

May

When Momma Died

Author: Supervisor Sherita Moon Seawright



The Reverend Sherita Moon Seawright is married to Bishop Harry L. Seawright. She is the mother of two adult children, Shari Nicole Seawright and Harry Matthew Seawright, and the grandmother of Cameron Isaiah Seawright.

Sherita Moon Seawright was born in Clinton, South Carolina, the second child of the late Peter and Aurelia Moon. She grew up in Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Clinton, where she served as a Sunday school teacher and a musician.

Rev. Sherita loves learning! She received her early education in the public schools of Mountville, Cross Hill and Clinton, South Carolina. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science, summa cum laude, from Benedict College, Columbia, SC and a Master of Arts degree in political science from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. She earned a Master of Divinity degree from Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, DC. Rev. Sherita served a one-year Chaplaincy Internship and a one-year Chaplaincy Residency at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, DC, earning five units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

Rev. Sherita Seawright, an Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, served as the Assistant Pastor of Union Bethel AME, Brandywine, MD and the Lead Ministry Coordinator of Union Bethel North, Temple Hills, MD. One of her greatest joys is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and empowering people for Christian service.

In 1982, Sherita Moon married then-Reverend Harry L. Seawright and joined Prodigal African Methodist Episcopal Church, Swansea, South Carolina. She served as an office assistant to Mrs. Wilhelmina Lawrence, former Connectional President of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS). The position proved to be excellent on-the-job training and equipped her with a wealth of AME Church knowledge, including its people and processes. As a lay person Rev. Sherita also served as president of the local Women's Missionary Society at Hemingway Temple, and a musician at Payne Memorial in Jessup, Maryland where she also organized the children's choir. Her concern for youth was further demonstrated in innovative projects she developed for the local Young People's Division.

When her husband was assigned to Union Bethel AME, Rev. Sherita accepted the invitation to serve as the local WMS president. During that time she presented workshops at WMS

Area Meetings and for local societies. At Union Bethel, Rev. Sherita was instrumental in expanding the Union Bethel Women's Ministry. In 1988 she organized the 1st annual Women's Retreat. For 29 years she led flourishing ministries, retreats and activities that promoted and enriched the lives of UBAME women. She continues to minister to women of all denominations, races and cultures.

Her former work assignments were at the US Agency for International Development, the US Defense Intelligence Agency, and Community Ministry of Prince George's County. For 7 years, Rev. Sherita directed Community Ministry's Warm Nights winter church shelter program and the Sharing Fund. As a result of her efforts to educate Prince George's County's African American churches about homelessness, many churches accepted the challenge to shelter the homeless or assist other churches in doing so or by preparing and serving meals for homeless and hungry persons at the Community Place Café. Through Community Ministry's Sharing Fund Rev. Sherita partnered with other agencies to prevent people from facing evictions, foreclosures, utility cutoffs and other forms of economic distress.

For 12 years Reverend Seawright served as Executive Director of Bethel House, Inc., a Union Bethel non-profit agency that provides holistic care and services to individuals and families. In this capacity she managed the day-to-day operations and was responsible for securing funds. Her deep commitment to helping people, especially women, reach the highest spiritual level that God desires was expressed through the creation of ministries and programs designed to free women, children and families from domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Rev. Sherita served as a Chaplain for Capital Caring, an agency that provides Palliative Care, Counseling and Hospice services. Assigned to the agency's Largo [Maryland] Neighborhood, this employment opportunity allowed her to offer spiritual care to patients who usually were in the last months of life, their families and agency staff. Describing chaplaincy as "a great opportunity," Rev. Sherita served persons of all faith traditions as well as those with no declared faith ties!

Rev. Sherita received numerous awards and scholarships: Storm Thurmond Foundation Award; Daniel Foundation Scholarship; The Ohio State University Minority Master's Fellowship; Benjamin E. Mays Fellowship; Ford Foundation Fellowship; Howard University School of Divinity Dean's Award for Academic Excellence; and Congress of National Black Church's Fellowship. In 2013 the Mid-Atlantic Region of the National Council of Negro Women honored her with their Distinguished Community Leader Award.

As a uniquely creative and accomplished preacher, teacher and workshop facilitator, Rev. Sherita has ministered in many parts of the United States and in Botswana, the Eighteenth Episcopal District of the AME Church. She is the author of a book, *When Momma Died—A Journey to Self* and a poem, "A Prayer for the Women Who Wait."

Rev. Sherita is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Sherita Moon Seawright knows the heartache of losing a loved one. When her mother died, she experienced the profusion of emotions that accompany the living side of death.

When Momma Died tells the story of Sherita Seawright's struggle to deal not only with the pain of her mother's death, but also with the friends who told her not to weep but to rejoice knowing that Momma had gone to live with God.