

The Members of the
First Local Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Wichita, Kansas

By

Richard LeRoy Vore

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Preface

This document presents biographical information about the members of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita. It incorporates information about the development of the Bahá'í Faith in Wichita only as it relates to the individuals. A more complete history of the Bahá'í Faith in Wichita is available in other documents.

The members of the first Spiritual Assembly of Wichita were just common people from various backgrounds. Some were Bahá'ís all of their lives. Others became Bahá'ís in the years leading up to the formation of the first Assembly and remained Bahá'ís the rest of their lives. Some went on to join other religions or otherwise continue their lives. The biographies are presented in alphabetical order of their last names, and couples are covered in a single part.

The picture¹ below of the members of the first Spiritual Assembly is from the Bahá'í Archives. Until recently, very little was known about the individual members of the Assembly beyond their names. I want to thank Elizabeth Owens of Wichita, Kansas, Donald Streets of Scottsdale, Arizona, and Duane Herrmann of Topeka, Kansas for their assistance.



Back, from left: Leland Campbell, Clara Niemoller, Ronald Preuss, Marjorie Turner, Bill Smith
Front, from left: Pauline Campbell, Mary Peters, Nadine McKay, Pauline Rushing

¹ Wichita Bahá'í Archives, "Picture of the First Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita."

Leland Virgil Campbell and Pauline Helen Brown Campbell

Leland Virgil Campbell was born in Auburn, Kansas on 18 April 1921 to Alonzo Ferris “Lon” Campbell (born in 1871 in Missouri, died on 6 August 1952) and Nora W. Whitsel Campbell (born 11 May 1844, died 5 April 1963) in Auburn, Kansas, southwest of Topeka.² Leland was the youngest of six children. Leland’s half siblings were Dwight Davis (1905-1973) and Gladys Davis (1906-1966).³ Leland’s siblings were Lucy Marie Campbell (1909-1998), Doris Campbell (1912-1989), and Vera Campbell (1919-2009).⁴ Leland lived in Auburn through high school. Leland was living with his parents in Warrensburg, Missouri (southeast of Kansas City) in 1940.⁵



Leland Virgil Campbell from childhood to old age

Pauline was born 4 December 1921 in Topeka, Kansas to Paul Harold Brown (born 8 May 1896 in Topeka Kansas; died 3 April 1979 in Topeka, Kansas) and May Belle Redmond Brown (born 1 May 1895 in Trego County, Kansas; died 10 February 1991 in Topeka, Kansas).⁶ Pauline’s siblings were Kenneth Welton Brown (1923-1977), Maella Marie Brown (1926-2016), Eugene Douglas Brown (1927-2001), and Donald Brown (1932-1956).⁷ Pauline was born as a Christian, but her parents joined the Bahá’í Faith and were two of the most revered Bahá’ís in Kansas.

² [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007,” Ancestry Operations, Inc., 2015.

³ [Ancestry.com](#), “1910 United States Federal Census,” [Ancestry.com](#), 2006.

⁴ [Ancestry.com](#), “1920 United States Federal Census,” [Ancestry.com](#), 2010.

⁵ [Ancestry.com](#), “1940 United States Federal Census,” [Ancestry.com](#), 2012.

⁶ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current,” Ancestry Operations, Inc., 2012.

⁷ [Ancestry.com](#), “1940 United States Federal Census,” [Ancestry.com](#), 2012.



Leland and Pauline Campbell

Leland and Pauline were married 21 August 1941 in Topeka, Kansas.⁸ They had 9 children: Gwendalyn “Gwen” Campbell (1943-?), Roy Campbell - (1945-?), Carolyn K. Campbell (1946-?), Susan Campbell (1948-?), Dona M. Campbell (1952-?), Terri Ann Campbell (1955-?), Lon R. Campbell (1957-?), Debora G. Campbell (1958-?), and Tanya L. Campbell (1961-?).⁹

Leland was working for the Boeing Airplane Company and living with his wife Pauline in Wichita, Kansas when he registered for the draft on 16 February 1942.¹⁰ Leland served for two or three years in the Air Force during World War II and received injuries from artillery shell fragments in about March of 1945.¹¹

Leland rejoined the Air Force during the Korean War.¹² Pauline is listed as arriving by air from Bermuda in Chicopee, Massachusetts on 23 August 1951 as a military dependent with children Carolyn, Gwen, Roy, and Susan.¹³

Both Leland and Pauline were members of the Bahá’í Faith in Wichita living at 2003 East Random Road in 1955 when the first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed.¹⁴ Leland was working as a toolmaker at that time. One of the first decisions of the new Assembly was to start children’s classes which would have included their children.¹⁵

⁸ jahaynes2598 (username), “Haynes Family Tree,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc.

