



# From the Desk of *Elaine Overton*

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*In Loving Memory. . .  
Bernice Stewart*



*March 25, 1927 -October 12, 2001*

May 4, 2007

Dear Readers,

When my mother passed away in October of 2001, I felt as if my world had caved in on itself. I didn't grieve openly, exactly. There was no doubt in my mind regarding her eternal resting place. There was no way a woman could live the life she lived, endured what she had, all the while remaining a true and faithful servant, and not be rewarded with a mansion in heaven . . . it was that simple. No, my "grieving" if you will, was reserved completely for myself. In the weeks following her funeral, I wallowed in the self pity of suddenly finding myself a motherless child. After all, superheroes (and that is what she was to me) are suppose to live forever, right?

One day in November, I was driving home from work, and a song came on the radio. It was Celine Dion's "Because You Loved Me." Many of you have probably heard it, but in case you haven't, here is a sample of the lyrics -just to give you a feeling of how powerful this song is. . .

*You were my strength when I was weak,  
You were my voice when I couldn't speak,  
You were my eyes when I couldn't see, you saw the best there was in me,  
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach, you gave me faith 'coz you believed,  
I'm everything I am, because you loved me.*

Now . . . you take four verses of beautifully written lyrics, combine them with Celine Dion's amazing voice, needless to say, by the time I pulled up in front of my home I was one weeping mess. But that wasn't enough, no, I had to go out and buy the CD, so I could moan and groan at my leisure.

After listening to the song for the twentieth or so time, something occurred to me (I understand now that *something* was the voice of God.) It occurred to me that the lyrics were far more significant than even I realized.

I truly am everything I am . . . because she loved me. The woman I am today is a direct result of everything she instilled in me. My strength, my resilience, my sometimes overly active imagination, my love for life, and trust in God—it was all Mama.

I decided it was time to set my self-serving sorrow aside, and live the life she "design" me to live. It was time for me to trust in the God she taught me would never forsake me. It was time for me to be the strong, black woman that is breed into my bones. It was time for me to live up to my legacy.

Now, I'm in my sixth year of living without her, and remembering her now makes me smile instead of cry. I often draw on things she had told me over my life. Those precious nuggets of wisdom she dispensed freely, even when she thought they were falling on deaf ears. I reference her example daily in the raising of my own son, and hope I am instilling in him all the mental and emotional fortification he will need to walk in this world in brown skin.

On the thirteenth of this month, I will attend morning service at my church, and as I've taken the habit of doing, I'll count the number of red roses, and the number of white ones. I will secretly envy the red roses, and empathize with the white roses, for I know they understand what I'm feeling.

This **Mother's Day**, whether you have her with you or not, . . . whether the loving maternal figure in your life is actually your mother or not, . . . whether or not, she was a less than perfect mother, . . . cherish her, honor her, and thank the wisdom of the Supreme Being that thought enough of us to create an earthly symbol of His love.

Take care,  
Elaine