Aretha Franklin

Aretha Louise Franklin (March 25, 1942 – August 16, 2018) was an American singer, songwriter, actress, pianist, and civil rights activist. Franklin began her career as a child singing gospel at New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, where her father C. L. Franklin was a minister. At the age of 18, she embarked on a secular-music career as a recording artist for Columbia Records. While Franklin's career did not immediately flourish, she found acclaim and commercial success after signing with Atlantic Records in 1966. Hit songs such as "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)", "Respect", "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman", "Chain of Fools", "Think", and "I Say a Little Prayer" propelled her past her musical peers. By the end of the 1960s, Aretha Franklin had come to be known as the "Queen of Soul".

Franklin continued to record acclaimed albums such as I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You (1967), Lady Soul (1968), Spirit in the Dark (1970), Young, Gifted and Black (1972), Amazing Grace (1972), and Sparkle (1976) before experiencing problems with her record company. Franklin left Atlantic in 1979 and signed with Arista Records. She appeared in the 1980 film *The Blues Brothers* before releasing the successful albums Jump to It (1982), Who's Zoomin' Who? (1985), and Aretha (1986) on the Arista label. In 1998, Franklin returned to the Top 40 with the Lauryn Hill-produced song "A Rose Is Still a Rose"; later, she released an album of the same name which was certified gold. That same year, Franklin earned international acclaim for her performance of "Nessun dorma" at the Grammy Awards; she filled in at the last minute for Luciano Pavarotti, who canceled his appearance after the show had already begun. [3][4] In a widely noted performance, she paid tribute to 2015 honoree Carole King by singing "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" at the Kennedy Center Honors.

Franklin recorded 112 charted singles on *Billboard*, including 77 Hot 100 entries, 17 top-ten pop singles, 100 R&B entries, and 20 number-one R&B singles. Besides the foregoing, Franklin's well-known hits also include "Ain't No Way", "Call Me", "Don't Play That Song (You Lied)", "Spanish Harlem", "Rock Steady", "Day Dreaming", "Until You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)", "Something He Can Feel", "Jump to It", "Freeway of Love", "Who's Zoomin' Who", and "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)" (a duet with George Michael). She won 18 Grammy Awards, [5] including the first eight awards given for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance (1968–1975). Franklin is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, having sold more than 75 million records

Aretha Franklin



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Born	Aretha Louise Franklin March 25, 1942 Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.
Died	August 16, 2018 (aged 76) Detroit, Michigan, U.S.
Resting place	Woodlawn Cemetery Detroit, Michigan
Occupation	Singer · songwriter · actress · pianist · activist
Years active	1956–2018
Home town	Detroit, Michigan, U.S.
Spouse(s)	Ted White (m. 1961; div. 1969) Glynn Turman (m. 1978; div. 1984)

Clarence LaVaughn

Franklin

Children

Parent(s)

worldwide.^[6] Franklin has had #1 records in every decade since the 1960s with the rerelease of "Never Gonna Break My Faith" in June 2020. ^[7]

Franklin received numerous honors throughout her career. She was awarded the National Medal of Arts and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 1987, she became the first female performer to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She also was inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2005 and into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2010, Rolling Stone magazine ranked her number one on its list of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time" and number nine on its list of "100 Greatest Artists of All Time". The Pulitzer Prize jury in 2019 awarded Franklin a posthumous special citation "for her indelible contribution to American music and culture for more than five decades."

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	Barbara Siggers Franklin	
Relatives	Erma Franklin (sister)	
	Carolyn Franklin (sister)	
	Cecil Franklin	
	(brother)	
Awards	see, list	
Musical career		
Genres	Soul \cdot R&B ^[1] \cdot pop \cdot	
	gospel · dance · rock	
Instruments	Vocals · piano	
Labels	J.V.B · Columbia ·	
	$At lantic \cdot Arista \cdot RCA$	
Website	Official website (http	
	s://www.arethafrankli	
	n.net/) 🖍	
Signature		
The best famile		

Early life



Franklin's birthplace, 406 Lucy Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee^[11]

Aretha Louise Franklin was born on March 25, 1942, to <u>Barbara</u> (née Siggers) and <u>Clarence LaVaughn "C. L." Franklin</u>. She was delivered at her family's home located at 406 Lucy Avenue, <u>Memphis, Tennessee</u>. Her father was a <u>Baptist minister</u> and <u>circuit preacher</u> originally from <u>Shelby, Mississippi, while her mother was an accomplished piano player and vocalist. Both Mr. and Mrs. Franklin had children from prior relationships in addition to the four children they had together. When Aretha was two, the family relocated to <u>Buffalo, New York</u>. By the time Aretha turned five, C. L. Franklin had permanently relocated the family to <u>Detroit</u>, where he took over the pastorship of the <u>New Bethel Baptist Church</u>.</u>

