

A portrait of an elderly woman with short, wavy, light-colored hair, smiling gently. She is wearing a purple and pink floral patterned top. The background is a dense arrangement of various flowers, including large white and yellow blooms, and smaller blue and white flowers. The overall color palette is warm and vibrant.

Memorial Service
Celebration of Life

Candelaria Norma
SILVA-COLLINS

Saturday May, 9th 2026

10 am – Family Reception, 11 am – Service
Sardis Baptist Church
5811 Sardis Road, Charlotte, NC 28270
Pastor Chris Hensley

Order of Service

Bishop Lawrence A. Ward, Pastor Emeritus, Presiding Minister
Abundant Life Church, Cambridge, MA

Opening Selection.....Lord Lift Us Up
Opening remarks.....Bishop Ward
Invocation.....Pastor Hensley
Song.....It Is Well, With My Soul

Old Testament readings
Ecclesiastes 12:1-8.....Unique McQueen
Psalm 23.....Thomas McQueen

New Testament reading
Matthew 5:1-12.....Darian Bogie-McQueen
Poem/Prayer.....Dionna Collins, Madison McElroy
Solo – Home.....Saige Boone

Predetermined Acknowledgments.....Pastor Hensley
Spoken Selection.....Amber McQueen
Obituary.....Cyrus McQueen
Solo - May the Work I've Done Speak for Me...Glenn Ellis
God's Gift.....Tessil Collins

Eulogy.....Bishop Ward
Song.....Precious Lord
Congregational Closing prayer.....The Lord's Prayer
Numbers 6:24-26.....Bishop Ward

Recessional.....I Shall Wear A Crown

Obituary

Candelaria Norma Silva-Collins

June 8, 1954 – March 24, 2026

Candelaria Norma Silva-Collins, affectionately known as Candi to family, was born on June 8, 1954 and departed this life on March 24, 2026.

Candelaria held many titles during her impactful time on this earth. As an executive director, consultant, arts administrator and self-described “connector” for a variety of civic, educational and community-based organizations throughout New England and the United States.

For Candelaria, her most accomplished title was that of author, especially of books for children. A lover of the written word since childhood, those who know Candelaria will remember her as a fierce intellectual and voracious reader who was never far from a cherished book.

Despite the many hats she wore, it is her role as a mother where Candelaria was able to combine her insightful, nuanced and well-balanced approach to parenting, with a greater purpose, sharing her expertise with countless individuals throughout the country. The greater gift being that, by sharing her wealth of knowledge, she enriched generations of young and soon-to-be parents with the skills needed to improve and create more thriving households.

Born in Bethesda, Maryland to Norma Jean English and Saturnino Silva, Candelaria would be raised in her mother’s native St. Louis, Missouri. One of her proudest and most profound recollections was of being baptized in the Mississippi River as a child.

Being a member of a large church-going family instilled in her a sense of faith and belonging that proved indispensable throughout her life. As one of the first African American students to integrate and graduate University City High School, Candelaria put down roots in her adopted home of Boston, Massachusetts.



Obituary

After attending Northeastern University and leaving in her second year to start a family, Candelaria eventually matriculated to Goddard College's Adult Degree Program. In a time before computing as we know today, Candelaria achieved her Bachelor of Arts through a form of distance learning, mail correspondence, occasionally traveling to Goddard's bustling campus in Plainfield, Vermont, with her infant son and toddler daughter in-tow, to complete her degree.

Candelaria's vision and determination soon saw her launch a laudable professional career. As a writer and poet, her works appeared in publications including *Ebony Junior*, *The Bay State Banner*, *Roxbury Literary Annual*, the *School Library Journal*, and *The Boston Globe*.

Among the many organizations and institutions Candelaria worked for in her more than five decades in Boston were Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO), Roxbury Community College, Boston City Hospital (now Boston Medical Center), Families First, and Madison Park Development Corporation (MPDC).

It was at MPDC, while serving for 10 years as the first Director of Arts, Culture & Trade (ACT) Roxbury, a cultural-economic development program, Candelaria created and established the Roxbury (Dudley) Film Festival, Roxbury Literary Annual, and Roxbury Open Studios. Her motto, "Roxbury is Rich", inspired her work.

Candelaria's vision of spotlighting the burgeoning artistic creativity within the city's African-American community brought her to lead the redevelopment and transformation of Hibernian Hall, a long shuttered Irish dancehall building in Roxbury into a gathering place for music, dance, theater and office space.

As coordinator of the membership community program at the Huntington Theatre Company, Mrs. Silva-Collins increased theater engagement between Boston's inner-city residents and the venerable theatre. Candelaria spent ten years as Coordinator of the Creative Entrepreneur Fellowship Program for the Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston.

Candelaria also served as a member and chair of the George B. Henderson Foundation Designators. The Designators are leading figures in the design, artistic, and preservation professions in Boston, demonstrating that projects funded by the Foundation must be of the highest professional and design quality standards.





