

CAROL ANN MERRILL

September 1, 1970 – July 17, 2020

Carol Ann Merrill spent 46 of her 50 years at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning. She followed her siblings to Old St. Mary's (which later became CRCL), charming her way into the summer school age program at age 4. Carol attended the Center throughout elementary and high school; worked summers at the Center during high school and college; and graduated from Tuskegee University with support from the Carole Robertson Memorial Scholarship. When she came home after college, the Center was in need of a temporary receptionist. Carol was asked to fill in at the front desk while she (as she put it) "looked for a REAL job." Turns out, the Carole Robertson Center for Learning *was* Carol's real job, much more than she, or anyone, ever imagined at the time. 2020 marked Carol's 25th year of service to the Carole Robertson Center for Learning.

Carol's contributions to the Carole Robertson Center for Learning are too numerous to list, but highlights include her leadership on the team that tripled the agency's families, staff, programs and sites from 1998-2001. Carol managed the CRCL side of the development and construction of two beautiful family resource centers in North Lawndale and Little Village, spending the better part of three years in work boots and pink hardhat. She coordinated the health, safety and facility compliance for CRCL accreditations, federal reviews and licensing processes. Carol oversaw information technology and computer services, and food service operations. Carol was famous for demanding Executive Orders on a range of critical matters, from the specifications for Halloween candy, to the appropriate protocols for initiating the *ALI VEVO* cheer. In her spare time, Carol provided ongoing vision, planning and logistical support for the school age enrichment and youth development programs so dear to her heart: Camp, the annual Awards Banquet, the DREAM and IMANI service learning programs, and the quintennial Rededication Ceremonies. She also administered the award process for the Carole Robertson Memorial Scholarship, established in 1983 to provide college funds for CRCL alumni, for more than twenty years.

Carol expected the best from everyone, and demanded the same of herself. She was a kind, loving and generous friend, with a big heart and an even-bigger spirit. In all areas of her life, personal as well as professional, she exemplified the vision and the mission of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, and called on others to do the same. **Carol** worked tirelessly to ensure programs worthy of the name "Carole Robertson Center for Learning" and the tragic legacy of Birmingham, dedicated to honoring the brief lives of Carole Robertson, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair and Cynthia Wesley.

In addition to her large and loving family, and her devoted friends too numerous to count, **Carol** is mourned by the entire Robertson Family, and by generations of Carole Robertson Center for Learning colleagues, families, friends, alumni and volunteers.

In lieu of flowers, the family appreciates restricted contributions in memory of Carol A. Merrill, designated for the **Carole Robertson Memorial Scholarship Fund**. Contributions to the Carole Robertson Memorial Scholarship Fund should be sent c/o Carole Robertson Center for Learning, 1111 S. Western Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612.

~In love and remembrance, we celebrate Carol's life ~

Ali Vevo, Carol!