The Franklins had a troubled marriage due to Mr. Franklin's infidelities, and they separated in 1948.^[15] At that time, Barbara Franklin returned to Buffalo with Aretha's half brother, Vaughn.^[16] After the separation, Aretha recalled seeing her mother in Buffalo during the summer, and Barbara Franklin frequently visited her children in Detroit.^{[17][16]} Aretha's mother died of a heart attack on March 7, 1952, before Aretha's tenth birthday.^[18] Several women, including Aretha's grandmother, Rachel, and Mahalia Jackson, took turns helping with the children at the Franklin home.^[19] During this time, Aretha learned how to play piano by ear.^[20] She also attended public school in Detroit, going through her freshman year at Northern High School, but dropping out during her sophomore year.^[21]

Aretha's father's emotionally driven sermons resulted in his being known as the man with the "million-dollar voice". He earned thousands of dollars for sermons in various churches across the country. His celebrity status led to his home being visited by various celebrities. Among the visitors were gospel musicians Clara Ward, James Cleveland, and early Caravans members Albertina Walker and Inez Andrews. Martin Luther King Jr., Jackie Wilson and Sam Cooke all became friends of C. L. Franklin, as well. Ward was romantically involved with Aretha's father from around 1949 to Ward's death in 1973, though Aretha "preferred to view them strictly as friends". Ward also served as a role model to the young Aretha.

Music career

Beginnings (1952–1960)

Just after her mother's death, Franklin began singing solos at New Bethel, debuting with the hymn "Jesus, Be a Fence Around Me". [19][29] When Franklin was 12, her father began managing her; he would bring her on the road with him during his so-called "gospel caravan" tours for her to perform in various churches. [30] He also helped her sign her first recording deal with J.V.B. Records. Recording equipment was installed inside New Bethel Baptist Church and nine tracks were recorded. Franklin was featured on vocals and piano. [31] In 1956, J.V.B. released Franklin's first single, "Never Grow Old", backed with "You Grow Closer". "Precious Lord (Part One)" backed with "Precious Lord (Part Two)" followed in 1959. These four tracks, with the addition of "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood", were released on side one of the 1956 album, *Spirituals*. This was reissued by Battle Records in 1962 under the same title. [32] In 1965, Checker Records released Songs of Faith, featuring the five tracks from the 1956 Spirituals album, with the addition of four previously unreleased recordings.

During this time, Franklin would occasionally travel with <u>The Soul Stirrers</u>.^[33] As a young gospel singer, Franklin spent summers on the gospel circuit in Chicago and stayed with <u>Mavis Staples</u>' family.^[34] According to music producer <u>Quincy Jones</u>, while Franklin was still young, <u>Dinah Washington</u> let him

know, "Aretha was the 'next one". [35] In 1958, Franklin and her father traveled to <u>California</u>, where she met singer Sam Cooke. [36] At the age of 16, Franklin went on tour with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and she would ultimately sing at his funeral in 1968. [37]

After turning 18, Franklin confided to her father that she aspired to follow Sam Cooke in recording pop music, and moved to New York. [25] Serving as her manager, C. L. Franklin agreed to the move and helped to produce a two-song demo that soon was brought to the attention of Columbia Records, who agreed to sign her in 1960. Franklin was signed as a "five-percent artist". [38] During this period, Franklin would be coached by choreographer Cholly Atkins to prepare for her pop performances. Before signing with Columbia, Sam Cooke tried to persuade Franklin's father to sign her with his label, RCA, but his request was denied. Record label owner Berry Gordy was also looking to sign Franklin and her elder sister Erma to his Tamla label. However, C.L. Franklin felt the label was not yet established enough, and he turned Gordy down. Franklin's first Columbia single, "Today I Sing the Blues", [39] was issued in September 1960 and later reached the top 10 of the Hot Rhythm & Blues Sellers chart. [40]

Columbia (1961–1966)

In January 1961, Columbia issued Franklin's first secular album, <u>Aretha: With The Ray Bryant Combo.</u> The album featured her first single to chart the *Billboard* Hot 100, "Won't Be Long", which also peaked at number 7 on the R&B chart. [41] Mostly produced by <u>Clyde Otis</u>, Franklin's Columbia recordings saw her performing in diverse genres such as <u>standards</u>, <u>vocal jazz</u>, <u>blues</u>, <u>doo-wop</u> and <u>rhythm and blues</u>. Before the year was out, Franklin scored her first hit single with her rendition of the standard "Rock-a-Bye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody". [42] "Rock-a-Bye" became her first international hit, reaching the top 40 in Australia and Canada. By the end of 1961, Franklin was named as a "new-star female vocalist" in <u>DownBeat magazine</u>. [43] In 1962, Columbia issued two more albums, <u>The Electrifying Aretha Franklin</u> and <u>The Tender</u>, the Moving, the Swinging Aretha Franklin, [44][45] the latter of which reached No. 69 on the <u>Billboard chart</u>. [46]

