



Services will be held Friday, Nov. 28, 2014, at 11 a.m., at the L.E. Black, Phillips and Holden Funeral Home for Irene Catley Jefferson, 95, who departed this life Sunday, Nov. 23, 2014.

Mrs. Jefferson was born April 3, 1919, in Beaumont, Texas, a daughter of Benjamin H. and Mary Lou Dowell Catley. She lived in this area since she was two years old.

She was a graduate of Chaney High School and had been employed as a Legal Secretary for the Law Firm of Howard, Dickerson and Fugett. Later, at the start of World War II, she moved to Washington, D.C., where she became the first black secretary to be hired by the Signal Corp, Military Personnel Division at the Pentagon. Following the end of the war, she returned to Youngstown and became Executive Secretary of the Laborers International Union of North America, Local 125, retiring in 1961.

She was a member of the Centenary United Methodist Church. She leaves to cherish her memory two granddaughters, Tonya (Shawn) Hawley and Stuelleyn Jefferson Hill; two daughters-in-law, Lenora Elaine Jefferson and Earlene Jefferson; three grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives and friends.

Besides her husband, William Jefferson, whom she married June 26, 1961, and he passed away May 23, 2004, she was preceded in death by her grandparents; parents; her only son, Benjamin David Smith; step son Stewart Edward Jefferson; two sisters, Bertha Catley Floyd and Lena Catley Layton; and three brothers Benjamin Catley Jr., and twins L.D. and L.V. Catley.

Friends may call one hour prior to the service from 10 to 11 a.m. at the funeral home.