Verna Handley Ivery ( David and Carmen)

**Life Story of Verna Mae Handley Ivery**

**A Mother’s Strength**

One of the most cherished memories we hold of Mama comes from a stormy day in Pine Bluff.

Carmen and I were frantic, thinking a tornado would take us away. The rain was falling so hard that when I looked out the window, I couldn’t even see the grass in the yard. Both of us were crying and afraid. Suddenly Carmen said, *“We need to go check on Mama.”*

We sprinted to her room, sure that she had to be just as scared as we were. But when we opened the door, we found her peacefully asleep. We woke her up and told her about the storm, expecting her to panic with us. Instead, she calmly said:

*“Go to sleep. God is in control. There’s no sense in you two worrying about anything.”*

The storm eventually passed. A large tree in the front yard split in half and fell toward the street instead of the house. We told her, *“Mama, we could have died, and you were in there sleeping like nothing was wrong while your children were scared.”* Once again, she simply replied:

*“God is in control.”*

**Faith and Resilience**

Another powerful memory comes from when I was in about the 5th grade. Mama became very sick. Later, when she recovered, she shared with me that during her illness she had seen **Big Momma**, her grandmother who had already passed away.

Big Momma told her to *“come on into heaven.”* But Mama replied, *“I cannot come right now. My child is not able to take care of themselves yet.”*

Her faith and her commitment to her children gave her strength to hold on.

**Her Final Transition**

When Mama passed away in April of 1989, it hurt me deeply, and my view of life has never been the same. Yet, it was not a complete surprise. In essence, she had told me long before that once I was capable of taking care of myself, she would make that transition to heaven.

Her life was a testimony of faith, resilience, and unwavering love for her children. And her words still guide us today:

*“God is in control.”*