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This memorial website was created by Susan Smith Ross in the memory of her mother, Margaret Inez Hite Pearson Smith, who was born in Champaign, Illinois on January 11, 1925 and passed away on January 3, 2005 -- eight days before her 80th birthday. Her husband, children, grandchildren, other relatives and friends will remember her forever.

Join us in honoring this very special lady. Please add a tribute or condolence . . . or just light a candle for Margaret with a simple thought. If you have any special stories, poems, photos or other items that can be added to the site, contact [Susan](#).

This site will remain active forever. Please pass this site along to anyone who knew Margaret.

She was a woman who loved to talk -- in person, one-on-one, face-to-face, on the telephone . . . heck, even in her sleep! But the voice was forever silenced on Monday, January 3, 2005, at 3:45 p.m.

Margaret loved the color red, shopping and cooking. She could make a mean macaroni and cheese, a melt-in-your-mouth pound cake, some fierce fried chicken and the best hamburgers in the world! She would grind her own fruits for cranberry relish, whip up some of the creamiest fudge around, make noodles from scratch for chicken 'n' noodles, and make cheesecake from the "git-go." For many years, she and her husband Earl held an open house every December 25th to celebrate not only Christmas, but Earl's birthday -- which also fell on that day. And their huge backyard was often the site of outdoor parties, picnics, luaus and barbecues.

Margaret was an extremely creative person. She enjoyed sewing, crocheting, knitting and all types of crafts. She made items as varied as school clothes, furniture slipcovers, her granddaughter's Cotillion dress, bridal veils, her daughter's first prom dress, curtains and valances, costumes, uniforms, suits and even a coat.

And she loved to gamble. Though she said she could never get the hang of the daily and weekly games, she would purchase tons of "scratch-offs." She even learned the codes on the tickets so that she knew whether the

This memorial website was created by Susan Smith Ross on 06/10/2005. [click here to contact Susan Smith](#)



Sponsorship

The hosting of this website is sponsored by Earl E. Smith

Memory-of.com made a donation to Children of Aging Parents to commemorate the sponsoring of this website.

Audio & Video

- A Song for Mama (Boyz II Men) [\(Click to play\)](#)
- Sadie (The Spinners) [\(Click to play\)](#)
- The Battle Is the Lord's-Live (Yolanda Adams) [\(Click to play\)](#)

[Click here for more audio and video](#)

Memorial Candles

Susan Smith Ross lit a candle on 01/10/2011: "Happy birthday Mama 1/11/11."

Susan Smith Ross lit a candle on 01/11/2010: "Happy 85th Birthday, mama."

ticket was a winner even before she finished revealing the information. Margaret also took several trips to Las Vegas with her friends and was a frequent "sailor" on the Par-A-Dice Riverboat Casino in Peoria.

As for sports, in her youth she played softball. Throughout her life she enjoyed bowling and was most recently a member of the Senior Citizens Bowling League. She also enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and playing bridge, gin rummy and various types of solitaire.

Born Margaret Inez Hite, she was the youngest child and only girl born to Earnest Stine and Helen M. Johnson Hite on January 11, 1925, in Champaign, Illinois. Margaret attended Gregory Elementary, Champaign Junior High School and Champaign Senior High School, from which she graduated in 1942.

Margaret married Onie Pearson, Jr., on June 4, 1942. They had one son, Bobby. They briefly lived in Richmond, Virginia, but eventually moved back to Champaign. During this time Margaret was first a housewife and then a domestic for households on Champaign's west side.

On August 23, 1952, Margaret and Earl E. Smith united in marriage. Four years later they moved into a new housing subdivision on the North End called Attucks Place. Subsequently, they had a daughter, Susan. Margaret lived in her home on Crispus Drive until late last year when she was moved to Manor Care Urbana.

In the 1960s, Margaret did some part-time food service work at the University of Illinois' Bevier Hall. Later, she began working part-time as a secretary for Unit #4 at Willard School. From there, she obtained full-time secretarial positions at Marquette School, Centennial High School, and as an elementary school "floater." Margaret was hired as the secretary at Booker T. Washington School in the 1970s where she remained until her retirement in 1986.

Born into a family of musicians -- dad and brother Jay played the drums, mom was a pianist, her Uncle Leslie led a 1940s big band, and brother Earnest was the organist for The Soul Brothers/Tan Band -- Margaret she enjoyed music tremendously. She boasted a vast collection that included 45s, 33s, 78s, 8-tracks, cassettes and CDs of jazz, soul, blues, swing, R&B, gospel and even a little classical and hip-hop. She was no music snob!

She was a member of Salem Baptist Church, where her maternal grandparents had been founding members, and served as President of the Webb Missionary Circle. Margaret helped found Gamma Upsilon Psi Society, which

I miss you!"

