



## BLOSSOM ELAINE FERGUSON

Blossom Ferguson, a native of Kingston, Jamaica West Indies, was reared in a home where God was the center of their lives. The only girl with four brothers, Blossom loved to go to church with her mother who truly was a woman of God. At an early age, Blossom gave her life to the Lord and was baptized at the age of nine. She completed her early schooling in Kingston and continued to grow in her faith and belief in God. Blossom married her childhood sweetheart Trevor Ferguson in Kingston, on May 16, 1964.

In 1969, Blossom migrated to the United States with her husband, Trevor, and son, Duane. The Fergusons lived with their family in East Elmhurst, Queens, New York where their daughter, Desirée, was born. While living in East Elmhurst, they attended the Corona Congregational Church. In 1973, they relocated to Cambria Heights, Queens and continued to attend church in Corona until 1980, when a co-worker told Blossom about Allen A.M.E. Church located on Sayers Avenue and Merrick Boulevard in Jamaica, New York.

Blossom visited Allen A.M.E. Church for a few years before she finally decided to move her membership. After the preaching of Assistant Pastor, Reverend Brenda Hazel and the counseling of Reverend Henrietta Fullard, at a watch night service in 1983, Blossom said yes to the Holy Spirit that said to her. "Start the new year right. This is the place to call your church home." After receiving the right hand of fellowship, Blossom wanted to learn about the A.M.E. Church, and joined the Lay Organization.

Trevor and Blossom allowed their children to continue worshipping at their childhood church in Corona. However, after their son, Duane, joined the United States Army in 1986 the entire family became members of Allen including their adopted daughter, Angella Colley Ferguson.

As a child, Blossom dreamed of becoming a nurse. "I just want to help people." With that determination and the opportunity given to her, Blossom enrolled in the Queensborough Community College nursing program. As a wife and mother of two small children, she knew it was not going to be easy, but she had to make it work. She graduated with an Associate Degree in Nursing in 1977, the first member of her family to graduate from college.

She continued her education and now has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from New York State University at Albany, a Master of Public Administration from C.W. Post University, Long Island, New York and Masters of Science in Nursing and Adult Nurse Practitioner, both from the College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, New York.

Blossom became involved with the American Cancer Society, Queens Division in 1988. She was a member of the Volunteer Nursing Advisory Board representing St . John's Queens Hospital and later a member of the Volunteer Speakers Bureau and the Executive Board. As a volunteer speaker, Blossom received assignments at junior high and high schools, as well as, senior citizen centers all over Queens to speak on such topics as nutrition and health, cancer prevention and smoking cessation. Most of the senior centers were out of her neighborhood. Blossom clearly remembers on her way home from one of her assignments in the Rockaways she asked, "God why can't I get assigned to my neighborhood?"

Be careful what you ask for. It was not very long after that when The Reverend Dr. Elaine M. Flake, Co-Pastor, stopped her, while she was going down the steps to the lower level of Shekinah Church. Reverend Elaine (as we affectionately call her) said, "You're Blossom Ferguson with the American Cancer Society." My response was, "Yes." She said, "Call me at the school. I want to talk to you." I said to myself, "What did I do?" I called Reverend Elaine the following day and later met with her. She had a vision for a cancer support group. From that meeting and several telephone calls, the Cancer Support Group was born with its first meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 1993 in the cafeteria of the Allen Christian School.

The ministers asked to support the group and present at the first meeting were the Reverend Mary Reed, M.D., Reverend Julia Russell, Reverend Mamie Conway and the late Reverend Cynthia Vaughan. Reverend Julia Russell continues to assist us today and Reverend Reed is our advisor from a distance. Others who have supported this ministry over the years include Reverend Nicole Edness and Reverend Kenneth O. Richardson; Minister Lorraine Dantzler and Evangelist Delores Prescott.

Blossom was grateful for the opportunity to come to the United States and to receive her formal education. On a flight back from Jamaica, after the funeral of her father in 1984, Blossom decided she had to give back to America some of what she had received. Upon her return, she inquired about and applied to The United States Army Reserve. As a registered nurse, Blossom was accepted and received a direct commission as a Second Lieutenant in January 1985. Blossom was asked by her recruiter, "Why do you want to join the Army Nurse Corp?" She replied, "I got my formal education here. I want to give back something to America. Not to fight wars but to take care of the products of war, the veterans." Blossom proudly served for 21 years. During her years of service, she held many different positions and was awarded and promoted for her diligent and extemporary service. Blossom retired from the military in 2006 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC).

Blossom has a passion for volunteer missions work. In 1999, 2000 and 2001, she participated in "Word Alive Medical Mission" to Jamaica, West Indies with The Reverend Dr. Jacqueline McCullough, Senior Pastor of The International Gathering at Beth Rapha in Pomona, New York. She accompanied the same group in 2010 and 2011 to Liberia, Africa. In 2003, she went with the Greater Allen Cathedral Missionaries to Cape Town, South Africa and again in 2012 and 2013 to Port au Prince, Haiti to minister to the needs of the people there.

Blossom is a very active member of The Greater Allen A. M. E. Cathedral of New York where she was appointed a Trustee in 1996. She is a long-standing member of the Prayer and Fasting Ministry. She has been instrumental in establishing, not only the Cancer Support Ministry in 1993 but the Parish Health Ministry in 1996, as well as, the Military Veterans Committee, in 2006.

Always valuing the power of education, Blossom's work with the Cancer Support Ministry led her to seek additional training in caring for people in crisis. She sought out a Chaplaincy program and enrolled in the Charles Harrison Mason Bible College in Long Island, New York. She completed course work and received certification in 2001 and 2003. Additionally, she has received training from the CMI Education Institute of New York as a Bereavement Facilitator.

Blossom is a former member of Community Board 13 of Queens serving at the request of Claire K. Shulman, a former Borough President of Queens. As a result of her dedication and commitment to people and the community, she has received numerous military and civilian awards and recognition including the "Life Saver" award from the American Cancer Society, the Women Veterans Alumni award from York College in Queens, and a proclamation from the New York State Senate for her service and continued contribution to the community. Some awards she has received from the United States Army include the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal.

Currently, Blossom is employed at the James J. Peters Veterans Administration Medical Center, located in the Bronx, New York. She is the perioperative nurse manager responsible for the operating room and the anesthesia unit.

Blossom, we the members of the Cancer Support Ministry want to thank you for your leadership, commitment, dedication and service to this Ministry. You have prayed with us, for us and sometimes over us. You have laughed with us and cried with us. You always have been there for us, and always with a smile and an uplifting word.

None of this would have been possible without God first and then a loving, supporting family including your husband, Trevor Ferguson, of 49 nine years, your son, Duane, daughters Desirée Ferguson Maurice and Angela Colley Ferguson and grandchildren, Davon, Kiara and TréSean.