



# Donna Summer



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Donna Summer	
	
Summer in December 2009	
Background information	
<b>Birth name</b>	LaDonna Adrian Gaines
<b>Also known as</b>	Queen of Disco Donna Gaines
<b>Born</b>	December 31, 1948 Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.
<b>Died</b>	May 17, 2012 (aged 63) Naples, Florida, U.S.
<b>Genres</b>	Pop, disco, dance, rock, R&B, gospel
<b>Occupations</b>	Singer, songwriter
<b>Instruments</b>	Vocals, piano
<b>Years active</b>	1968–2012
<b>Labels</b>	Oasis, Casablanca, Geffen, Atlantic, Mercury, WEA, Epic, Burgundy
<b>Associated acts</b>	Giorgio Moroder, Brooklyn Dreams

**LaDonna Adrian Gaines** (December 31, 1948 – May 17, 2012),<sup>[1]</sup> known by her stage name, **Donna Summer**, was an American singer and songwriter who gained prominence during the disco era of the late 1970s. A five-time Grammy Award winner, Summer was the first artist to have three consecutive double albums reach number one on the United States *Billboard* album chart and charted four number-one singles in the United States within a 13-month period. Summer has sold over 150 million records worldwide.

Born into a devoutly Christian middle-class family in Boston, Massachusetts, Summer first became involved with singing through church choir groups before joining a number of bands influenced by the Motown Sound. Also influenced by the counterculture of the 1960s, she became the front singer of a psychedelic rock band named Crow and moved to New York City. Joining a touring version of the musical *Hair*, she left New York and spent several years living, acting, and singing in West Germany, where she met music producer Giorgio Moroder. Also while in Europe, she married Helmut Sommer. After their divorce, she would keep his surname for her stage name; dropping

the "o" and replacing it with a "u" for "Summer".

After returning to the United States, Summer co-wrote the song "Love to Love You Baby" with Pete Bellotte. The song was released in 1975 to mass commercial success. Over the following years Summer followed this success with a string of other hits, such as "I Feel Love", "Last Dance", "MacArthur Park", "Hot Stuff", "Bad Girls", "Dim All the Lights", "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)", and "On the Radio". She became known as the "Queen of Disco" and regularly appeared at the Studio 54 nightclub in New York City, while her music gained a global following within the gay and non-gay communities. She struggled with depression and addiction, and subsequently she became a born-again Christian in 1980.

Diagnosed with lung cancer, Summer died on May 17, 2012, at her home in Naples, Florida. She was posthumously described as the "undisputed queen of the Seventies disco boom" who reached the status of "one of the world's leading female singers." Moroder described Summer's work with him on the song "I Feel Love" as "really the start of electronic dance" music. In 2013, Summer was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

## Early life

Summer was born on December 31, 1948, in Boston, Massachusetts, to Andrew and Mary Gaines, and was one of seven children.<sup>[2]</sup> She was raised in the Boston neighborhood of Mission Hill. Her father was a butcher and her mother a schoolteacher. Summer's mother later recalled that from the time Donna could talk, she would often sing. "She literally loved to sing. She used to go through the house singing, singing. She sang for breakfast and for lunch and for supper."

Summer's performance debut occurred at church when she was ten years old when she replaced a vocalist who failed to show up. Summer's pastor invited her to perform, judging from her small frame and speaking voice that she would be an "amusing spectacle", but instead Summer's voice recalled a voice older than her years and frame. Summer recalled that as she sang, "I started crying, everybody else started crying. It was quite an amazing moment in my life and at some point after I heard my voice came out I felt like God was saying to me 'Donna, you're going to be very, very famous' and I knew from that day on that I would be famous."

Summer later attended Boston's Jeremiah E. Burke High School where she performed in school musicals and was considered popular. She was also something of a troublemaker, skipping home to attend parties, circumventing her parents' strict curfew. In 1967, just weeks before graduation, Summer left for New York where she was a member of the blues rock band Crow. After they were passed by every record label, the band agreed to break up. Summer stayed in New York and auditioned for a role in the counterculture musical, *Hair*. When Melba Moore was cast in the part, Summer agreed to take the role in the Munich production of the show. She moved to Munich, Germany after getting her parents' reluctant approval.