⁹ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S. Obituary Collection, 1930-2017,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2006.

¹⁰ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S. WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2011.

¹¹ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S. WWII Hospital Admission Card Files, 1942-1954,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2019.

¹² [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S. Veterans’ Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2006.

¹³ [Ancestry.com](#), “Massachusetts, Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1963,” [Ancestry.com](#) operations, 2006.

¹⁴ [Ancestry.com](#) “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2011.

¹⁵ Elizabeth M. Owens, “The Wichita Bahá’í Community: In Quest of the Dream,” Paper for master’s program in Department of History at Wichita State University, about 1985.

Leland moved back to Topeka, Kansas by 1957 where he worked as a draftsman and later a salesman. Pauline had joined him by 1958. I believe they had both resigned from the Bahá'í Faith by this time.¹⁶

In 1961, they were back in Wichita living at 324 North Estelle and later at 313 N Ash in 1962, and Leland was working as a salesman. In 1963 he was again working as a toolmaker.¹⁷

At some point they moved back to Topeka, Kansas where they were living in 1993.¹⁸ Leland died on 7 July 1997 in Topeka, Kansas. Leland is buried in Auburn Cemetery, Auburn, Kansas.¹⁹



Headstone for Leland V. Campbell

Pauline died in May 2015 in Topeka, Kansas, while her residence was in Lawrence, Kansas. She was buried 7 June 2015 in Auburn Cemetery, Auburn Kansas.²⁰

¹⁶ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2011.

¹⁷ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁸ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2010.

¹⁹ National Cemetery Administrations, "U.S. Veterans' Gravesites, ca.1775-2006," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2006.

²⁰ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

Nadine Georgia Sharon McKay

Nadine Georgia Sharon was born on 24 September 1918 in Carthage, Missouri to Harry Raymond Sharon (born 2 April 1895 in Missouri, died 26 December 1958 in Kansas) and Neva Bessie Moore Sharon (born 15 March 1898, died 7 April 1983).²¹ Nadine was the oldest of 4 children. Nadine's siblings were William Eugene "Billy" Sharon (1921-2010), Norma Hope Sharon (1923-2017), and Howard Wayne Sharon (1925-2002).²²

Growing up, Nadine lived with her family in Carthage, Sarcoxie, Joplin, and Aurora, Missouri. Nadine attended high school in Carthage, Missouri.²³



Nadine Sharon in 1936

By 1940, Nadine was living with her family at 2040 19th Street North in Wichita, Kansas and working as a packer.²⁴ By 1946, Nadine was married to Roy William McKay (Born 13 September 1918, died 16 June 2003), who was serving in the military. They lived at 436 North Exposition Street at least from 1946 until 1949. In 1952 to 1954 they were living at 620 West 31st Street South.²⁵

Nadine hosted a number of firesides and devotional programs at her home. Margaret Ruhe from the Bahá'í Area Teaching Committee came to Wichita to enroll Nadine McKay, Marjorie Turner, and Bill Smith in 1955. Nadine served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita in 1955-1956.

²¹ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2015.

²² [Ancestry.com](#), "1940 United States Federal Census," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

²³ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. School Yearbooks, 1900-1999," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2010.

²⁴ [Ancestry.com](#), "1940 United States Federal Census," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

²⁵ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," [Ancestry.com](#), 2011.

Ancestry records have Nadine married to Roy William McKay on 21 August 1956 in San Diego, California,²⁶ and 26 April 1958 in Clark County, Nevada.²⁷ Since Nadine was living with Roy since at least 1946, these records seem confusing.

At some point, Nadine was divorced from Roy William McKay, and married Donald Alonzo Hoffman (1908-1972) on 14 November 1969.²⁸

Nadine died 18 July 1989 in Hilo, Hawaii.²⁹ Her burial location is unknown, but there is a gravestone for David Alonzo and Nadine Sharon Hoffman in Evergreen Cemetery, Lansing, Michigan.³⁰ The final date for Nadine Sharon Hoffman was not filled in.



Hoffman Gravestone in Lansing, MI

²⁶ [Ancestry.com](#), "California, Marriage Index, 1949-1959," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2013.

²⁷ [Ancestry.com](#), "Nevada, Marriage Index, 1956-2005," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2007.

