

In Loving Memory



ZANITA GERTRUDE
SMITH BUCHANAN

March 30, 1961 – September 8, 2026

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Sunday, November 1, 2026 · 1:00 p.m.

Miracle City Seventh-day Adventist Church
100 S Rock Glen Road, Baltimore, MD 21229



Order of Service

PROCESSIONAL

WELCOME

Pastor Noah Washington

HYMN

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Margo Bagley · LaJeanne Joseph · Robin Thomas
Melanie Cruz · Susan Smith · Brian Smith

SONG SELECTION

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
Meaghan Hicks Turner

READING OF THE OBITUARY

Marji Bates

EULOGY

Pastor Anthony Medley

CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor Noah Washington

*“Great is Thy faithfulness... Strength for today
and bright hope for tomorrow.”*



A Life Well Lived, Beautifully Organized, and Impeccably Dressed

Zanita Gertrude Smith Buchanan, known as Zan to nearly everyone who loved her (which is to say, nearly everyone who met her), was called to rest on September 8, 2026, at the age of 65. She was born in Detroit, Michigan, on March 30, 1961, and she spent the next six and a half decades proving that a person could be devout, disciplined, hilarious, and fashionable all at once, and make it look like the easiest thing in the world.

Zan was the daughter of Dr. Rothacker Childs Smith and Mrs. Dorothy Louise Malson Smith. Her story began in Inkster, Michigan, before her family moved to Huntsville, Alabama, where she spent most of her childhood on the campus of Oakwood College. She went on to Pine Forge Academy, the boarding school in Pine Forge, Pennsylvania, and was delighted to graduate with the class of 1979. After a short season at Oakwood College (now Oakwood University), she returned to Detroit and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Marketing PR from Wayne State University.

In Detroit, Zan met Herbert C. Buchanan Jr. They married on September 5, 1987, and together, raised four cherished children: Jasmine, Amber (Eric Samson), Herbert III, and Jalen. They spent 25 years married, and even though their marriage ended, they remained family. Her grandson, Caden, was her pride, her delight, and the most reliable source of her best storytelling.

Service was Zan's love language. She homeschooled her children with patience and intention,

volunteered with Family Shelter Service, and later became a substitute teacher. In 2014, she answered a deeper calling and became a Senior Legal Advocate with HopeWorks of Howard County, Maryland. There she supported survivors of domestic violence with compassion, integrity, and a fierce commitment to justice. After earning her Home Health Aide certification in 2022, she cared for seniors with tenderness and dignity.

At Miracle City SDA Church in Baltimore, Zan anchored her life in Scripture and in the writings of a prolific author named Ellen G. White. Her favorite hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," described the way she lived: trusting God in every season, believing in His promises, and walking in hope. When cancer came, with all of its twists and uncomfortable turns, her faith did not flinch. She walked with God to the very end.

Her laughter came first, a warm, infectious sound that could defuse tension, lift spirits, and fill a room before she had fully entered it. Her kitchen produced legendary pizza, bread, and dishes that could have won cook-offs. Her herbs filled the windowsills. Her fashion sense was so polished that magazine covers should have been nervous. She adored flowers, great food, animals, family gatherings, and any excuse at all to be near the shore. If joy had a spokesperson, it would have been Zan.

Her ashes were lovingly released at Assateague, Maryland, the shore she cherished and the serenity she embodied.

Those Who Carry Her Forward

Zanita is survived by her children, Jasmine, Amber (Eric Samson), Herbert III, and Jalen; her grandson, Caden; and a large and loving family.

SIBLINGS

Barry Smith; Marcia Smith Hicks and Bill Hicks,
brother-in-law; Karen Smith; Brian Smith and
Lisa Smith, sister-in-law; and Candace Smith

NIECES AND NEPHEWS

William Hicks; Gwen Marie Hicks;
Meaghan Hicks Turner; and Curtis Turner

GRAND-NIECES AND GRAND-NEPHEWS

Kenton Hicks, Kasmin Hicks, Anais Turner, and Kaylei Hicks

PRECEDED IN DEATH BY HER PARENTS

Dr. Rothacker Childs Smith and Mrs. Dorothy Louise Malson Smith



WITH DEEP APPRECIATION

The family of Zanita Gertrude Smith Buchanan extends heartfelt thanks for every prayer, message, call, and act of kindness. Your love has been a balm in this season of grief.

With loving remembrance, The Family of Zanita Gertrude Smith Buchanan



zanitabuchanan.com

*Her full story, more
photographs, and a place
to share your memories*