Summer eventually became fluent in German, singing various songs in German. She participated in the musicals *Ich bin ich* (the German version of *The Me Nobody Knows*), *Godspell* and *Show Boat*. Within three years she moved to Vienna, Austria and joined the Vienna Volksoper. She briefly toured with an ensemble vocal group called FamilyTree, the creation of producer Guenter "Yogi" Lauke. In 1968, Summer released (as Donna Gaines) on Polydor her first single, a German version of the title "Aquarius" from the musical "Hair," followed in 1971 by a second single, a cover of The Jaynetts' "Sally Go 'Round the Roses", from a one-off European deal with Decca Records. In 1972, she issued the single "If You Walkin' Alone" on Philips Records.

She married Austrian actor Helmuth Sommer in 1973 and had a daughter, Mimi, the same year. Citing marital problems caused by her affair with German artist (and future live-in boyfriend), Peter Mühldorfer, she divorced Sommer. She kept his last name, but anglicized it to "Summer". She provided backing vocals on producer-keyboardist, Veit Marvos, on his 1972 Ariola Records release *Nice to See You*, credited as "Gayn Pierre". Several subsequent singles included Summer performing with the group, but she often denied singing on any of the Marvos releases. The name "Gayn Pierre" also was used by Donna while performing in *Godspell* with Helmuth Sommer during 1972.

## Music career

### 1974–79: Initial success

While singing background in a recording session at Munich's Musicland Studios for Three Dog Night, Summer met German-based producers, Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte. The trio forged a working partnership and began collaborating on songs together starting in 1974. A demo tape of Summer's work with Moroder and Bellotte led to a deal with the European-distributed label Groovy Records. The label issued Summer's first album, *Lady of the Night*. The album became a hit in the Netherlands and Belgium with two songs, "The Hostage" and "Lady of the Night". The album, however, had no U.S. release.

In mid-1975, while working on another album, Summer passed on an idea for a song to Moroder who was working with another artist in the then-nascent disco sound. Summer believed she had a good idea for a song for Moroder to use with the other artist; a song that would be called "Love to Love You". Summer and Moroder wrote the song together, and together they worked on a demo version with Summer singing the song. Summer would later say that she had imagined how Marilyn Monroe would sing this song and that is how she approached it. Prior to recording the song and to get into the mood, she requested

Moroder to turn off the lights while they sat on a sofa with him inducing her moans and groans. Moroder liked what he heard after hearing its playback and felt that Summer's version should be released. The song got a European release and performed modestly on the charts there. Moroder then sought an American release for the song and it was sent to Casablanca Records president Neil Bogart. Bogart was unsure about giving it a release. Bogart and his Casablanca Records were known in the industry for throwing lavish and extravagant parties. At one such party, Bogart, who was still undecided about releasing the song, decided to gauge its reaction with the crowd. He had the DJ play the four minute song. The song was successful with the crowd and they insisted that it be played over and over each time it ended. Bogart knew he had a potential hit on his hands and later informed Summer and Moroder he would release the song, but he requested that Moroder produce a longer version for discothèques. Moroder, Bellotte, and Summer returned with a 17-minute version. Bogart tweaked the title to "Love to Love You Baby", and Casablanca signed Summer and released the single in November 1975. The shorter version of the single was promoted to radio stations while clubs regularly played the 17-minute version (the longer version would also appear on the album). With this 17-minute version, Casablanca became one of the first record labels to popularize the 12" single format.<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>

By early 1976, "Love to Love You Baby" had reached No. 2 on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 while the parent album of the same name sold over a million copies. The song generated controversy due to Summer's moans and groans and some American stations, like those in Europe with the initial release, refused to play it.<sup>[3]</sup> Despite this, "Love to Love You Baby" climbed its way to number 2 on the US Hot 100 and found chart success in several European countries, and made the Top 5 in the United Kingdom despite the BBC ban. Two subsequent albums (both of which went gold), *Love Trilogy* and *Four Seasons of Love*, produced singles such as "Try Me, I Know We Can Make It", U.S. No. 80; "Could It Be Magic", U.S. No. 52; "Spring Affair", U.S. No. 58; and "Winter Melody", U.S. No. 43.