²⁸ [Ancestry.com](#), "California, Marriage Index, 1960-1985," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2007.

²⁹ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2015.

³⁰ Find A Grave, "Memorial 107923604," [www.FindAGrave.com](#).

Clara Wilhelmina Niemoller

Clara Wilhelmina Niemoller was born on 13 January 1916 in Wakefield, Kansas to August Frederick Niemoller (born 28 June 1868 in Huntingburg, Indiana, died 10 December 1944 in Clay County, Kansas) and Lucy Hannah Chapman Niemoller (born 31 December 1871 in Wakefield, Kansas, died 1 April 1958 in Sedgwick County, Kansas).³¹ She had two brothers Henry Chapman Niemoller (1913-1916) and Franklin Augustus Niemoller (1917-1933) who both died young.³²

Clara lived her early years in Wakefield, Kansas.³³ She was living in Manhattan, Kansas in 1935 while working on her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration at Kansas State University which she received in 1938.^{34 35} After graduation, she moved to Alton, Kansas where she taught business subjects at Alton High School for 3 years before moving to Wichita, Kansas.^{36 37} In Wichita, Clara lived at 340 North Market and worked for Cessna Aircraft Company.

In 1947, Clara moved to Los Angeles, California where she worked with the Director of Health and Physical Education of Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools. In 1951, Clara earned her Master of Social Work degree from the University of California.³⁸

After receiving her master's degree, Clara returned to Wichita, Kansas where she worked for the Family Consultation Service and the Veteran's Administration Mental Hygiene Clinic and Hospital.³⁹

Clara enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith in about 1954 and served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita in 1955 to 1956.⁴⁰ She was living at 2209 S Seneca Avenue around this time.⁴¹ There were numerous firesides at her home, which saw the enrollment of several Bahá'ís.

Clara resigned from the Bahá'í Faith in about 1961 and moved to Boulder, Colorado in 1963 after her retirement from social casework. In Boulder, she earned a Master degree in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado in 1969.⁴²

³¹ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current" [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

³² [Ibid.](#)

³³ [Ancestry.com](#), "1930 United States Federal Census," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2002.

³⁴ [Ancestry.com](#), "1940 United States Federal Census," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

³⁵ Arnold Grove, "Clara's Obituary," shared on [Ancestry.com](#), 2015.

³⁶ [Ancestry.com](#), "1940 United States Federal Census," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

³⁷ Arnold Grove, [Ibid.](#)

³⁸ [Ibid.](#)

³⁹ [Ibid.](#)

⁴⁰ Elizabeth M. Owens, [Ibid.](#)

⁴¹ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2011.

⁴² Elizabeth M. Owens, [Ibid.](#)

In Boulder, Clara was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Boulder, the Colorado Mountain Club, the Eskimo Ski Club, the Over-the-hill Gang of Copper Mountain, the Boulder Artist Guild, Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority of Kansas State University, and the Zeta Tau Alumni of Boulder.⁴³



Clara Neimoller

Clara never married but had many close relationships she considered as her adopted family. She loved hiking, biking, skiing, and traveling with the Colorado Mountain Club.⁴⁴

Clara spent her last days at the TRU Community Hospice in Lafayette, Colorado where she passed away peacefully on 9 Nov, 1913. She had her ashes scattered in the Colorado mountains, but there is also a gravestone at Highland Cemetery in Wakefield, Kansas where her parents and brothers are buried.⁴⁵



⁴³ Arnold Grove, *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), "U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current" [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) Operations Inc, 2012.

Mary Elizabeth Peters

Mary Elizabeth Peters was born to Eugene Mark Peters (born 16 July 1900 in Texarkana, Arkansas, died 11 July 1973 in Flint, Michigan) and Jessie Mae Watts Peters (born 27 November 1913, died 26 November 1987) on 26 May 1931 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.⁴⁶ She was the oldest of 5 children. Mary's siblings were Paul A. Peters (1933-1999), Vivian Delores Peters (1935-1996), Gloria Peters (1938-?), Markada M. Peters (1939-?).⁴⁷

The family moved to Jackson County, Mississippi and Ann Arbor, Michigan before settling in Flint, Michigan about 1935.⁴⁸ Mary attended Northern High School in Flint, Michigan, probably graduating in 1949.⁴⁹ Mary went on to college and became a nurse about 1953. The family was active in the Bahá'í Faith in Flint.



