jeannetta Roberts lit a candle in memory of Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown



Jeannetta Roberts - December 18, 2025 at 12:03 PM

SJ

“ Sandra J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Lerita Marie Coleman Brown.

Sandra J. - December 18, 2025 at 11:51 AM