In 1977, Summer released the concept album *I Remember Yesterday*. This album, again co-produced by Moroder and Bellotte, included her second top ten single, "I Feel Love", which reached number six in the U.S. and number



Summer in a recording studio in 1977

one in the UK. Another concept album, also released in 1977, was *Once Upon a Time*, a double album which told of a modern-day Cinderella "rags to riches" story through the elements of orchestral disco and ballads. This album would also attain gold status. In 1978, Summer released her version of the Jimmy Webb ballad, "MacArthur Park", which became her first U.S. number one hit. The song was featured on Summer's first live album, *Live and More*, which also became her first album to hit number one on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart and went platinum, selling over a million copies. Other studio tracks included the top ten hit "Heaven Knows", which featured the group Brooklyn Dreams accompanying her on background and Joe "Bean" Esposito singing alongside her on the verse; reached number four. Summer would later be romantically involved with Brooklyn Dreams singer Bruce Sudano and the couple married two years after the song's release. Also in 1978, Summer acted in the film *Thank God It's Friday* playing a singer determined to perform at a hot disco club. The film met modest success, but a song from the film, titled "Last Dance", reached number three on the Hot 100 and resulted in Summer winning her first Grammy Award. Its writer, Paul Jabara, won both an Academy Award and a Golden Globe Award for the composition.

In 1979, Summer performed at the world-televised Music for UNICEF Concert, joining contemporaries such as ABBA, Olivia Newton-John, the Bee Gees, Andy Gibb, Rod Stewart, John Denver, Earth, Wind & Fire, Rita Coolidge and Kris Kristofferson for a TV special that raised funds and awareness for the world's children. Artists donated royalties of certain songs, some in perpetuity, to benefit the cause. Summer began work on her next project with Moroder and Bellotte, *Bad Girls*. Summer based the concept on prostitution (revisiting the theme for 1974's *Lady of the Night*), even dressing as a hooker herself on the cover art.

The album became a huge success, spawning the number one hits "Hot Stuff" and *Bad Girls* and the number two "Dim All the Lights". With "MacArthur Park", "Hot Stuff", "Bad Girls", and the Barbra Streisand duet "No More Tears (Enough is Enough)", Summer achieved four number one hits within a thirteen-month period. Those songs, along with "Last Dance", "Heaven Knows", "Dim All The Lights", and "On the Radio" (from her upcoming double-album), would give her eight US Top 5 singles within a two-year period. "Hot Stuff" later won her a second Grammy Award in the Best Female Rock Vocal Performance, the first time the category was included. That year, Summer played eight sold-out nights at the Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles.

Summer released *On the Radio: Greatest Hits Volumes I & II*, her first (international) greatest hits set, in 1979. The double album reached number one in the United States, becoming her third consecutive number one album. A new song from the compilation, "On the Radio", reached the U.S. top five, selling over a million copies in the United States alone.

## 1980–85



Summer with friend, celebrity talent executive,  
Brian Edwards

After the release of the *On the Radio* hits album, Summer wanted to branch out into other musical styles in addition to disco, which led to tensions between her and Casablanca Records. Casablanca wanted her to continue to record disco only while Summer wanted to sing more rock and pop-based music. Sensing that they could no longer come to terms, Summer and the label parted ways in 1980 and she signed with Geffen Records, the new label started by David Geffen.

Summer's first Geffen album, *The Wanderer*, featured an eclectic mixture of sounds but with little emphasis on Summer's past disco success, instead bringing elements of rock, rockabilly, new wave and gospel music. The album continued Summer's streak of gold albums with the title track peaking at No. 3 in the U.S. Its follow-up singles, "Cold Love" and "Who Do You Think You're Foolin'," were only modest hits.

When Summer presented Geffen Records with her next album, *I'm a Rainbow*, the label was not happy with the final results and shelved the album, refusing to release it. Geffen wanted this album to have more success than its predecessor and wanted Summer to change producers,

leading to conflict between her and the label. Eventually, Moroder, Bellotte, and Summer agreed to part ways and Geffen hired top R&B and pop producer Quincy Jones to produce Summer's next album, the eponymously titled *Donna Summer*. The album took over six months to record as Summer and Jones did not get along. The album was released in 1982 and included the top ten hit "Love Is in Control (Finger on the Trigger)". Other modest performing singles included "State of Independence" (No. 41 pop) and "The Woman in Me" (No. 33 pop). Problems then arose between Summer and Geffen Records after they were notified by Polygram Records, Summer's former label (Casablanca was by then a wholly owned subsidiary of Polygram), that she needed to deliver them one more album to fulfill her contract with them.