Mary Peters

Mary, along with Pauline Rushing, moved to Wichita in about 1954, at the encouragement of Ronald Preuss whom they met at Louhelen Bahá'í School, to help form a Bahá'í Assembly in Wichita. Mary and Pauline served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita in 1955. Mary moved back to Flint, Michigan in 1956, as the Assembly was failing.⁵⁰

Mary was married about 1957 in Flint, Michigan and probably had at least one child from the marriage. She may have been married a second time, but those records are not readily available because most of the individuals are probably still living. Mary died in Flint, Michigan in June of 1966.⁵¹

⁴⁶ DesignTeamOfAtlanta (username), "Davis Family Tree," shared on Ancestry.com.

⁴⁷ Ancestry.com, "1940 United States Federal Census," Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2012.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ancestry.com, "U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2013," Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth M. Owens, *ibid.*

⁵¹ DesignTeamOfAtlanta, *ibid.*

Ronald Leslie Preuss and Marjorie Corrine Gehrke Turner Preuss

Ronald Leslie Preuss was born 28 November 1924 in Kechi, Kansas to Franz Heinrich (Henry) Preuss (born 7 November 1889 in Ellsworth, Kansas, died 12 August 1963 in Wichita, Kansas) and Louise R “Lizzie” Stussy Preuss (born 30 January 1895, died 24 January 1995).⁵² Ronald was the second of five children. Ronald’s sisters were Eva Irene Preuss (1922-1993), Ruth May Preuss (1929-1929),⁵³ Adaline L Preuss (1930-?), and Leah Preuss (1933-?).⁵⁴

The Preuss family moved from Kechi to Wichita between 1930 and 1935 and lived at 208 North Dodge.⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ Ronald graduated from Wichita North High School in 1942.⁵⁷ He enlisted in the Army on 9 July 1943 and served until 17 February 1946.⁵⁸



Ronald Preuss

After the war, Ronald attended Friends University where he was a sophomore in 1947.⁵⁹ Looking for a new spiritual basis, Ronald took a semester off from school to study Christian Science, Swedenborg, Rosicrucian, and other philosophies. He found some Bahá’í books in the Wichita Public Library. He joined the Bahá’í Faith in February of 1947 and immediately went to the Bahá’í National Center in Wilmette, Illinois to meet other Bahá’í s. He met Dr. Edris Rice-Wray there, who put him in touch with the Regional Teaching Committee of

⁵² [Ancestry.com](#), U.S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007, [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2015.

⁵³ [Ancestry.com](#), U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current, [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

⁵⁴ 1940 United States Federal Census.

⁵⁵ [Ancestry.com](#), “1930 United States Federal Census,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2002.

⁵⁶ [Ancestry.com](#), “1940 United States Federal Census,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

⁵⁷ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2013,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2010.

⁵⁸ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S., Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010,” [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2011.

⁵⁹ [Ancestry.com](#), “U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2013,” Ibid.

Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. With help from Bahá'ís in Topeka and St. Louis, he organized a public meeting at the Wichita YMCA.⁶⁰

Ronald was a devoted teacher of the Bahá'í Faith. He was instrumental in the enrollment of many of the early Bahá'ís in Wichita. Among them were Gabriel Onukaogu, a student from Nigeria, who later became an economic advisor to the prime minister of Nigeria. Others enrollments were Nadine McCay, Marjorie Gehrke Turner (later Preuss) and Bill Smith. Along the way, he was associated with numerous Bahá'í pioneers to Wichita and travel teachers. Ronald also severed on the Regional Teaching Committee.⁶¹

In 1954, the Wichita Bahá'í community had grown and was approaching 9 believers required to form an Assembly. Ronald attended a session at Louhelen Bahá'í School and convinced Mary Peters and Pauline Rushing to pioneer to Wichita. In 1955, the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita was formed largely due to the efforts of Ronal Preuss.⁶²

Marjorie Corrine Gehrke was born on 19 February 1924 in Manhattan, Kansas to Herman Andrew Gehrke (born 23 December 1888 in Shickley, Nebraska, died 15 December 1976 in Wichita, Kansas) and Dorothy Barbra Helena Biester Gehrke (born 15 March 1897 in Geneva, Nebraska, died 18 March 1983 in Wichita, Kansas).⁶³ Marjorie was the youngest of 4 children. Her sisters were Amogen Lenore Gehrke (1919-1995), Hermeone Eva Gehrke (1920-1976), and Dorothy Barbara Gehrke (1922-1944).⁶⁴

Marjorie attended Wichita North High School the same time that Ronald attended in 1942.⁶⁵



Marjorie Preuss

⁶⁰ Elizabeth M. Owens, *ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), "U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current," [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) Operations Inc, 2012.

