



Great, Great Grandma Bertha Evans Siler, formerly of Sophia, who lived to be 116 years old. (b.1865-d.1981)



Rev. Kim Reives with Grandma Elnora Curry, Bertha's granddaughter, who is also from Randolph County. (b. 1921- )

## ***Looking back before going forward: A Revisit to the Land of Sofia in Randolph County***

*Written by Dr. Judy Rashid*

**Athlete. Teacher. Coach. Global Pastor.** Rev. Kim Reives, formerly of Randleman, has been called to be the Founding Pastor of the Amazing Joy Worship Centre in Pretoria, South Africa.

After Graduation from Randleman High School in 1983 and Barber Scotia College in 1987, Rev. Kim was licensed in 1999 and ordained as a minister in 2003. As a student athlete at Randleman High, she excelled in four varsity sports which landed her a spot in the Randleman High School Hall of Fame in 2013. She recently retired from Guilford County Schools having served 25 years as a teacher and administrator.

Yet, on a recent winter afternoon, Rev. Kim was drawn back to Sophia to visit where her Great, Great Grandma Bertha Evans Siler was born and raised. She felt the need to revisit her family roots to pull for strength on her new assignment. Recently, she found her Great, Great Grandma's death certificate which proved that when she passed December 25, 1981, she was indeed 116 years old. (see familysearch.org) An article that the family has that was written by Jerry Bledsoe in Greensboro at the time of her death, points out that Bertha Siler "could have been the oldest person on earth at the time of her death". Rev. Kim was 16yrs. old when she passed away and remembers her presence here on earth.

Rev. Kim recently shared that she often pulls on the strength of the stories of her family who lived and worked in Sophia and Randolph County, including her great, great grandmother Bertha and grandmother Elnora Curry. As she forges ahead to carry out this new mission in a land thousands of miles away, Rev. Kim still sits and learns from her grandmother Elnora who is still alive at 97 years old. As history is recorded, Randolph County has had a deep history steeped in the religious fervor of the early Quakers and Baptists. She believes that, due to slavery, her "Grandma Bertie" (as she was affectionately called by the family) and her family benefited from the generosity of the Quakers in the area during the late 1800's. During her recent stay on a farm in the area, Rev. Kim reported that she felt the presence of her ancestors. She vows to take that same enduring, kind spirit with her as she proclaims the gospel "to tell the people how good God is" as she builds a worship center thousands of miles away. She will take with her the spirit of love as she holds dear to her heart how a people that did not look like her shielded her ancestors from hate and bigotry.

Rev. Kim has served in ministry for 19 years having served as volunteer Chaplain at Barber-Scotia College; Chaplain of the National Alumni Association of Barber-Scotia College; as supply Pastor for the Empire Circuit of the United Methodist Church in Randolph County; and recently as an Associate Minister at Berean Baptist Church, Raleigh NC. As a Servant Leader, she ministers in the spirit of the motto of Barber Scotia College which is For **Head, Heart, and Hand**. Her favorite scripture is Romans 8:31... "**if God be for us, who can be against us?**" Rev. Reives is also intrigued by the Last Will and Testament that her fellow alumnus, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, left before her death which states, "**I leave you Love, love builds. It is positive and helpful. It is more beneficial than hate.**" With this spirit, she has accepted the call to go from Randleman to South Africa to spread the good news.

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