

Mildred “Bonnie” Hines, first woman AME Zion bishop, dies at 67

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [June 29, 2022](#) issue



(Courtesy of AME Zion Church)

Bishop Mildred “Bonnie” Hines, the first female bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, has died at age 67.

“We are sad because we will miss her powerful preaching, her electrifying teaching, her dynamic leadership, and her loving spirit,” said the board of bishops in a statement. “We are glad because she is free from her infirmities and is in the

presence of her Lord, whom she served so faithfully.”

Hines, the 98th bishop of the AME Zion Church, died May 23. She was the sole female bishop of the historically Black denomination, which dates to 1796.

George McKain, director of public affairs for the denomination, said Hines was known as an “unbelievable teacher” as well as a powerful preacher.

“She was our first female bishop, so against all the odds of the old system, she rose with a freshness and with a power single to none,” he said. “For her to be such a quiet yet powerful individual, it was amazing that she was the one God chose to raise up as the example and the pioneer for women in ministry.”

She pastored Los Angeles First AME Zion Church before being elected bishop in 2008. In 2013, she became the first woman to lead the board of bishops.

Hines served as the presiding prelate of a West African district and later was assigned to the US district that includes churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Tennessee. Most recently, she oversaw churches in South Carolina and Georgia. She was also the chair of the board of trustees of Clinton College in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Hines told the Sun Chronicle, an Attleboro, Massachusetts, newspaper, that she knew from age 16 she was meant to be a minister. She also said she hoped her historic bishop’s role would be an inspiration for others.

“For myself, I’m honored and very humbled to be the first female to be elected,” she said. —Religion News Service