⁶⁴ [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), "1930 United States Federal Census," [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) Operations Inc, 2002.

⁶⁵ [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), "U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2013," [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) operations Inc, 2010.

Marjorie married Edwin Allen Turner (1921-1988) in 1947.⁶⁶ They had three children: Steven Turner, John Turner, and Mary Turner.⁶⁷ Marjorie and Edwin were divorced in the early 1950s.

Marjorie attended firesides at Nadine McCay's home in 1954-1955. Margaret Ruhe from the Bahá'í Area Teaching Committee came to Wichita to enroll Nadine McCay, Marjorie Turner, and Bill Smith in 1955. Marjorie served on the First Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita. The Assembly was lost in late 1956.⁶⁸

Ronald and Marjorie were married in 1957 in Topeka, Kansas since there was no longer an Assembly in Wichita to oversee the wedding. This was the first Wichita Bahá'í marriage.⁶⁹

Activities continued in Wichita with little success until Erwin Schawacker, a member of the Area Teaching Committee moved to Wichita to pursue a Master's Degree in English at Wichita State University in 1960. At that time, the Bahá'í community consisted only of Ronald, Marjorie, and Erwin. The three of them worked together, often traveling together and setting up public meetings with invited speakers and advertising. The Assembly was finally reformed in 1962. The Assembly was incorporated in 1969. The Assembly has been reelected every year since being reformed in 1962. Ronald and/or Marjorie Preuss were members of the Assembly most years until the early 1980s.⁷⁰



Ronald and Marjorie Preuss

Ronald and Marjorie continued to live in Wichita until 1994 when they moved to a farmhouse North of Andover, Kansas, near Marjorie's son John. But they continued to frequent meetings in Wichita.

⁶⁶ Ancestry.com, "Gehrke," Ancestry Family Trees.

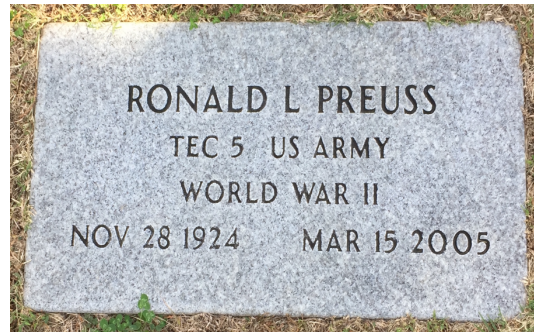
⁶⁷ Ancestry.com, "U.S., Cemetery and Funeral Home Collection, 1847-2017," Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth M. Owens, *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Ronald died on 15 March 2005 in Butler County, Kansas at the farm on which he and Marjorie were living. He is buried in Old Mission Cemetery, Wichita, Kansas.⁷¹



Marjorie developed dementia before Ronald died and had already moved from the farm to a nursing home in Augusta, Kansas when he died. Marjorie died 9 February 2015 in Augusta, Kansas and was buried in Old Mission Cemetery, Wichita, Kansas next to Ronald in the Gehrke plot.⁷²



⁷¹ Ancestry.com "U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current," Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2012.

⁷² Ancestry.com, "U.S., Cemetery and Funeral Home Collection, 1847-2017," Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011.

Pauline Alliece Rushing

Pauline Alliece Rushing born on 27 March 1929 in Florida to Samuel Rushing (1901-1970) and Willa (Willie) Mae Turner Rushing (1903-1981).⁷³ She had 6 siblings: Marian “Mary” Rushing (1925-1965), Rachel Rushing (1928-1974), Lola Mae Rushing (1932-1994), William “Bill” Rushing (1934-2002), Barbara Rushing (1937-2011) and Robert R Rushing (1939-).⁷⁴

The family moved to Flint, Michigan in about 1930.⁷⁵ Samuel and Willa were divorced 10 September 1945.⁷⁶ After the divorce, Willa and the kids had to live on welfare in Flint.⁷⁷

Pauline attended Northern High School in Flint, Michigan.⁷⁸ She was a very intelligent student and probably graduated in 1946. As with all the African American female students, she was guided into studying a secretarial course of study. Her counselor called her in one day and told her she needed to “get out of here, you are too smart for the future you have here.” Pauline replied that the family was too poor and that she could not afford to leave. The counselor replied that she could. His advice was that she join the Army.⁷⁹



Pauline Rushing, Junior, Northern High School, Flint, MI ⁸⁰

After graduation in 1946, Pauline worked as a stenographer⁸¹ before enlisting in the Army in about 1949. Pauline spent 3 years in the Army and spent most of her time as a secretary to Generals and other high-ranking officers in Germany. After leaving the Army in 1952, Pauline attended Eastern Michigan University on the GI Bill.