Summer recorded and delivered the album *She Works Hard for the Money* and Polygram released it on its Mercury imprint in 1983. The title song became a major hit, reaching number three on the US Hot 100, as well as No. 1 on Billboard's R&B chart. It also garnered Summer another Grammy nomination. The album also featured the reggae-flavored UK Top 20 hit "Unconditional Love", which featured the British group Musical Youth, who were riding high from the success of their single "Pass the Dutchie". The third U.S. single, "Love Has A Mind of Its Own", reached the top forty of the Billboard R&B chart. The album itself was certified gold. Media reports were that David Geffen, owner of the label Summer was currently recording for, was not happy that the album had performed well.

In late 1984, with her contract to Polygram Records now fulfilled, Summer returned with her next release on Geffen Records. Geffen, wanting to keep the momentum going, enlisted *She Works Hard for the Money*'s producer Michael Omartian to produce *Cats Without Claws*. The album, however, was not as successful as *She Works Hard for the Money* and failed to attain gold status in the US, becoming her first album in America not to do so. It did include a moderate hit in The Drifters cover "There Goes My Baby", which peaked at No. 21. Jellybean Benitez remixed two of the album's songs, "Eyes" and "I'm Free," which were released as 12" singles for club play.

On January 19, 1985, she sang at the nationally-televised 50th Presidential Inaugural Gala the day before the second inauguration of Ronald Reagan.

## Controversy over alleged anti-gay comments

In the mid-1980s, Summer was embroiled in a major controversy. She allegedly had made anti-gay remarks regarding the then-relatively new disease, AIDS, which as a result had a significantly negative impact on her career. Summer, by this time a born-again Christian, was alleged to have said that AIDS was a punishment from God for the immoral lifestyles of homosexuals. Because of this alleged statement, thousands of her records were returned to her record company. Summer publicly denied that she had ever made any such comment, and in a letter to the AIDS campaign group ACT UP in 1989 said it was "a terrible misunderstanding. In explaining why she did not respond to the controversy sooner, Summer stated "I was unknowingly protected by those around me from the bad press and hate letters. If I have caused you pain, forgive me." She apologized for the delay in not making a response earlier and closed her letter with Bible quotes (from Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians).

Also in 1989, Summer told *The Advocate* magazine that "a couple of the people I write with are gay, and they have been ever since I met them. What people want to do with their bodies is their personal preference." A couple of years later, she filed a lawsuit against *New York* magazine when it reprinted the rumors as fact just as she was about to release her album *Mistaken Identity* in 1991.<sup>[4]</sup> According to a *Biography* television program dedicated to Summer in which she participated in 1995, the lawsuit was settled out of court, though neither side was able to divulge any details.

## 1987–89

In 1987, Summer returned with the album *All Systems Go*, which did not sell well and was her second consecutive album not to achieve gold status. It featured the single "Dinner with Gershwin," (written by Brenda Russell), which was only a minor U.S. hit; though it became a hit in the UK, peaking at No. 13. The album's title track, "All Systems Go", was released only in the UK, where it peaked at No. 54.

For Summer's next album, Geffen Records hired the British hit production team of Stock Aitken Waterman (or SAW), who enjoyed incredible success writing and producing for such acts as Kylie Minogue, Dead or Alive, Bananarama, and Rick Astley among others. However, Geffen decided not to release the album, entitled *Another Place and Time*, upon its completion and Summer and Geffen Records parted ways in 1988. The album, however, was released in Europe in March 1989 on Warner Bros. Records, which had been Summer's label in Europe since 1982. The single "This Time I Know It's for Real" had become a top ten hit in several countries in Europe, prompting the Warner Bros. sister company Atlantic Records to sign Summer in the U.S. and pick up the album for a North American release soon after. The single peaked at No. 7 on the US Hot 100 and became her 12th gold single in America. It was also Summer's final Top 40 hit on the American pop charts, though she scored two more UK hits from the album, "I Don't Wanna Get Hurt" (UK No. 7) and "Love's About to Change My Heart" (UK No. 20).

