

# Remembering "Momma Mac"

March 6, 1912 - September 11, 2006

By Rosalind "Bee" Harris

Despite the rain, more than 75 people headed toward the house on the hill at 28th and Decatur Street in Omaha, Nebraska on Aug. 27 to celebrate the life of 94-year-old Elsie McSwain. Family and friends gathered to give praises to Mrs. McSwain, who was also known in the community as "Momma Mac." Momma had been diagnosed with colon cancer, and it was estimated her life would end in six months. It was the will of God and her love of God and her family that kept her alive longer than expected. Siblings Chester and Jenette both agreed that Momma should smell her roses now, which was the purpose of the party. Trying to avoid the rain predicted for two days earlier, the event was rescheduled - but so was the rain. The weather forced everyone to gather inside the McSwain home for great food, spontaneous entertainment and a feeling of togetherness. Family and friends came from Illinois, Minnesota, Colorado and California. Topping off the event was the reading of a proclamation by her son, Pastor Erven McSwain, proclaiming August 27 as Elsie McSwain Day.

It has been more than 35 years, since I was fortunate enough to become a member of the McSwain family as one of the daughter-in-laws. But, on Sept. 11, when many people were reflecting on the disaster of 9/11 just five years ago, I knew it was my brother-in-law Chester calling to say Momma had gone home when my phone rang. A feeling of sadness came over me. Momma's funeral was filled with adoration and elation. Her obituary outlined her devoted life of seeking to enhance and bless the lives of others. While she made reference to others as "Angel," Momma Mac was one by definition, one of the sweetest and most loving individuals this side of heaven. She was a saint in every sense of the word. To know her was to love her. The spirit of Momma was felt as friends and family came near and far for her home going celebration. I am honored and happy that she touched my life, and my sons and my grandsons. We love you Momma Mac and will truly miss you, but will see you again.

**Editor's note:** Elsie Butler McSwain was born March 6, 1912 in Little Bay, Arkansas and moved to Omaha, Nebraska with her husband Erven who is deceased. She had six children, Erven Jr. (Omaha), Marva Jean (deceased), Chester (Chicago), Jeannett (Chicago), Donald (Denver) and Gregory (deceased).

