



Aretha Franklin

Aretha Louise Franklin, born March 25th, 1942, in Memphis Tennessee, died August 16th, 2018 (aged 76).

Aretha was born to Barbara and Clarence LaVaughn Franklin. She was delivered at her family's home located at 406 Lucy Avenue, Memphis Tennessee. Her father was a Baptist Minister while her mother was an accomplished piano player and vocalist. Both Mr. and Mrs. Franklin had children from prior relationships plus the four children they had together. When Aretha was two, the family relocated to Buffalo New York. When Aretha turned five, her father had permanently relocated the family to Detroit.

The Franklins had a troubled marriage due to Mr. Franklin's infidelities, and they separated in 1948. At that time, Barbara Franklin returned to Buffalo taking with her Aretha's half-brother, Vaughn.

From her time growing up in the home of a prominent African American preacher to the end of her life, Franklin was immersed and involved in the struggle for civil rights and women's rights. She provided money for civil rights groups, at times covering payroll, and performed at benefits and protests. **She** was also a strong supporter of Native American rights. She quietly and without fanfare supported Indigenous People's struggles worldwide, and numerous movements that supported Native American and First Nation cultural rights. In an era when respect was not universally received in the US, Franklin's rousing version of "Respect," first recorded by Otis Redding, was an electrifying call to action. Released in the 1970s, the song radically overturned gender conventions by situating a woman as the primary breadwinner in a family and fiercely challenged sexist assumptions. The unflinching demand for respect became a mantra for both the women's rights and civil rights movements.

Franklin's song "Sisters Are Doin' It For Themselves" was another feminist anthem, envisioning a world where women everywhere can break free from the constraints of a sexist society.

"American history wells up when Aretha sings," Obama said in 2015. "Nobody embodies more fully the connection between the African-American spiritual, the blues, R&B, rock and roll – the way that hardship and sorrow were transformed into something full of beauty and vitality and hope."

The soul singer regularly performed at civil rights events to support Martin Luther King Jr. during his rallies. She was eventually awarded the Southern Christian Leadership Award for her dedicated work by King. When King was assassinated in 1968, Franklin performed at his funeral.

Aretha also regularly supported charities such as Feeding America, which funds more than 200 foodbanks, and the Barbara Davis Centre for Childhood Diabetes. Having diabetes herself, she wanted to make sure other people would have the health care access they needed.

In 2012, she attended a gala for the Rainforest Fund, which seeks to protect human rights in the Amazon Rainforest. The next year she lent her voice to a Christmas album whose proceeds went to the Special Olympics. In 2017, Franklin was a headlining act for The Elton John AIDS Foundation New York Gala, which went on to raise \$4.4 million.

“Being the Queen is not all about singing, and being a diva is not all about singing,” she said of her fame. “It has much to do with your service to people. And your social contributions to your community and your civic contributions as well.”