## 1990–99: *Mistaken Identity*, acting, and *Live & More Encore*

In 1990, a Warner compilation, *The Best of Donna Summer*, was released. The album went gold in the UK after the song "State of Independence" was re-released there to promote the album. The following year, Summer emerged with the album *Mistaken Identity*, which included elements of R&B as well as new jack swing. While the album itself failed to become a success, the song "When Love Cries" continued her success on the R&B charts, reaching No. 18. In 1992, Summer embarked on a world tour to promote the album and later that year received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 1993, Polygram issued the two-disc set *The Donna Summer Anthology*, which included 34 tracks of all of Summer's material with Casablanca Records and Mercury Records and songs from her tenures with Atlantic and Geffen.

Summer signed with Mercury/Polygram that same year, and in 1994 issued the Christmas album *Christmas Spirit*, which included renditions of classic Christmas songs such as "O Holy Night" and "Joy to the World" and Summer-penned songs. Another hits collection, *Endless Summer: Greatest Hits*, was released, featuring eighteen songs that were single cuts of the songs differentiating from the *Anthology* set, where fuller length recordings were

featured. In 1992, she reunited with Giorgio Moroder, recording the dance song "Carry On", which later won Summer the first Grammy given to anyone in its dance category. The 1995 dance tune "Melody of Love (Wanna Be Loved)" went number-one on the dance charts in the U.S. while becoming a top 30 hit in the UK, peaking at number 21.

During this time, Summer was offered a guest role on the sitcom *Family Matters* as Steve Urkel's (Jaleel White) Aunt Oona. She made a second appearance in 1997. In 1998, Summer received a Grammy Award for Best Dance Recording, the first to do so, after a remixed version of her 1992 collaboration with Giorgio Moroder, "Carry On", was released in 1997. In 1999, Summer taped a live television special for VH1 titled *Donna Summer – Live and More Encore*, producing the second highest ratings that year for the network after their annual *Divas* special. A CD of the event was released by Epic Records and featured two studio recordings, "I Will Go with You (Con te partirò)" and "Love Is the Healer", both of which reached number one on the U.S. dance charts.

### 2000–09: Later recordings and *Crayons*



Donna Summer in 2005

In 2000, Summer participated in VH1's third annual *Divas* special, dedicated to Diana Ross, though Summer sang mostly her own material for the show. In 2003, Summer issued her autobiography, *Ordinary Girl: The Journey*, and released a best-of set titled *The Journey: The Very Best of Donna Summer*. In 2004, Summer was inducted into the Dance Music Hall of Fame alongside the Bee Gees and Barry Gibb as an artist. Her classic song, "I Feel Love", was also inducted that night. In 2004 and 2005, Summer's success on the dance charts continued with the songs "You're So Beautiful" and "I Got Your Love".

In a 2008 interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, Summer claimed that one month before the September 11 attacks she had a premonition that they would occur. She was living in Manhattan at the time of the attacks. In the same interview she said for a period of time after the attacks she was so depressed she was unable to leave her bedroom and left her blinds closed.<sup>[5]</sup>

In 2008, Summer released her first studio album of fully original material in 17 years, entitled *Crayons*. Released on the Sony BMG label Burgundy Records, it peaked at No. 17 on the United States Top 200 Album Chart, her highest placing on the chart since 1983. The songs "I'm a Fire", "Stamp Your Feet" and "Fame (The Game)" reached number one on the U.S. Billboard Dance Chart. The ballad "Sand on My Feet" was released to adult contemporary stations and reached number 30 on that chart. Summer said, "I wanted this album to have a lot of different directions on it. I did not want it to be any one baby. I just wanted it to be a sampler of flavors and influences from all over the world. There's a touch of this, a little smidgeon of that, a dash of something else, like when you're cooking." On the song "The Queen Is Back", Summer reveals her wry and witty self-awareness of her musical legacy and her public persona. "I'm making fun of myself," she admits. "There's irony. It's poking fun at the idea of being called a queen. That's a title that has followed me, followed me and followed me. We were sitting and writing and that title kept popping up in my mind and I'm thinking, 'Am I supposed to write this? Is this too arrogant to write?' But people call me 'the queen,' so I guess it's ok to refer to myself as what everybody else refers to me as. We started writing the song and thought it was kind of cute and funny." Summer wrote "The Queen Is Back" and "Mr. Music" with J.R. Rotem and Evan Bogart, the son of Casablanca Records founder Neil Bogart.

