

## **EULOGY – RAMONA MASCOLL**

Ramona was a woman with many roles that she balanced well. She was a mother, grandmother, wife, friend and a dedicated health care worker. Each role she played, was executed with great compassion, love and commitment.

Born on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1969 in the village of Maracas in the island of Trinidad & Tobago, Ramona was the 2<sup>nd</sup> child to Raymond and Rosie McLean, and came from a family of six siblings. She was also the adoptive daughter of Gwendolyn Clark.

In her early childhood years, Ramona attended The Maracas St. Joseph Community Centre Pre-School, followed by the Maracas St. Joseph Roman Catholic Primary School, until reaching the age eligible to sit the common entrance examination.

Ramona then attended the Mount Hope Junior Secondary School between the years of 1981 to 1984 and then between the years of 1984 -1986 she attended the St. Augustine Senior Comprehensive School where she would have successfully passed the examinations set forth by the Caribbean Examination Council around the year 1987.

However, Ramona followed a passion that would have developed through high school that brought her to the island of Barbados where she undertook a course in cosmetology between 1988 and 1989. Few people may know this but before

Ramona's career in health care, she had a strong interest in cosmetology and pursued this profession specializing in hair dressing.

In fact, it was during this period that I would have first met Ramona and I'll share that memorable experience with you in a few moments.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1994, Ramona undertook the role of parenthood when she became the mother to her baby boy, who has now grown in to a respectful young gentleman.

Her parenting skills, love and dedication was second to none and I must say, it has been a pleasure watching Renaldo grow through the various stages of life under the values and morals his mother would have taught him from a young age. Ramona believed strongly in two values above all, discipline and respect. Qualities I am sure anyone who has met Renaldo can attest to.

Her marriage to Whitfield Mascoll on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2002 marked a new chapter for Ramona. One which was filled with dedication and love. Ramona was a wonderful wife; she would always ensure her husband never lacked support whether emotional or otherwise. She was the missing piece to his completion. He would refer to her as Mona and as we can sum up, being the "Mona-lisa" of his heart, an art of perfection and class.

The birth of Francisco in 2017 placed Ramona within yet another role, the role of being a grandmother or as Cisco would refer to her as, the role of being his “na na”. I vividly remember us spending hours both at my desk at work and on the phone discussing Cisco’s development, and the joy Ramona exclaimed from within came from a place of great happiness.

Ramona in a professional capacity would be the role most knew but this wasn’t just a job for her, this was a career path of joy with skills she honed naturally. Ramona always cared for the well being of others and this is where her true calling was destined to be. Her nursing career began working in the capacity of a private nurse at the Peace Haven Nursing Home, then for Ms. Judith Hinds where she provided individual care for Judith’s dad.

But Ramona wanted to do more and offer her skills to a wider range of people. As a result, she attended the Barbados Community College in 2011 where she did the Nursing Assistant program. It was here she met Maria Azumally and the two instantly meshed with Ramona subsequently becoming a mother figure in this young lady’s life. Ramona always referred to Maria as being her own daughter and spoke of her in the same light as she would for Renaldo.

The energy Ramona gave to many was of such that often colleagues at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital also saw her as a mother, she was always willing to offer advice or make the day or mood lighter for those around her.

Now I had known Ramona for over three decades, and I'll share with you how we first met. I was working as a clerk at Clico Insurance Ltd when a beautiful, young lady approached my desk and introduced herself as Ramona McLean. I would never forget how our personalities instantly meshed and for the past 33 odd years we have maintained a healthy friendship seeing and speaking regularly and doing one of Ramona's best past time which was going on picnics.

In late 2019 and early 2020, as the infancy of the pandemic in relation to the novel corona virus began to rise, I would often speak to Ramona and we would pray together for the safety of not only herself but those on the front line. BUT! Besides being obviously concerned, Ramona wasn't scared, she was ready for the task at hand no matter how dire the situation was expected to be.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February this year, I received a video call from Ramona and she said she had contracted the corona virus. My stomach instantly sank but I had faith that she would have pulled through, but our conversation was brief as she had seemed very tired.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, I received another video call from her but the mood was much dire than on the prior day. I remember her saying to me she had issues with her breathing and wasn't feeling well. As we often prayed, she asked me to pray for her and we prayed together that evening. But that would had been the last time I spoke to her.

From there, I followed up closely for updates from her son and his fiancé as they would keep me closely abreast with her condition. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, I received the news that Ramona had past, making her the first health care worker in Barbados to fall victim to this deadly virus. Words could not and still cannot describe how I felt in that moment as I tried to come to grips with the news that my best friend of 33 years would not be calling me tomorrow to tell me she was feeling better.

She was only 51 years old. A mother, sister, wife and healthcare worker. May she rest in peace.