Pauline probably enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith in the early 1950s. Ron Preuss from Wichita attended a session at Louhelen Bahá'í School at the same time that Pauline Rushing and

⁷³ Ancestry.com, “Indiana, Death Certificates, 1899-2011,” Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2015.

⁷⁴ Ancestry.com, “1940 United States Federal Census,” Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2012.

⁷⁵ Ancestry.com, “1930 United States Federal Census,” Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002.

⁷⁶ Ancestry.com, “Michigan, Divorce Records, 1897-1952,” Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2014.

⁷⁷ Donald Streets, “Interview with Donald Streets,” Richard Vore, 2017.

⁷⁸ Ancestry.com, “U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2012,” Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010.

⁷⁹ Donald Streets, *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Ancestry.com, “U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2012,” Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010.

⁸¹ Ancestry.com, “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995,” Ancestry.com Operations, 2011.

Mary Peters attended. Ron convinced them to come to Wichita to help form a new Assembly. They moved to Wichita probably in 1954 to help form Assembly and served on the first Assembly in 1955 through part of 1956 years.⁸²

Pauline attended Friends University while in Wichita on the GI Bill. Pauline lived at 818 N. Water for at least part of her time in Wichita. Ultimately, this Assembly was not destined to succeed. Pauline and Mary resigned, and they both returned to Flint, Michigan.⁸³ Pauline's brother William "Bill" Rushing also was a Bahá'í pioneer to the Azores from 1955 to 1957. William was a Bahá'í for the rest of his life.⁸⁴

After returning to Flint, Pauline again attended Eastern Michigan University and received a bachelor's degree in Special Education.⁸⁵

Pauline and Bernard W. Streets (1933-living) wanted to be married. According to Bahá'í law, they were required to have her father's permission. Pauline's mother, Willa, was upset with her contacting Samuel, but Bernard drove her to meet with her father and get permission. Pauline and Bernard were married on 2 September 1958 in Detroit, Michigan. After Pauline became reacquainted with her father, they were able to establish a relationship, and Pauline and Bernard later attended Samuel Rushing's funeral in Detroit.⁸⁶

Pauline and Bernard eventually settled down and built a home in Niles, Michigan. Donald Streets now of Scottsdale, Arizona was a confirmed bachelor at the time and built a house next door. Pauline taught special education classes at one of the schools in Niles, Michigan. Pauline and Bernard had two daughters Karen Streets-Anderson (1960-living) and Kimberly Streets (1962-living). Pauline served on the Bahá'í Assembly for Niles Township.⁸⁷

Pauline died at the age of 41 on 6 April 1970 in South Bend, Indiana from a massive G.I. hemorrhage. She is buried in Highland Cemetery in South Bend, Indiana. At the time of her death, Pauline and Bernard were living at 3001 Adams Street in Niles, Michigan.^{88 89}

Pauline was very well liked at her school. After her death, some of the parents attempted to get the name of the school changed to honor Pauline. The attempt to change the name of the school ultimately failed.⁹⁰

⁸² Elizabeth M. Owens, *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ [Ancestry.com](#), "U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2012.

⁸⁵ Donald Streets, *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ [Ancestry.com](#), "Indiana, Death Certificates, 1899-2011," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2015.

⁸⁹ [Ancestry.com](#), "newspapers.com Obituary Index, 1800s-Current," [Ancestry.com](#) Operations Inc, 2019.

⁹⁰ Donald Streets, *ibid.*

Bill Smith

Bill Smith was a local African American restaurant owner. Bill attended devotions and firesides held at Nadine McKay's home. Margaret Ruhe from the Bahá'í Area Teaching Committee came to Wichita to enroll Nadine McCay, Marjorie Turner, and Bill Smith in 1955. Bill served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Wichita. Many interracial meetings were held at his restaurant. He resigned from the Faith in 1955 or 1956 because the Faith did not allow participation in partisan politics, and he became involved with some local politics.⁹¹



Bill Smith

⁹¹ Elizabeth M. Owens, *ibid.*