On December 11, 2009, Summer performed at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, Norway in honor of American President Barack Obama. She was backed by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra.

## 2010–12: Final recordings

On July 29, 2010, Summer gave an interview with Allvoices.com wherein she was asked if she would consider doing an album of standards. She said, *I actually am, probably in September. I will begin work on a standards album. I will probably do an all-out dance album and a standards album. I'm going to do both and we will release them however we're going to release them. We are not sure which is going first.*<sup>[6]</sup> Summer's husband, Bruce Sudano, stated during his speech at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction on Summer's behalf that Donna never recorded the standards album as each time they went into the studio to record standards, she preferred to record new songs instead.

In August 2010, she released the single "To Paris With Love", co-written with Bruce Roberts and produced by Peter Stengaard. The single (her last charted single) reached No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard Dance Chart in October 2010, Also that month Summer appeared in the PBS television special *Hitman Returns: David Foster and Friends*. In it Summer performed with Seal on a medley of the songs "Un-Break My Heart / Crazy / On the Radio" before closing the show with "Last Dance".<sup>[7]</sup>

On September 15, 2010, Summer appeared as a guest celebrity singing alongside rising star Prince Poppycock on the television show *America's Got Talent*.

On October 16, 2010, she performed at a benefit concert at the Phoenix Symphony.

On June 6, 2011, Summer was a guest judge on the show *Platinum Hit* in an episode entitled "Dance Floor Royalty".

In July 2011, Summer was working at Paramount Recording Studios in Los Angeles with her nephew, the rapper and producer O'Mega Red. Together they worked on a track titled "Angel".

On December 11, 2012, after four prior nominations, Donna posthumously was announced to be one of the 2013 inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame., and was inducted on April 18, 2013, at Los Angeles' Nokia Theater.

## 2013: *Love To Love You Donna*

A remix album titled *Love To Love You Donna*, containing new remixes of some of Summer's classics, was released in October 2013. "MacArthur Park" was remixed by Laidback Luke for the remix collection and it was also remixed by Ralphie Rosario, which was released to dance clubs all over America, having a successful peaking at #1, giving Donna her first number-one posthumously and her twentieth number-one on the chart.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Personal life

Summer and her family moved from the Sherman Oaks district of Los Angeles to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1995,<sup>[9]</sup> when she took time out from show business to focus on painting, a hobby she began back in the 1980s. Summer was raised in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Also in 1995 Summer's mother died of pancreatic cancer;<sup>[10]</sup> her father died of natural causes in December 2004.

## Death and aftermath

### Death

Summer died on the morning of May 17, 2012, at her home in Naples, Florida at the age of 63. She was diagnosed with lung cancer not related to smoking. She believed she developed the illness by inhaling toxic particles following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York. Summer is survived by her husband, Bruce Sudano, and her daughters, Brooklyn, Amanda and Mimi. Her funeral was held in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 23, 2012.<sup>[11]</sup> She was buried in Harpeth Hills Memory Gardens Cemetery in Nashville, Tennessee.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Funeral

Summer's funeral service was held in Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee on the afternoon of May 23, 2012. The exact location and time of the service was kept secret. Several hundred of Summer's friends and family appeared at the funeral, according to CNN. The funeral was a private ceremony and cameras were not allowed inside the church. TMZ obtained a copy of Summer's funeral program,<sup>[13]</sup> which includes a Proverb dedicated to Summer about a "wife of noble character". According to the program, Pastor Tim Johnson started the service and welcomed the guests. Afterward, Ricky Gaines, her brother, gave a speech. Summer's sisters, Linda Gaines Lotman, Mary Ellen Bernard, Dara Bernard and Jenette Yancey, performed "We've Come This Far By Faith." Mary Ellen Bernard performed "Because of Whose You Are". Rick Dohler, a son-in-law of Summer, gave a speech and Pastor Johnson spoke again. The service was closed by David Foster and Natalie Grant performing "The Prayer". Guests left the church, entered their cars and followed the black hearse with Summer's body to the Harpeth Hills Memory Gardens cemetery in Nashville, where she was buried. Other guests included Giorgio Moroder, who produced several of Summer's hits, and singer Tony Orlando.

