



Norma Jean Taliaferro

March 19, 1940 - September 21, 2025

Portsmouth- Norma J. Taliaferro, 85, of the 800 block of Dinwiddie Street departed this life on Sunday, September 21, 2025. Mrs. Taliaferro retired from Portsmouth Public Schools after over 30 years of service as a teacher and later Asst. Principal and acting Principal of Churchland High School. She had a second career as a realtor for Kline Real Estate and a third career as Asst. Executive Director for William A. Hunton YMCA. She was a vital part of the community as an educator, mentor, and volunteer as well as a devoted member of her beloved St. James Episcopal Church. She was involved in numerous social and civic organizations including: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Pinochle Bugs, Inc., and the Delicados, Inc. as well as The Camelot Civic League. She also sat on the board of several local charities including St. Mary's Home in Norfolk.

She is predeceased by her husband Franklin D. Taliaferro, sister Marjorie Williams, and maternal aunt Mary C. Davis. Mrs. Taliaferro leaves to cherish her memory a daughter Frankie Lawrence (Bill), a son James Taliaferro, two grandchildren Taylor and Will Lawrence, a niece Patricia Williams, and son-in-love Terrance Williams.

A life celebration service will be held at 1:00 pm on Monday, September 29, 2025, at St. James Episcopal Church located at 928 Effingham Street Portsmouth, VA with Rev. Diane Hill officiating. Preceding the service, Alpha

Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. will honor her with the "Ivy Beyond the Wall" ceremony at 12:30. Interment is private. The family has entrusted J.T. Fisher Funeral Services, 1248 N. George Washington Hwy, Chesapeake to handle the final care arrangements.

PLEASE NOTE:

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association, in the name of Norma J. Taliaferro at <https://www.alz.org/?form=FUNDHYMMBXU> .

Previous Events

Wake Service "Ivy Beyond the Wall"

SEP **29**. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

St. James Episcopal Church
928 Effingham Street
Portsmouth, VA

Memorial Service

SEP **29**. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. James Episcopal Church
928 Effingham Street
Portsmouth, VA

Tribute Wall

RB

“ *Ronald Barnes lit a candle in memory of
Norma Jean Taliaferro*



Ronald Barnes - October 21, 2025 at 02:09 AM

T1

“ Today we celebrate the life of my beloved Assistant Principal at Churchland High School, Mrs. Norma Taliaferro. She was a trailblazer, the only African American and woman administrator at a time when there were very few minorities at CHS. I can only imagine the battles she fought.

A proud woman of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she carried herself with grace, strength, and wisdom. She knew I wanted to be an AKA ☐♥☐

I'll never forget the day I got into a fight (yes, I did — that USMC DNA. Lol). Mrs. Taliaferro looked at me and said, “You're too smart and too pretty to fight.” Instead of disciplining me harshly, she sent me back to class. It may not sound like much, but that moment changed everything. Had she handled it differently, my trajectory could have been very different. Because of her mercy and belief in me, I graduated with honors and even spoke at graduation.

Later in life, I was blessed to become her Soror, a fellow woman of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. ♥♥ What an honor to share that sisterhood with someone who impacted my life so deeply.

I truly hate that I never had the chance to say thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Taliaferro, for seeing me, for guiding me, and for shaping generations of students like me. Your legacy lives on in us.

To this day, I carry her lesson with me: the power of mentorship lies in seeing what others may not yet see in themselves, and speaking life into that potential.

Rest well, Soror. ♥♥

Tonya Perkins CHS Class of 1990 - September 29, 2025 at 10:19 AM

SS

“ Frankie, James and Family:

My expression of heartfelt sympathy to you upon the death of your Mom and my friend, Norma. Norma and I were friends for almost 70 years. It was a friendship which began in earnest in 1958 when my Mom, Lina Smith, and Miss Davis drove us along 460 west, dragging a U-Haul trailer, which held everything Norma and I felt we would need at Virginia State. We were roommates in Atlantic City working during our college summer breaks for several years. Supposedly, we were working to help out with college tuition, but unfortunately for our parents, our earnings basically only supported our clothing purchases at a small Atlantic City clothing shop, which was able to redecorate its premises as a result. Our friendship was never more evident than when both of us were selected as probates for our respective sororities -- she AKA and me Delta. We were both elated, but soon came to realize that the two of us were the only probates in the dormitory where most of the "big sisters" lived which also housed the sorority rooms. Drawing upon each other, we made it through. In the later years of our friendship, I was thrilled when Norma asked if I would be a godparent for her first born, Frankie.