In the 1960s, during a performance at the <u>Regal Theater</u>, <u>WVON</u> radio personality <u>Pervis Spann</u> announced that Franklin should be crowned "the Queen of Soul". [47][34] Spann ceremonially placed a crown on her head. By 1964, Franklin began recording more pop music, reaching the top 10 on the R&B chart with the ballad "Runnin' Out of Fools" in early 1965. She had two R&B charted singles in 1965 and 1966 with the songs "One Step Ahead" and "Cry Like a Baby", while also reaching the <u>Easy Listening</u> charts with the ballads "You Made Me Love You" and "(No, No) I'm Losing You". By the mid-1960s, Franklin was making \$100,000 per year from countless performances in nightclubs and theaters. Also during that period, she appeared on rock-and-roll shows such as <u>Hollywood A Go-Go</u> and <u>Shindig!</u>. However, she struggled with commercial success while at Columbia. Label executive <u>John H. Hammond</u> later said he felt Columbia did not understand Franklin's early gospel background and failed to bring that aspect out further during her period there. [39]

Atlantic (1967-1979)

In November 1966, Franklin's Columbia recording contract expired and she chose to move to <u>Atlantic Records</u>. [50][51] In January 1967, she traveled to <u>Muscle Shoals</u>, <u>Alabama</u>, to record at <u>FAME Studios</u> and recorded the song "<u>I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)</u>", backed by the <u>Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section</u>. Franklin only spent one day recording at FAME, as an altercation broke out between her manager and husband <u>Ted White</u>, studio owner <u>Rick Hall</u>, and a horn player, and sessions were abandoned. [39][52] The song was released the following month and reached number one on the R&B chart, while also peaking at number nine on the *Billboard* Hot 100, giving Franklin her first top-ten pop single. The song's b-side, "<u>Do</u>

<u>Right Woman, Do Right Man</u>", reached the R&B top 40, peaking at number 37. In April, Atlantic issued her frenetic version of <u>Otis Redding</u>'s "<u>Respect</u>", which reached number one on both the R&B and pop charts. "Respect" became her signature song and was later hailed as a civil rights and feminist anthem. [39][53]



Franklin in 1967

Franklin's debut Atlantic album, <u>I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You</u>, also became commercially successful, later going gold. Franklin scored two more top-ten singles in 1967, including "Baby I Love You" and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman". Her rapport with producer <u>Jerry Wexler helped in the creation of the majority of Franklin's peak recordings with Atlantic.</u> In 1968, she issued the top-selling albums <u>Lady Soul</u> and <u>Aretha Now</u>, which included some of her most popular hit singles, including "Chain of Fools", "Ain't No Way", "Think" and "I Say a Little Prayer". That February, Franklin earned the first two of her Grammys, including the debut category for <u>Best Female R&B Vocal Performance</u>. [54] On February 16, Franklin was honored with a day named for her and was greeted by longtime friend Martin Luther King Jr., who gave her the <u>SCLC</u> Drum Beat Award for Musicians two months before his death. [55][56][57] Franklin toured outside the US for the first time in May, including an appearance at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, where she played to a near-hysterical audience

who covered the stage with flower petals.^[58] She appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine in June.^[59]

In 1969 Franklin was the subject of a criminal <u>impersonation</u> scheme. Another woman performed at several Florida venues under the name Aretha Franklin. Suspicion was drawn when the fake Franklin charged only a fraction of the expected rate to perform. Franklin's lawyers contacted Florida authorities and uncovered a coercive scheme in which the singer, <u>Vickie Jones</u>, had been threatened with violence and constrained into impersonating her idol, whom she resembled closely both in voice and looks.^[60] After being cleared of wrongdoing, Jones subsequently enjoyed a brief career of her own, during which she was herself the subject of an impersonation.

Franklin's success expanded during the early 1970s, during which she recorded the multi-week R&B number one "Don't Play That Song (You Lied)", as well as the top-ten singles "Spanish Harlem", "Rock Steady" and "Day Dreaming". Some of these releases were from the acclaimed albums Spirit in the Dark and Young, Gifted and Black. In 1971, Franklin became the first R&B performer to headline Fillmore West, later that year releasing the live album *Aretha Live at Fillmore West*. [61] She returned to Gospel music in a two-night, live-church recording, with the album, *Amazing Grace*, in which she reinterpreted standards such as Mahalia Jackson's "How I Got Over". [62] *Amazing Grace* sold more than two million copies. [63] The live performances were filmed for a concert film directed by Sydney Pollack, but due to synching problems and Franklin's own attempts to prevent the film's distribution after Hollywood refused to promote a dark-skinned black woman as a movie star at the time, its release was only realized by producer Alan Elliott in November 2018.^[64] Franklin's career began to experience problems while recording the album, *Hev Now Hev*, which featured production from Quincy Jones. Despite the success of the single "Angel", the album bombed upon its release in 1973. Franklin continued having R&B success with songs such as "Until You Come Back to Me" and "I'm in Love", but by 1975 her albums and songs were no longer top sellers. After Jerry Wexler left Atlantic for Warner Bros. Records in 1976, Franklin worked on the soundtrack to the film Sparkle with Curtis Mayfield. The album yielded Franklin's final top 40 hit of the decade, "Something He Can Feel", which also peaked at number one on the R&B chart. Franklin's follow-up albums for Atlantic, including Sweet Passion (1977), Almighty Fire (1978) and La Diva (1979), bombed on the charts, and in 1979 Franklin left the company. [65]

Arista (1980-2007)



