

# *A Tribute to a Friend*



## **Carol Kennedy Williams**

August 19, 1941---May 4, 2000

*Our lives on earth are measured by the richness of our friendships and our love for those we do not know, but whose lives intersect with our own in unknown ways. By this metric, Carol Williams has lived a life that is rich beyond description.*

Umesh Mathur

*The Holy One Cherishes the Way of the Righteous.*

## A Beautiful Child

Carol Sue Kennedy was born August 19, 1941 at St. John's Hospital, Tulsa, Oklahoma. She and her brother Jimmy were raised in Tulsa by loving parents.



Carol attended Tulsa's Springdale Elementary School and Woodrow Wilson Junior High School.



Carol Kennedy graduated from Will Rogers High School in 1959, and earned her Associate Degree from Tulsa Community College.



## *Such a One Is Like a Tree Planted Beside Streams of Water*



## **A Wonderful Wife, Mother and Grandmother**

Upon graduation from high school, Carol married her sweetheart, Bernie Williams, on October 17, 1959, and made their home in Tulsa.

Their daughter Tina was born June 30, 1972, at St. John's Hospital, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Carol loved and doted on Tina. Bernie passed away on December 23, 1992.



Tina married Alan Wedding on December 14, 1996, at Boston Avenue Methodist Church. Carol's grandson Tyler William Wedding, the apple of Carol's eye, was born December 17, 1997. Pictured, Tina and Tyler Wedding, and Carol.



## *Such a Tree Yields Its Fruit In Season*



**Citizens Demand Action at City Hall.** After the June 8, 1974, flood, citizen leaders stormed City Hall. Left to right, Vic Bastien, Irene and Bill Walton, Sharon Beck Seals, Carol Williams, Dr. Judith Finn.

## Civic Leader



**Flood Victims Meet With FEMA.** Flood victim Carl Moose and Tulsans for a Better Community leader Carol Williams meet with FEMA Regional Director, Del Greer after the 1974 flood.

The life of Carol Williams proves the power of the single individual. Her commitment moved mountains. She was a catalyst for monumental progress in floodplain management made by the City of Tulsa and the nation.

Carol, as spearhead of Tulsans for a Better Community, led citizens in getting their government to take an active role in floodplain management. She was primarily responsible for getting Section 1362 of the Flood Insurance Act funded, which became the nation's flood hazard mitigation program.

Tulsa has acquired and removed more than 1,000 homes from floodplains. Following that example, nationally over 23,000 families have now been removed from harm's way.

Tulsa is now recognized as a national leader in floodplain management, named the country's "Outstanding Floodplain Management Program" by the Association of State Floodplain Managers.

## *Its Foliage Never Fades*



**Those Who Cared.** Leaders in Tulsa's flood program at a 1997 reunion at Sharon Beck Seals' Flint Creek Ranch. Front row: Carol Williams, Sharon Beck Seals, Jean Mathur. Back row: Ron Flanagan, Nancy Kincaid Deacon, Dr. Judith Finn, Bill Morris, Ann Patton, Umesh Mathur.

In my years of work in emergency management, I have seen too much death and destruction. Yet what I remember most is the magnificent flowering of the human spirit that can rise like a phoenix from disaster. I have seen so much good come from the devastation left by nature. I've seen people reaching out to one another and I've seen hope push away despair. So it is that Carol Williams of Tulsa, Oklahoma, epitomizes the best of that spirit.

In the 1970s, Tulsa was America's most frequently flooded community, and hundreds of damaged homes were rebuilt again and again. Carol was a young mother living near Tulsa's Mingo Creek. She refused to accept the continual flooding of her home, and she mobilized her neighbors, her town, and eventually- this nation to change long-entrenched public policy.

Carol was a driving force behind disaster prevention in Tulsa and a founding member of FEMA's Project Impact: Building Disaster-Resistant Communities. Without the vision and support of people like Carol, Project Impact could not have succeeded.

Ultimately, Tulsa and FEMA brought and cleared hundreds of floodplain homes in Tulsa, relocating residents permanently to safe, dry sites. Tulsa's floodplain management program has become a national model, due in part to Carol's community work over nearly three decades. Under Project Impact, more disaster prevention has been done in Tulsa, not just for flooding but for tornadoes and other disasters.

We know it's smart to take long-range actions to prevent disasters before they happen. Every day, we are putting into practice the lessons taught us by visionary local leaders like Carol Williams. The lessons we have learned together, and her kind of indomitable spirit, will endure far into the future, helping to create a safer and more livable world for future generations. We all owe her a debt of gratitude, and remind all of you that her success in life has been overshadowed only by the number of people whose lives she has touched.

James Lee Witt, Director  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington, D.C.

April 25, 2000

## *Whatever It Produces Never Fades*

# Public Hero

**FEMA's "Outstanding Public Service" Award-** Carol Williams (left front) and Commissioner J.D. Metcalfe, Ann Patton, Jim Cameron, Mike Buchert, and Charles Hardt, accept the Federal Emergency Management Agency's prestigious "Outstanding Public Service" award.

**Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association-** Carol Williams was a founding member of the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association. After years of dedicated service, Carol was awarded the first, and only "Lifetime Membership" award. She was also presented with OFMA's "Outstanding Achievement Appreciation" award.



**Friends and Fun.** Work and play sometimes intermingled with crusades. Carol is shown here having a few laughs with her good friend, Juanise Weatherman at a Project Impact dinner at the John Zink Ranch.



## *And Whatever It Produces Thrives. Psalms 1*



**The Spirit of Carol Williams** oversees her legacies: a world-class floodplain management program, a stormwater detention pond named in her honor, her daughter Tina, and grandson Tyler.

### **Carol's Pond Stormwater Management Basin**

This location, at East 10<sup>th</sup> Street and South Mingo Road, was the scene of homes repeatedly devastated by flooding in the 1970s and 1984. Its transformation to a place of peace and recreation was brought about with heroic effort, inspired and led by the flood victims themselves. One resident of this area epitomizes citizen involvement in bringing about great changes in our community by creating opportunity out of adversity. That person is Carol Williams, in whose honor this site is named.

*M. Susan Savage*

M. Susan Savage, Mayor

*She Shall Carry Away a Blessing From the  
Lord, a Just Reward from God Her Deliverer.  
Psalms 24*

## In Praise of Carol

A Poem by Judith Finn

Splendid one,  
Brilliantly illuminating the Truth;

Courageous one,  
Steadfastly vanquishing evil;

Beloved one,  
Benevolently gathering us in with  
your smile;

We send word ahead:

You ran the course;  
You kept the faith.  
The earth itself bears witness  
As do we.



O Holy One

We Remember Before You Our Friend Carol.

We Are Grateful That You Have Given Her To Us, To Know And To Love As A Companion In  
This Life.

Receive Her

Into The Arms Of Your Mercy,

Into The Blessed Rest Of Everlasting Peace, And

Into The Glorious Company Of The Saints In Light.

Amen.