So many experiences shared for so many years have created many memories I will hold on to forever. I will miss your mom and will always cherish our friendship. I pray for God's blessing upon her soul and will always be thankful for the bond created by our friendship and hope, perhaps, to see her on the other side. May she rest in peace.

shirley smith - September 27, 2025 at 02:37 PM

DT

“ Mrs. Taliaferro was my Spanish teacher at the old I. C. Norcom High School. She was a wonderful teacher.

Diane J Trusty - September 26, 2025 at 07:34 PM

DT

“ *Diane J Trusty lit a candle in memory of Norma Jean Taliaferro*



Diane J Trusty - September 26, 2025 at 07:32 PM

TD

“ *What an extraordinary woman and what an AMAZING life lived. I attended Churchland High School from 1984 until my graduation, June 1988. It was a wonderful learning experience to be in the presence of a strong educated African American woman in leadership in a high school that was predominately white at the time. Her presence gave us a sense of calm. She was deeply respected and cared for all the students with such admiration. She changed lives with her dedication and commitment to her students. May she rest in peace. My prayers are for her family, friends, Sorors, and all the students who had the opportunity to be in her presence.*

Toni Dixon - September 26, 2025 at 10:10 AM

RD

“ *I'm saddened to learn of Mrs. T's passing. I remember one day in the cafeteria, you came up to me and said for me to come see you in your office....This was in regard to an issue I had with one of my teachers the year before. I always appreciated you for following up on that matter. RIP Mrs. T.*

Rodney Davis - Churchland class of 1992

Rodney Davis - September 24, 2025 at 08:50 PM

JJ

“ *In memory of a dedicated and eternally beautiful soul and woman. She remains the most important educational influence for me over 50 years beyond the moment I left her guidance and support as my homeroom teacher. Over those 4 years she encouraged, scolded, guided, endured and tolerated me and my classmates during some very turbulent high school days in the late 1960's. She was a constant and dependable presence who kept a steady hand on the wheel, always equally generous with compliments as well as strategic comments about the high-waters you may have 'mistakenly' work to school. Above all else we knew she loved us, and that love she so freely expressed was only surpassed, possibly, by the love and admiration we had for her. We love and will miss you Norma Jean Taliaferro ... Rest in Peace and Regal Power*
Joseph F. Jordan

Joseph F. Jordan - September 24, 2025 at 01:18 PM

TC

Mere words cannot express our gratitude and love for our Homeroom Teacher, Norma Jean Taylor Taliaferro. Room 318, 12-4 from 1965-1969. Her dedication and love for us enriched our lives and forever sealed a bond. Sending condolences and prayers to her family. Sending my heartfelt sentiments for a queen among queens. She will forever be cherished and loved by us for we became better because of her. Rest in Paradise Queen Norma Jean Taylor Taliaferro....
Tonette Choate-Wilder

Tonette Choate-Wilder - September 24, 2025 at 06:42 PM

KH

“ *Katherine Gambrell c/o "77 Wilson High lit a candle in memory of Norma Jean Taliaferro*



Katherine Gambrell c/o "77 Wilson High - September 24, 2025 at 09:20 AM

KH

“ Katherine Gambrell c/o "77 Wilson High lit a candle in memory of Norma Jean Taliaferro



Katherine Gambrell c/o "77 Wilson High - September 24, 2025 at 09:18 AM



As one of the many students she touched at Churchland High School. The Almighty used this Wonderful Lady to help me, when others had given up on me. I am a better person as a result of her direct influence at a very tumultuous time in my development. Everytime I saw her it was nothing but sincere, honest and genuine Love. Some today may have been offended, but I learned to appreciate it. THANK YOU MRS. TALIFERRO ❤️

LPrice Kennels - September 26, 2025 at 07:26 AM

TS

Mrs. T as I would call her, was my English teacher at Manor High School. She inspired me to become a teacher. I lived with her during my high school years, taking care of her daughter. She was a wonderful person and she was a great teacher. She will be missed. Thanks for all you did for your students and thanks for being there when I needed you. RIP

Tracie Smith-Banks - September 26, 2025 at 09:55 PM