Franklin in 1998

In 1980, after leaving Atlantic Records, [66] Franklin signed with Clive Davis's Arista Records^[67] and that same year gave a command performance at London's Royal Albert Hall in front of Oueen Elizabeth. Franklin also had an acclaimed guest role as a soul food restaurant proprietor and wife of Matt "Guitar" Murphy in the 1980 comedy musical *The Blues Brothers*. [68][69] Franklin's first Arista album, Aretha (1980), featured the No. 3 R&B hit "United Together" and her Grammy-nominated cover of Redding's "I Can't Turn You Loose". The follow-up, 1981's Love All the Hurt Away, included her famed duet of the title track with George Benson, while the album also included her Grammy-winning cover of Sam & Dave's "Hold On, I'm Comin'". Franklin achieved a gold record—for the first time in seven years —with the 1982 album Jump to It. The album's title track was her first top-40 single on the pop charts in six years.^[70] The following year, she released "Get It Right", produced by Luther Vandross.^[71] In 1985, inspired by a desire to have a "younger sound" in her music, Who's Zoomin' Who? became her first Arista album to be certified platinum. The album sold well over a million copies thanks to the hits "Freeway of Love", the title track, and "Another Night". [72] The next year's *Aretha* album nearly matched this

success with the hit singles "Jumpin' Jack Flash", "Jimmy Lee" and "I Knew You Were Waiting for Me", her international number-one duet with George Michael. During that period, Franklin provided vocals to the theme songs of the TV shows *A Different World* and *Together*.^[73] In 1987, she issued her third gospel album, *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, which was recorded at her late father's New Bethel church, followed by *Through the Storm* in 1989. The same year, Franklin performed "America the Beautiful" at WWE's Wrestlemania III, the company's third annual "entertainment spectacular", in her home state of Michigan. Franklin's 1991 album, *What You See is What You Sweat*, flopped on the charts. She returned to the charts in 1993 with the dance song "A Deeper Love" and returned to the top 40 with the song "Willing to Forgive" in 1994.^[74]

In 1995, she was selected to play <u>Aunt Em</u> in the <u>Apollo Theater</u> revival of <u>The Wiz</u>. Franklin's final top 40 single was 1998's "<u>A Rose Is Still a Rose</u>". The <u>album of the same name</u> was released after the single. It sold over 500,000 copies; earning a gold album. ^[75]

That same year, Franklin received global praise after her 1998 Grammy Awards performance. She had initially been asked to come and perform in honor of the 1980 *The Blues Brothers* film in which she appeared with Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi. That evening after the show had already begun, Luciano Pavarotti himself contacted show producers and said he was too ill to perform the opera aria "Nessun dorma" as planned. The show's producers were desperate to fill the time slot, and approached Franklin with their dilemma. She was a friend of Pavarotti, and had sung the selection two nights prior at the annual MusiCares event. She asked to hear Pavarotti's rehearsal recording, and after listening, agreed that she could sing it in the tenor range that the orchestra was prepared to play in. Over one billion people worldwide saw the performance, and she received an immediate standing ovation. She would go on to record the selection, and perform it



Franklin performing in April 2007 at the Nokia Theater in Dallas, Texas

live several more times in the years to come; the last time being in <u>Philadelphia</u> for <u>Pope Francis</u> at the <u>World Meeting of Families</u> in September 2015. A small boy was so touched by her performance that he came onto the stage and embraced her while Franklin was still singing. [3][4]

Her final Arista album, <u>So Damn Happy</u>, was released in 2003 and featured the Grammy-winning song "Wonderful". In 2004, Franklin announced that she was leaving Arista after more than 20 years with the label. ^[76] To complete her Arista obligations, Franklin issued the duets compilation album *Jewels in the*

<u>Crown: All-Star Duets with the Queen</u> in 2007.^[77] The following year, she issued the holiday album <u>This Christmas, Aretha</u>, on DMI Records.^[78] In February 2006 she performed "<u>The Star-Spangled Banner</u>" with Aaron Neville and Dr. John for Super Bowl XL, held in her hometown of Detroit.^[79]

Later years (2008–2018)

On the 8 February, 2008, Franklin was honored as the <u>MusiCares</u> Person of the Year, and performed "<u>Never Gonna Break My Faith</u>", which she had won the <u>Grammy</u> for best Gospel performance [80] the year before. 12 years later, an unheard performance of "<u>Never Gonna Break My Faith</u>" was released in June 2020 to commemorate <u>Juneteeth</u> with a new video visualizing the American human rights movement. This caused the song to enter the Billboard gospel charts at #1, giving Franklin the distinction of having had #1 records in every decade since the 1960s [81]

On January 20, 2009, Franklin made international headlines for performing "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" at President Barack Obama's inaugural ceremony with her church hat becoming a popular topic online. In 2010, Franklin accepted an honorary degree from Yale University. [79] In 2011, under her own label, Aretha's Records, she issued the album *Aretha: A Woman Falling Out of Love*.