Candelaria Silva-Collins had been the program manager of the Boston Public Library's Fellowes Athenaeum Trust since 2014 before moving to Charlotte, NC in July 2025. A champion of libraries, she was able to realize a dream of her own when the children's books she authored and published were placed on BPL shelves as well as libraries and bookstores across the country.

Candelaria's experiences as a grandmother with new lives added to her cherished family, inspired her trilogy of books centered on an ebullient African American girl learning to navigate a new and exciting world. The setting of a happy home with a precocious child nestled in the bosom of a loving Black family. Candelaria's love of family, love of learning, and love of writing coalesced into one of her most enduring legacies: her Stacey Huggins books.

Candelaria was also a giver who donated regularly to a variety of causes. She volunteered at many community events often baking cookies or a cake. She regularly kept one-dollar bills in her pocket to offer to an unhoused person.

Candelaria Silva-Collins built an impeccable reputation through her dynamic leadership and effective problem-solving abilities. Her many awards include the Arts and Community Leadership Award, Martinis and Masterpieces from the Arts and Business Council of Greater Boston, as well as the Community Service Award from the John D. O'Bryant African-American Institute at Northeastern University and the Roxbury Puddingstone Award from Discover Roxbury.

Jump, Jump, Jump Stacey was named one of 2025's Best Indie Books by Kirkus Reviews.

Candelaria Norma Silva-Collins passed away after a valiant cancer fight. She is survived by her beloved husband Tessil John Collins, daughter Amber Rashida McQueen, son Cyrus Malik McQueen, mother Norma Jean Thompson, sister Nina Gardner, brother Glenn Ellis, daughter-in-love Dionna Collins, daughter-in-law Leanne McQueen, brother-in-law Christopher Gardner, a host of grandchildren who affectionately refer to her as "Grandi"; Saige Boone, Unique McQueen, Thomas McQueen, Darian Bogie-McQueen, Madison McElroy and Molly Jean McQueen, her dear niece Christina Gardner and nephew Anthony Gardner as well as maternal aunts Jewelle Reynolds, Sharon Ramey Williams, Deborah Pippins and siblings, Vicki Silva, Maribel Silva, Nimar Silva, cousins and cherished friends.

God's Gift

Candelaria Norma Silva-Collins & Tessil Collins

Monday, September 23, 2002 5:46 PM

I think you heard me when I called you God's Gift to me. I am very spiritual also. I pray constantly. The Jabez Prayer has overwhelmed me with blessings. I count you as one.

Wow...I could have written your email myself. The pace feels fine. The other night at your house, you said things that I spoke to God about. The words "she" would say so I would recognize His blessing. The challenge was not only for me to hear it, but acknowledge it.

We don't have to do war stories, but we must to talk to each other and trust that we'll be considerate of one another. When I fall, I fall hard. When I love someone, it seems I don't stop. I've been getting play (I don't want). I've been reaching out, and coming home empty. Until you.

My new boss asked me in a private meeting if I was pent up. I'm very expressive and open at school, so I told him I don't hold things in, I let them out. My frustration level at/with school varies.

But personally, I've been holding back for a long time, over a year. I've been giving and offering my love to someone who is done with me. It's unnatural for me to hold back, so I hurt.

You are cute. You should get all the attention available. I'm sure you don't get jealous. :-)

We can complement each other, fill in some gaps in our lives. I'll do my best to make you smile and be happy we found each other.

— Tessil

God's Gift

Candelaria Norma Silva-Collins & Tessil Collins

Relax, relate, release.

Saying it to myself as much as to you.

Two years for me, during which time I've questioned myself so much - if I had been more of that, less of this...would he have loved me...you know the drill.

She's through with you - are you through with her? fs she the one you took to see Luther? (I had a brief pang of envy at RFF- because of this - didn't think I noticed did you?)

Jealousy - I haven't inherited, or perhaps I've suppressed my Latino jealousy blood and my Leo mother's drama, I will say that when someone matters to me - I want them to be mine but I know that you can't orchestrate that, you can't demand fidelity and in fact fidelity (am I using this word properly?) isn't what it's about for me - it is feeling loved and cherished and as if I matter.

I could go on but I'll stop, turn down the intensity, passion, longing and leave work before I look up and it's 8 o'clock.

I already love you, Tessil, even if we don't have the great and good love that I desire - I have felt your caring and you gave me one of the most perfect weekends I've had in my life...or perhaps it wasn't you gave me or I gave you but it was the we. . . we were the magic...

— Candelaria

The Family extends its thanks to Robinson Fire and Rescue, the Novant Hospital Hospice team, Lisa Bishop, RN, Simia McCotter, CN, Ajelicia Hudson from Faithful Nurses Health Care, Dan Casotti of Robertson FCS, Nettrice Gaskins, Ph.D. for her portrait of our beloved Candelaria, Johnny Mawardi of Sensational Touch Events, Luther Fisher and Gary Marion, media techs, Bill Ward, pianist and the Congregation of Sardis Baptist Church for their openness and hospitality.

Repast — 2 pm

Mecklenburg Shrine Club 5200 Mecklenburg Shrine Club Rd Charlotte, NC 28215

