The family of Dr. Dorothy M. Pearson, Professor Emerita, Howard University, regretfully announces her passing. She died on May 15, 2019 in Louisville, KY.

...A talent is a gift of God...There is always the gratuitous element in talent. Of course, I must work at its use; I must develop it; but the talent itself is a gift I am only the trustee—Howard Thurman

After 24 years of service at Howard University, Dr. Pearson retired in 1999 as a Full Professor at the School of Social Work and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. She was also a former Associate Dean of Howard's School of Social Work. She lived in Washington, D.C. from 1975 - 2012 when she moved to Louisville, KY to be with her niece Diana Wagner (Robert) and family. Her research was in mental health and women's issues.

Dr. Pearson was a 1958 magna cum laude graduate of Southern University—Baton Rouge (Louisiana) where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Sociology and a minor in Chemistry. Upon graduation from Southern University, she enrolled in the University of Wisconsin School of Social Work and received a Master of Science in Social Work in 1960.

After receiving the Master's Degree, she began her professional career as a psychiatric social worker at Milwaukee County Mental Health Center, a public mental health center-hospital.

Dr. Pearson pursued doctoral study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and received her Ph.D. degree in 1973. She added a scholarly research focus to her already devoted interest in social work education and the mentally challenged. Her dissertation on social class and the mentally retarded was selected by the American Association on Mental Deficiency as an outstanding contribution to knowledge in the field. She went on to publish some of the findings in Social Service Review.

With less than a year of tenure at Howard University, she had provided the leadership that culminated in Board of Trustee approval of a Doctor of Social Work degree program; and as such, she was the first director of that program which was established in 1976. At that time, the social work doctoral program was the only one in existence in any university worldwide that predominantly served people of color. (In 1996, the program was converted to a Doctor of Philosophy degree program).

Dr. Pearson was a founding member (and secretary 1979-1980) of the group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) and through her leadership, the group held its annual meeting at Howard University in 1980.

Dr. Pearson also devoted her time to teaching and research. The findings of a research project regarding the educational, social, and family life of professional African American women was published as an Occasional Paper by Howard University. In 1993, she edited and published the book, Perspectives of Equality and...
In 1993, Dr. Pearson received the outstanding alumnus award from Southern University-Baton Rouge, and at the time of the celebration commemorating the award, she was made Honorary Mayor-President of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She has also been the recipient of other honors, awards, and organizational appointments which include; Service to Humanity award from Bogalusa (Louisiana) Community Center; appointment to the Governor's Council on Criminal Justice (Wisconsin); listed in Who's Who of American Women; plaques of appreciation and/or exemplary Leadership awards from Howard University, Barry University, Wisconsin Associations of Black Social Workers, National Association of Social Workers (Metro-Washington-Chapter and National), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Women In Crisis, Inc. (New York City; Bethel A.M.E. Church (Baltimore); and Unity Center of Truth (Washington, D.C.). Also, she was selected for the CSWE Profile that appeared in the Spring/Summer 1996 issue of its Social Work Education Reporter.

Dr. Pearson was born in Darbun (Walthall County), Mississippi, a small farming community, to the late Mr. & Mrs. Wallace (Annie Stovall) Pearson. She was the youngest child in this family of nine children.

She was nurtured in a loving Christian environment and was baptized at an early age in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Darbun. At her death, she was a member of Metropolitan United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. She was known for giving her time, know-how, a listening ear and an easy smile to those wanting to share their thoughts with her.

It sometimes appeared that Dr. Pearson accomplished things so easily, but to paraphrase Langston Hughes: Life for her was no crystal stair. It had tacks, splinters and barriers in it, but she kept climbing.

Survivors include nieces and nephews: Diana Wagner (Robert), Theodore Pearson, Jr. (Stephanie), Larry Pearson, Sandra Pearson, Connie Pearson (Lisa), Glenda Whittine, Ricky Pearson (Jesusa), Cornelius Pearson (Sandra), Portia Alexander (Steve) as well as great nieces & nephews cousins, former students and friends.