Franklin performs in the East Room of the White House in 2015

In 2014, Franklin was signed under RCA Records, controller of the Arista catalog and a sister label to Columbia via Sony Music Entertainment, and worked with Clive Davis. An album was planned with producers Babyface and Danger Mouse. [82] On September 29, 2014, Franklin performed to a standing ovation, with Cissy Houston as backup, a compilation of Adele's "Rolling in the Deep" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" on the Late Show with David Letterman. [83] Franklin's cover of "Rolling in the Deep" was featured among nine other songs in her first RCA release, Aretha Franklin Sings the Great Diva Classics, released in October 2014. [84] In doing so, she became the first woman to have 100 songs on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart with the success of her cover of Adele's "Rolling in the Deep", which debuted at number 47 on the chart. [85]

In December 2015, Franklin gave an acclaimed performance of "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" at the 2015 Kennedy Center Honors during the section for honoree Carole King, who co-wrote the song. [86][87][88][89] During the bridge of the song, Franklin dropped her fur coat to the stage, for which the audience rewarded her with a midperformance standing ovation. [90][91] She returned to Detroit's Ford Field on

Thanksgiving Day 2016 to once again perform the national anthem before the game between the Minnesota Vikings and Detroit Lions. Seated behind the piano, wearing a black fur coat and Lions stocking cap, Franklin gave a rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" that lasted more than four minutes and featured a host of improvizations. [92] Franklin released the album *A Brand New Me* in November 2017 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which uses archived recordings from Franklin. [93] It peaked at number 5 on the *Billboard* Top Classical Albums chart before her death and rose to number 2 after her death.

While Franklin canceled some concerts in 2017 due to health reasons, and during an outdoor Detroit show, she asked the audience to "keep me in your prayers", she was still garnering highly favorable reviews for her skill and showmanship. [94][95][96] At the Ravinia Festival on September 3, 2017, she gave her last full concert. [97][98] Franklin's final performance was at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City during Elton John's 25th anniversary gala for the Elton John AIDS Foundation on November 7, 2017. [99]

Music style and image

According to Richie Unterberger, Franklin was "one of the giants of soul music, and indeed of American pop as a whole. More than any other performer, she epitomized soul at its most gospel-charged". [1] She had often been described as a great singer and musician due to "vocal flexibility, interpretive intelligence, skillful piano-playing, her ear, her experience". [100] Franklin's voice was described as being a "powerful mezzo-soprano voice". She was praised for her arrangements and interpretations of other artists' hit songs. [101] According to David Remnick, what "distinguishes her is not merely the breadth of her catalog or the cataract force of her vocal instrument; it's her musical intelligence, her way of singing behind the beat, of spraying a wash of notes over a single word or syllable, of constructing, moment by moment, the emotional power of a three-minute song. 'Respect' is as precise an artifact as a Ming vase". [91] Describing Franklin's voice as that of a youngster on her first album, Songs of Faith, released in 1956 when she was just 14, Jerry Wexler explained that it "was not that of a child but rather of an ecstatic hierophant". [102] Critic Randy Lewis assessed her skills as a pianist as "magic" and "inspirational". Musicians and professionals



Franklin waiting to perform at the White House, in 2015

alike such as Elton John, <u>Keith Richards</u>, Carole King, and Clive Davis were fans of her piano performances.^[103]

In 2015, then-President Barack Obama wrote the following regarding Franklin:

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. American history wells up when Aretha sings. That's why, when she sits down at a piano and sings 'A Natural Woman,' she can move me to tears — the same way that Ray Charles's version of 'America the Beautiful' will always be in my view the most patriotic piece of music ever performed — because it captures the fullness of the American experience, the view from the bottom as well as the top, the good and the bad, and the possibility of synthesis, reconciliation, transcendence. [104]

Civil rights activism

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 <u>civil rights</u> and <u>women's rights</u>. She provided money for civil rights groups, at times covering payroll, and performed at benefits and protests. [105] When <u>Angela Davis</u> was jailed in 1970, Franklin told <u>Jet</u>: "Angela Davis must go free ... Black people will be free. I've been locked up (for disturbing the peace in Detroit) and I know you got to disturb the peace when you can't get no peace. Jail is hell to be in. I'm going to see her free if there is any justice in our courts, not because I believe in communism, but because she's a Black woman and she wants freedom for Black people". [105] Her songs "Respect" and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" became anthems of these movements for social change. [106][107] Franklin and several other American icons declined to take part in performing at President Donald Trump's 2017 inauguration as a large-scale act of musical protest. [108]

Franklin was also a strong supporter for <u>Native American</u> rights.^[109] She quietly and without fanfare supported <u>Indigenous Peoples'</u> struggles worldwide, and numerous movements that supported Native American and <u>First Nation</u> cultural rights.^[109]

Personal life

After being raised in Detroit, Franklin relocated in the 1960s to New York City, where she lived until moving to Los Angeles in the mid-1970s. She eventually settled in Encino, Los Angeles, where she lived until 1982. She then returned to the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, to be close to her ailing father and siblings. Franklin maintained a residence there until her death. Following an incident in 1984, she cited a fear of flying that prevented her from traveling overseas; she performed only in North America afterward. [47]