## Reaction

Singers and music industry professionals around the world reacted to Donna Summer's death. Gloria Gaynor, a famous disco performer during the late 1970s,<sup>[14]</sup> said she was "deeply saddened," that Donna was "a fine lady and human being," that she was devastated by the death of her friend and that she had not known about Summer's cancer. Harry Wayne Casey of KC and the Sunshine Band said he and Donna "ran in the same circles and are part of the same generation." Liza Minnelli said, "She was a queen, The Queen Of Disco, and we will be dancing to her music forever." She said that her "thoughts and prayers are with her family always." Dolly Parton said, "Donna, like Whitney, was one of the greatest voices ever. I loved her records. She was the disco queen and will remain so. I knew her and found her to be one of the most likable and fun people ever. She will be missed and remembered." Janet Jackson wrote that Donna "changed the world of music with her beautiful voice and incredible talent." Barbra Streisand wrote, "I loved doing the duet with her. She had an amazing voice and



Donna Summer's memorial made by fans in the Castro District, San Francisco

was so talented. It's so sad." Quincy Jones wrote that Donna's voice was "the heartbeat and soundtrack of a decade." Aretha Franklin said, "It's so shocking to hear about the passing of Donna Summer. In the 70s, she reigned over the disco era and kept the disco jumping. Who will forget 'Last Dance'? A fine performer and a very nice person." John Lydon also paid tribute to her, saying he was heartbroken and that her records were 'wonderful'. Chaka Khan said, "Donna and I had a friendship for over 30 years. She is one of the few black women I could speak German with and she is one of the few friends I had in this business." Gloria Estefan wrote that "It's the end of an era" and posted a photo of herself with Summer.

United States President Barack Obama said, "Michelle and I were saddened to hear about the passing of Donna Summer. A five-time Grammy Award winner, Donna truly was the 'Queen of Disco.' Her voice was unforgettable and the music industry has lost a legend far too soon. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Donna's family and her dedicated fans."<sup>[15]</sup>

Summer was honored at the 2012 Billboard Music Awards ceremony. Singer Natasha Bedingfield honored Summer, calling her "a remarkable woman who brought so much light and who inspired many women, including myself, through her music. And if we can remember her through her music, this will never really be the last dance." After her

statement, she began to sing the song "Last Dance", Summer's song that received an Academy Award.<sup>[16]</sup> As she sang the song, photos of Summer were displayed on a screen overhead.

Fans paid tribute to Summer by leaving flowers and memorabilia on her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. A few days after her death, her album sales increased by 3,277 percent, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Billboard reported that the week before she died, Summer sold about 1,000 albums. After her death that number increased to 26,000.

## Cover versions of her songs

"I Feel Love" has been sampled several times by artists such as Blondie, David Guetta, 2 Unlimited, Darren Hayes, Whitney Houston, Madonna, Bette Midler, Kylie Minogue, Moby, Moloko, Mylo, Stuart Price, Diana Ross, Britney Spears and Robbie Williams. The Italian company Gucci used a special version of it in the "Flora" perfume advertising filmed by Chris Cunningham. Venus Hum with Blue Man Group also recorded the song with the Japanese singer Kumi Koda for their album *The Complex*. In 2006, Tracy Bonham stood in for "Hum" in the "Blue Man Group" tour and sang the song. Bronski Beat and Marc Almond released the track as a duet with an added bridge section and titled it "I Feel Love/Johnny Remember Me", which reached number three on the British charts in April 1985. In 1992, the British alterna-pop group Curve recorded a version for the NME's 40th anniversary compilation *Ruby Trax*, which became an instant underground hit.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Laura Branigan's cover of Summer's hit song "Dim All the Lights" appeared in 1995 and Emmylou Harris recorded a cover of Summer's "On the Radio" for her album *White Shoes* in 1983.

"Love to Love You Baby" was sampled in Beyoncé Knowles's "Naughty Girl" and by TLC in their original version of "I'm Good at Being Bad", but was removed by request of Summer on later editions. This song has been covered in portions on stage by Dionne Warwick.

1980s pop diva Sheena Easton covered Summer's "Love is in Control" for her European retro disco cover album *Fabulous* in 2000.