Susan Smith Ross lit a candle on 08/26/2009: "Been really missing you

[Click here for more candles](#)

To light a candle in memory of Margaret Smith fill out this form:

First name:

Last name:

Text:
(max. 120 characters)

[Tell your Friends](#)

To tell others about the website in memory of Margaret Smith, enter their e-mail addresses:

[Get Updated](#)

Enter your e-mail to be notified every time this website is updated:

[Add to favorites](#)

You are visitor number:
2,277

sponsors Champaign County's premier scholarship debutante ball for Black girls. She served Gamma in many roles, including President and Member Emeritus. After retirement, she joined the Douglass Center Senior Citizens and was elected president. Until illness forced her to quit, she worked as a clerk-receptionist at the senior citizen's center located in the Douglass Annex. She and Earl often traveled with the Douglass Senior Citizens as well.

At various points Margaret was affiliated with Les Femmes, the XS Club, the Regalettes and the SFC Club. She worked on the original organizing committee for what is now known as Champaign-Urbana Day, and was instrumental in organizing the biennial Smith Family Reunion. In the late 1990s, she was honored by the National Council of African-American Men for her tireless efforts as a community worker and leader.

Margaret is survived by Earl, her husband of 52 years; son D. Robert "Bobby" Pearson, Sr. (Minnie) of Champaign; daughter Susan Smith Ross (Ronald) of Chicago; three grandchildren: Lucretia Pearson Williams (Otis) of Champaign, Donald R. "Dino" Pearson, Jr. of Richfield, MN, and Taylor P. Ross of Chicago; three great-grandchildren; four sisters-in-law: Margaret Smith Minor, Imogene Smith Wood, Thelma Smith Pealer and Dorothy Patterson Hite, all of Champaign-Urbana; several nieces and nephews, including special nieces, Ronalyn T. Hite David of St. Thomas, VI and Karen J. Hite of Champaign; a godson, S. Lemond Peppers, II; and a host of relatives and numerous friends, including Daisy Holt Jackson and Kathryn Britt Humphrey. She was predeceased by her parents, both brothers: Earnest E. Hite, Sr. and Luster Jay Hite, and one grandchild, Ronald L. Ross, Jr.

Visit her Family Tree at
<http://margarethitesmith.memory-of.com/FamilyTree.aspx>.

[Click here to see Margaret Smith's Family Tree](#)

🔗 Tributes and Condolences

To My Wife / Earl Smith (Husband)

In life I loved you dearly
In death I love you still
In my heart you hold a place
No one can ever fill
A light from our household is gone
A voice from our love is stilled
A place in our vacant home
Which never can be filled
Some may think you are forgotten
Th... 🔗 [Continue >>](#)

Loss, but found / Carolyn Lawrence (great-niece)

Dear family members,

As you now God works in mysterious ways. I found this site when I was looking up information on Les Hite.... We all experience loss (I just lost my brother), but no one can understand exactly what one is feelin... [Continue >>](#)

Angels Are Always There! / Shirley Tuttle

Prayer for Margaret, her family, and many friends!

"Earth Has No Sorrow That Heaven Can Not Heal" / Juanita Mason (Neighbor)

Dearest Earl, Bobie, Susan And Grand Children. I have been there losing mama in 2002, your mom always would ask me about mama. Just a word of encouragement ,Earth has no sorrow,that heaven can not heal. Look back with satisfaction,and... [Continue >>](#)

With God / Aisha Ato

My deepest condolences, keep the faith and know that all is well with your mom as she is with God now.

[Click here to pay tribute or offer your condolences](#)

[Her legacy](#)

Gamma Upsilon Psi Society

Margaret was one of the founding members of the Gamma Upsilon Psi Society in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. The group was organized in 1973 to help the men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (Epsilon Mu Sigma Graduate Chapter), produce an annual debutante Cotillion for Black high school senior girls. The Sigmas felt they needed a "woman's touch" to the affair and solicited the assistance of Margaret, Kathryn Humphrey, Jean Davis and other upstanding women in the community. Kathryn belonged to another organization, based in the south suburbs of Chicago, which produced an annual Cotillion. And Margaret, Jean and others had attended this affair for numerous years.

The women added sophistication, flair and ambience to the affair and soon the Sigmas dropped their sponsorship. By this time, the women had adopted the name Gamma Upsilon Psi Society. Since the mid-1970s, the Gammas have been the sole producers and directors of the Cotillion which awards tens of thousands of scholarships annually to its participants.

[More of her legacy...](#)

❖ Margaret's Photo Album



The Les Femmes Club Annual Spring Formal



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