Franklin and William Wilkerson at the 2011 US Open

Franklin was the mother of four sons. She first became pregnant at the age of 12 and gave birth to her first child, named Clarence after her father, [110] on January 28, 1955. The father was widely believed and reported to be "Donald Burk, a boy she knew from school"; however, in one of her handwritten wills discovered in 2019, Franklin revealed the father was Edward Jordan. [111][112] On August 31, 1957, Franklin had a second child with Jordan, named Edward Derone Franklin after his father. [113] Franklin did not like to discuss her early pregnancies with interviewers. [114] Both children took her family name. While Franklin was pursuing her career and "hanging out with [friends]", Franklin's grandmother Rachel and sister Erma took turns raising the children. [115] Franklin would visit them

often.^[116] Franklin's third child, Ted White Jr., was born to Franklin and her then-husband Theodore "Ted" White in February 1964^[117] and is known professionally as Teddy Richards. He provided guitar backing for his mother's band during live concerts.^[118] Her youngest son, Kecalf Cunningham, was born in April 1970 and is the child of her road manager Ken Cunningham.^[119]

Franklin was married twice. Her first husband was <u>Ted White</u>, whom she married in 1961 at the age of 19.^{[120][121]} Franklin had actually seen White the first time at a party held at her house in 1954.^[122] After a contentious marriage that involved <u>domestic violence</u>, Franklin separated from White in 1968 and divorced him in 1969.^[123] Franklin married her second husband, actor <u>Glynn Turman</u>, on April 11, 1978, at her father's church. By marrying Turman, Franklin became stepmother of Turman's three children from a previous marriage. Franklin and Turman separated in 1982 after Franklin returned to Michigan from California, and they divorced in 1984. In 2012, Franklin had plans to marry her longtime companion Willie Wilkerson.^{[124][125]} She and Wilkerson had been engaged twice before. Franklin eventually called off the 2012 engagement.^[126]

Franklin's sisters, <u>Erma</u> and <u>Carolyn</u>, were professional musicians and spent years performing background vocals on Franklin's recordings. Following Franklin's divorce from Ted White, her brother Cecil became her manager, and maintained that position until his death from lung cancer on December 26, 1989. Sister Carolyn died in April 1988 from breast cancer, while eldest sister Erma died from throat cancer in September 2002. Franklin's half-brother Vaughn died in late 2002. Her half-sister, Carol Kelley (née Jennings; born 1940), is C. L. Franklin's daughter by Mildred Jennings, a then 12-year-old congregant of New Salem Baptist Church in Memphis where C. L. was pastor. [127]

Franklin was performing at the <u>Aladdin Hotel</u> in <u>Las Vegas</u>, on June 10, 1979, when her father, C. L., was shot twice at point-blank range in his Detroit home. [128] After six months at <u>Henry Ford Hospital</u> while still in a coma, C. L. was moved back to his home with 24-hour nursing care. Aretha moved back to Detroit in late 1982 to assist with the care of her father, who died at Detroit's New Light Nursing Home on July 27, 1984. [129]

Franklin's music business friends included <u>Dionne Warwick</u>, Mavis Staples, and Cissy Houston, who began singing with Franklin as members of the <u>Sweet Inspirations</u>. Houston sang background on Franklin's hit "Ain't No Way". [130] Franklin first met Cissy's daughter, <u>Whitney</u>, in the early 1970s. She was made Whitney's honorary aunt (not a godmother as has been occasionally misreported), and Whitney often referred to her as "Auntie Ree". [131] Franklin had to cancel plans to perform at Whitney Houston's memorial service on February 18, 2012, due to a leg spasm. [132]

Franklin was a Christian^{[133][134]} and was a registered Democrat.^{[135][136]}

Health

Franklin had weight issues for many years. In 1974, she lost 40 pounds (18 kg) on a <u>crash diet</u>^[137] and maintained her new weight until the end of the decade.^[138] She again lost weight in the early 1990s, before gaining some back.^[139] A former <u>chain smoker</u> who struggled with alcoholism, she quit smoking in 1992.^[140] She admitted in 1994 that her smoking was "messing with my voice",^[141] but after quitting smoking she said later, in 2003, that her weight "ballooned".^[142]

In 2010, Franklin canceled a number of concerts to have surgery for an undisclosed tumor. [139] Discussing the surgery in 2011, she quoted her doctor as saying that it would "add 15 to 20 years" to her life. She denied that the ailment had anything to do with pancreatic cancer, as had been reported. [143] On May 19, 2011, Franklin had her comeback show at the Chicago Theatre. [144] In May 2013, she canceled two performances because of an undisclosed medical treatment. [145] Later the same month, she canceled two June concerts and planned to "resume her touring schedule in July". [146] A show scheduled for July 27 in Clarkston, Michigan, was canceled due to continued medical treatment. [147] She canceled an appearance at a Major League Baseball luncheon in Chicago honoring her commitment to civil rights on August 24 [148] and also a performance on September 21 in Atlanta, Georgia. [149] During a phone interview with the Associated Press in late August 2013, Franklin stated that she had had a "miraculous" recovery from her undisclosed illness but had to cancel shows and appearances until her health was at 100%, estimating she was about "85% healed". [150] Franklin later returned to live performing, including a 2013 Christmas concert at Detroit's MotorCity Casino Hotel. She launched a multi-city tour in mid-2014, starting with a performance on June 14 in New York at Radio City Music Hall. [151]