"Starting Over Again" was a number one hit on the Hot Country Songs chart as a single for Dolly Parton in 1980. It also was a Top 40 hit for Parton on the Billboard Hot 100. Reba McEntire named her album of 1995 after this song, and McEntire's version hit No. 17 on the country singles chart in 1996. McEntire stated in the album's liner notes that her recording of the song was intended as a tribute to Summer and Parton, both artists whom she admired. British singer and actress Martine McCutcheon recorded a version that reached number seven in the British charts in February 2001.

Her nephew O'Mega Red released "Angel" featuring his aunt Donna Summer and produced by Stay Grindin Music for O'Mega Red's forthcoming Wikipedia:Manual of Style/Dates and numbers#Chronological items album *Red October*. The song was nominated for Best Rap/Hip Hop Artist of the Hollywood Music Media Awards for both his and Donna Summer's work on the record "Angel".

## Legacy

According to longtime synthpop/electropop musician Marc Almond, Summer's collaboration with producer Giorgio Moroder "changed the face of music". Summer was the first artist to have three double albums reach No. 1 on *Billboard's* album chart: *Live and More*, *Bad Girls* and *On the Radio: Greatest Hits Volumes I & II*. She became a cultural icon and her prominence on the dance charts, for which she was referred to as "the queen of disco", made her not just one of the defining voices of that era, but also as an influence on pop artists from Madonna to Beyoncé. Unlike some other stars of disco who faded as the music became less popular in the 1980s and beyond, Summer was able to grow beyond the genre and later segued to a pop-rock sound. She had one of her biggest hits in the 1980s with "She Works Hard For the Money", which became another anthem, this time for women's rights. Summer was the first black woman to be nominated for an MTV Video Music Award. Summer remained a force on the *Billboard* Dance/Club Play Songs chart throughout her career and notched 19 number one singles. Her last studio album,

2008's *Crayons*, spun off three No. 1 dance/club hits with "I'm a Fire", "Stamp Your Feet" and "Fame (The Game)". In May 2012, it was announced that "I Feel Love" was included in the list of preserved recordings at the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry.<sup>[17]</sup> Her Rock and Roll Hall of Fame page listed Summer as "the Diva De Tutti Dive, the first true diva of the modern pop era".

## Concert tours

- *Once Upon a Time Tour* (1977–78)
- *Bad Girls Tour* (1979)
- *The Wanderer Tour* (1980)
- *Hard for the Money Tour* (1983)
- *The Rainbow Tour* (1984)
- *Silver Girl Tour* (1986)
- *All Systems Go Tour* (1987)
- *Mistaken Identity Tour* (1991)
- *Endless Summer Tour* (1995)
- *Mid Summer Nights Dream Tour* (1996–97)
- *Live & More Encore Tour* (1999)
- *Greatest Hits Tour* (2005)
- *Crayons Tour* (2008)

## Discography

- 1974: *Lady of the Night*
  - 1975: *Love to Love You Baby*
  - 1976: *A Love Trilogy*
  - 1976: *Four Seasons of Love*
  - 1977: *I Remember Yesterday*
  - 1977: *Once Upon a Time*
  - 1978: *Live and More*
  - 1979: *Bad Girls*
  - 1980: *The Wanderer*
  - 1981: *I'm a Rainbow*
  - 1982: *Donna Summer*
  - 1983: *She Works Hard for the Money*
  - 1984: *Cats Without Claws*
  - 1987: *All Systems Go*
  - 1989: *Another Place and Time*
  - 1991: *Mistaken Identity*
  - 1994: *Christmas Spirit*
  - 2008: *Crayons*
-

## Filmography

### Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1978	<i>Thank God It's Friday</i>	Nicole Sims	

### Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1970	<i>11 Uhr 20</i>	Sängerin in Kasbah	Episode: "Tod in der Kasbah"
1994–97	<i>Family Matters</i>	Aunt Oona	Episodes: "Aunt Oona" & "Pound Foolish"
2011	<i>Platinum Hit</i>	Guest Judge	Episode: "Dance Floor Royalty"

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## External links

- Official website (<http://www.donnasummer.com/>)
  - Donna Summer (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0838595/>) at the Internet Movie Database
  - Donna Summer ([http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/donna\\_summer//index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/donna_summer//index.html)) collected news and commentary at *The New York Times*
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