

# In Memoriam: Aretha Franklin

Aretha Franklin (1942-2018), affectionately called “the Queen of Soul” was a singer, songwriter, pianist, and supporter of the Civil Rights movement. Her signature song was her version of Otis Redding’s “*Respect*,” released in 1967. Her many hit songs included “*(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman*,” “*Freeway of Love*,” and “*Rock Steady*.” She had more than 100 singles in the *Billboard* charts, including 17 Top 10 pop singles and 20 No. 1 R&B hits. She received 18 competitive Grammy Awards, along with a lifetime achievement award in 1994.



Ms. Franklin (Aretha) was the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, in 1987, its second year. She sang at the inauguration of Barack Obama in 2009, at pre-inauguration concerts for Jimmy Carter in 1977 and Bill Clinton in 1993, and at both the Democratic National Convention and at the funeral the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

Ms. Franklin received honorary degrees from Harvard University and New York University in 2014, as well as honorary doctorates in music from Princeton University (2012); Yale University (2010); Brown University (2009); the University of Pennsylvania (2007); Berklee College of Music (2006); the New England Conservatory of Music (1997); and the University of Michigan (1987). Franklin was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Case Western Reserve University (2011) and Wayne State University (1990), and an honorary Doctor of Law degree by Bethune–Cookman University (1975).

Ms. Franklin died August 16, 2018 at her home in Detroit, Michigan of advanced pancreatic cancer; she has four sons and four grandchildren. Aretha was both a 20th and 21st century musical and cultural icon known the world over simply by her first name: Aretha. The reigning and undisputed “Queen of Soul” she created an amazing legacy that spans an incredible six decades, from her first recording as a teenage gospel star to her RCA Records release, *Aretha Franklin Sings the Great Diva Classics* (her first studio album to be released under a major label in 11 years), her thirty-seventh and final studio album released in October 2014, featuring ten cover songs made famous by female recording artist.