In February 2017, Franklin announced that 2017 would be her final year touring.^[152] However, she scheduled some 2018 concert dates, before canceling them based on her physician's advice.^[104]

Death and funeral

On August 13, 2018, Franklin was reported to be gravely ill at her home in Riverfront Towers, Detroit. [153][154] She was under hospice care and surrounded by friends and family. Stevie Wonder, Jesse Jackson and ex-husband Glynn Turman visited her on her deathbed. [155] Franklin died at her home on August 16, 2018, aged 76, [156] without a will. [157] The cause of death was a malignant pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor (pNET), [158][159] which is distinct from the most-common form of pancreatic cancer. [160][161] Numerous celebrities in the entertainment industry and politicians paid tribute to Franklin, including former U.S. president Barack Obama who said she "helped define the American experience". [162] Civil rights activist and minister Al Sharpton called her a "civil rights and humanitarian icon". [163]

A memorial service was held at New Bethel Baptist Church on August 19.^[164] Thousands then paid their respects during the public lying-in-repose at the <u>Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History</u>. The August 31 <u>Homegoing Service</u> held at <u>Greater Grace Temple</u> in Detroit, included multiple tributes by celebrities, politicians, friends and family members and was streamed by some news

agencies^[166] such as Fox News, CNN, The Word Network, BET and MSNBC.^[167] Among those who paid tribute to Aretha at the service were Ariana Grande, Bill Clinton, Rev. Al Sharpton, Louis Farrakhan, Faith Hill, Fantasia, The Clark Sisters, Ronald Isley, Angie Stone, Chaka Khan, Jennifer Holliday, Loretta Devine, Jennifer Hudson, Queen Latifah, Shirley Caesar, Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Entertainer, Tyler Perry, Smokey Robinson, and Yolanda Adams. Stevie Wonder, Eric Holder, Gladys Knight, Cedric the Ent

Following a telecast procession up <u>Seven Mile Road</u>, Franklin was interred at <u>Woodlawn Cemetery</u> in Detroit. [174][175]

Legacy and honors

Franklin received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1979, had her voice declared a Michigan "natural resource" in 1985, [176] and became the first woman inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987.[177] The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences awarded her a Grammy Legend Award in 1991, then the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1994. Franklin was a Kennedy Center Honoree in 1994, recipient of the National Medal of Arts in 1999, and was bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005. [25] She was inducted into the Michigan Rock and Roll Legends Hall of Fame in 2005, [178] and the Rhythm & Blues Hall of Fame in 2015.^[179] Franklin became the second woman inducted to the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2005. She was the 2008 MusiCares Person of the Year, performing at the Grammys days later. In 2019 she was awarded a Pulitzer Prize Special Citation "[f]or her indelible contribution to American music and culture for



Franklin wipes a tear after being given the Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 9, 2005, at the White House. She is seated between fellow recipients Robert Conquest (left) and Alan Greenspan

more than five decades."^[180] Franklin was the first individual woman to receive a Pulitzer Prize Special Citation.^[181]

In 2010 Franklin was ranked first on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time". [10] and ninth on their list of "100 Greatest Artists of All Time". [10] Following news of Franklin's surgery and recovery in February 2011, the <u>Grammys ceremony</u> paid tribute to the singer with a medley of her classics performed by <u>Christina Aguilera</u>, <u>Florence Welch</u>, <u>Jennifer Hudson</u>, <u>Martina McBride</u>, and <u>Yolanda Adams</u>. [182] That same year she was ranked 19th among the <u>Billboard</u> Hot 100 All-Time top artists. [183][184]

When *Rolling Stone* listed the "Women in Rock: 50 Essential Albums" in 2002 and again 2012, it listed Franklin's 1967, "I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You", number one. [185] Inducted to the <u>GMA Gospel Music Hall of Fame</u> in 2012, Franklin was described as "the voice of the civil rights movement, the voice of black America" and a "symbol of black equality". [186][187] Asteroid <u>249516 Aretha</u> was named in her honor in 2014. [188] The next year, *Billboard* named her the greatest female R&B artist of all time. [189] In 2018, Franklin was inducted in to the Memphis Music Hall of Fame.

