

WILMER E. KING (1923 – 2012)



WILMER E. KING Wilmer Ellis King was born on July 14, 1923 in Antoine, Arkansas. Wilmer passed away on September 1, 2012 in Los Angeles, California. She was the first of nine children born to the marriage of Willie Lee and William Ellis Cooke. The Cooke family moved to Hinkley, California in the 1940's. Wilmer and her siblings were the first Black students to attend Barstow Union High School and she was the first Black student to graduate from Barstow High. After graduation from high school, she moved to Los Angeles and attended Moler Barber College. After graduating from Barber College, she began working as a barber in Los Angeles. In 1951, she married Ural King. The family moved to Barstow in 1954. Wilmer was a dedicated mother and was very close to her parents. She and her family spent a lot of time at the Cooke farm in Hinkley. In addition to raising 5 children, she worked as a barber at the Marine Base, Fort Irwin and at Dave's Barber Shop in Barstow until she was in her 70's. At the time of her stroke in the year 2000, she was still cutting her brother Vernon's hair. Although Wilmer spent the last 12 years of her life living with her children, she was a long-time resident of Barstow and considered Barstow her home. Wilmer was preceded in death by her husband, Ural King, her sister, Ruby Ramsey and her brothers James and Vernon Cooke. She is survived by her five children, Ernest and his wife Gwen, Jural Garrett and her husband Larry, Kora De Granada, William and his wife Eileen and Ural Lee; her three sisters, Charlene Handy, Martha Blunt, and Sara Cooke; her two brothers, McHenry and Donald Cooke and numerous grandsons, granddaughters, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. She was the beloved matriarch of a very large family and will truly be missed by all. Visitation will be on Friday, September 7, 2012 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Mead Mortuary, 36930 Irwin Road, Barstow. The Funeral Service will be on Saturday, September 8, 2012 at noon, also at Mead Mortuary, with burial to follow at Mt. View Memorial Park, 37067 Irwin Road, Barstow. Arrangements provided by Mead Mortuary, 760-256-5671.

Published in the Daily Press on September 7, 2012