

Councilman's wife recalled as more than just a school teacher

By Chris Sykes
Staff Writer

Evelyn R. Lewis, the wife of former Councilman William "Bill" Lewis, was remembered by those who attended her wake as someone who worked a long time to improve the lives of those around her.

Lewis died July 9 at East Orange General Hospital and was buried Friday in Fairmount Cemetery in Newark.

Because of the number of people who were expected to pay their respects, the wake was hosted July 15 in St. Matthew AME Church. The funeral liturgy was presented Friday in the church, where many of Evelyn and Bill's family, friends and former colleagues gathered to say farewell to a woman

they said lived a life that touched many others.

William Lewis said he will have many fond memories of his wife from their time spent raising a family. He added they shared many of the same beliefs in their professional careers: he as an engineer and she as an educator working in Newark's public schools.

"She was very accomplished in her field and came to the attention of a company that offered her a lot of money to relocate to Maryland and take over a program there," said Lewis. "She didn't want to leave New Jersey and the work that she was doing here. One of the problems today is people are too concerned about the awards and accolades

and plaques they can get to hang on their walls that they are going to get for doing something. She was not like that."

During his comments, Lewis said he wished for those assembled to take inspiration from her life that can be applied to their own.

"I want you to be happy that Evelyn had the kind of life that she had and produced the kind of family, children, work and people that she did," Lewis said. "She cared about children."

In his eulogy, the Rev. Reginald Jackson, pastor of St. Matthew's, encouraged the assembly to put Lewis' comments into action in their everyday lives the way she did.

Jackson said there was a lesson in Evelyn

Lewis' life from which everyone could learn. He said that although all were in the church to celebrate her 74 years of life, they should take the occasion to review themselves, the direction of their lives and what they are doing with them.

"More and more every day, I become concerned because I see people going through the motions of living without actually living," said Jackson. "Life is a gift. You ought to live the life that God has blessed you to live."

When it comes to the problem of people being "alive but not living," Jackson said that phenomenon has left him "baffled." He said he does not like being around people who lead dull, boring lives, but he never had any

problem with Evelyn Lewis because she was never guilty of doing that.

"Every day is the same for people who are not getting the most out of life or giving it their best because they do the same boring things over and over again. But before they realize it, their days on earth are coming to an end," said Jackson. "That's not life. God has given us these marvelous computers that are our minds to lead a good, fruitful life. I commend Sister Lewis for using her mind to become the best person that she possibly could and dedicating her life to helping others."

Editor's note: William R. Lewis comments about his wife in a letter to the editor, Page 4.