"American history wells up when Aretha sings", President Obama explained in response to her performance of "A Natural Woman" at the 2015 Kennedy Center Honors. "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". [91] Franklin later recalled the 2015 Kennedy Center Honors as one of the best nights of her life. [91] On June 8, 2017, the City of Detroit honored Franklin's legacy by renaming a portion of Madison Street, between Brush and Witherell Streets, "Aretha Franklin Way". [190]

Honorary degrees

Franklin received honorary degrees from Harvard University and New York University in 2014, [191] as well as honorary doctorates in music from Princeton University, 2012; [192] Yale University, 2010; [193] Brown University, 2009; [194] University of Pennsylvania, 2007; [195] Berklee College of Music, 2006; [196] New England Conservatory of Music, 1997; [197] and University of Michigan, 1987. [198] She was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Case Western Reserve University 2011 [199] and Wayne State University in 1990 and an honorary Doctor of Law degree by Bethune–Cookman University in 1975. [200]

Tributes

After Franklin's death, fans added unofficial tributes to two New York City Subway stations: the Franklin Street station in Manhattan, served by the $\underline{1}$ train, and the Franklin Avenue station in Brooklyn, served by the \underline{C} and \underline{S} trains. Both stations were originally named after other people. Although the fan tributes were later taken down, the subway system's operator, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, placed temporary black-and-white stickers with the word "Respect" next to the "Franklin" name signs in each station. [201][202]

During the <u>American Music Awards</u> on October 9, 2018, the show was closed by bringing <u>Gladys Knight</u>, <u>Donnie McClurkin</u>, <u>Ledisi</u>, <u>Cece Winans</u>, and <u>Mary Mary</u> together to pay tribute to Aretha Franklin. The "all-star" group performed gospel songs, including renditions from Franklin's 1972 album, *Amazing Grace*. [203][204]

A tribute concert, "Aretha! A Grammy Celebration for the Queen of Soul", was organized by <u>CBS</u> and <u>The Recording Academy</u> ^[205] on January 13, 2019, at the <u>Shrine Auditorium</u> in Los Angeles. The concert included performances by <u>Smokey Robinson</u>, <u>Janelle Monáe</u>, <u>Alicia Keys</u>, <u>John Legend</u>, <u>Kelly Clarkson</u>, <u>Celine Dion</u>, <u>Alessia Cara</u>, <u>Patti LaBelle</u>, <u>Jennifer Hudson</u>, <u>Chloe x Halle</u>, <u>H.E.R.</u>, <u>SZA</u>, <u>Brandi Carlile</u>, <u>Yolanda Adams</u> and <u>Shirley Caesar</u>, ^{[206][207]} and was recorded for television, airing on March 10. ^{[208][209]}

At the <u>61st Annual Grammy Awards</u>, the ceremony was ended with a memorial tribute to the life and career of Franklin. The tribute concluded with a rendition of her 1968 hit, "A Natural Woman (You Make Me Feel Like)," performed by Fantasia Barrino-Taylor, Andra Day and Yolanda Adams.^[210]

In other media

On January 29, 2018, <u>Gary Graff</u> confirmed that <u>Jennifer Hudson</u> will play Franklin in an upcoming biopic. [211] Franklin's biopic *RESPECT* is expected to be released in December 2020 and January 2021 in various countries. [212][213]

On February 10, 2019, it was announced that the subject of the third season of the American <u>National</u> <u>Geographic</u> <u>anthology</u> television series <u>Genius</u> would be Franklin, in the "first-ever, definitive scripted miniseries on the life of the universally acclaimed Queen of Soul". Filming is set to commence in mid-2019,

Loss of materials

On June 25, 2019, *The New York Times Magazine* listed Aretha Franklin among hundreds of artists whose material was reportedly destroyed in the 2008 Universal fire.^[215]

Discography

Studio albums

- Aretha: With The Ray Bryant Combo (1961)
- The Electrifying Aretha Franklin (1962)
- The Tender, the Moving, the Swinging Aretha Franklin (1962)
- Laughing on the Outside (1963)
- Unforgettable: A Tribute to Dinah Washington (1964)
- Runnin' Out of Fools (1964)
- Yeah!!! (1965)
- Songs of Faith (1965)
- Soul Sister (1966)
- Take It Like You Give It (1967)
- I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You (1967)
- Aretha Arrives (1967)
- Lady Soul (1968)
- Aretha Now (1968)
- Soul '69 (1969)
- Soft and Beautiful (1969)
- This Girl's in Love with You (1970)
- Spirit in the Dark (1970)
- Young, Gifted & Black (1972)
- Hey Now Hey (The Other Side of the Sky) (1973)
- Let Me in Your Life (1974)
- With Everything I Feel in Me (1974)
- You (1975)
- Sparkle (1976)
- Sweet Passion (1977)
- Almighty Fire (1978)
- La Diva (1979)
- Aretha (1980)
- Love All the Hurt Away (1981)
- Jump to It (1982)
- Get It Right (1983)
- Who's Zoomin' Who? (1985)
- Aretha (1986)
- Through the Storm (1989)

- What You See Is What You Sweat (1991)
- A Rose Is Still a Rose (1998)
- So Damn Happy (2003)
- This Christmas, Aretha (2008)
- Aretha: A Woman Falling Out of Love (2011)
- Aretha Franklin Sings the Great Diva Classics (2014)

Filmography

- 1972: Black Rodeo (documentary)
- 1980: The Blues Brothers (as Mrs. Murphy)
- 1990: Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones (documentary)
- 1998: Blues Brothers 2000 (as Mrs. Murphy)
- 2003: Tom Dowd & the Language of Music (documentary)
- 2012: *The Zen of Bennett* (documentary)
- 2013: Muscle Shoals (documentary)
- 2018: *Amazing Grace* (documentary)

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