

Aretha Franklin left the world better than she found it

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Will you leave the world better than you found it?

Ms. Aretha Franklin certainly did!

Think about how many barriers she overcame, how many paths she opened for others to walk on. This is not just true for people in the entertainment sphere.

Think about how Ms. Aretha Franklin had an impact on so many people's lives, making them feel validated just for who they are. Ms. Franklin's success and how she lived her life empowered many people, people who were looked at as inferior, as not as capable as others. She gave a voice to those who were not heard. She gave a voice to women!

Music was not the only way Ms. Franklin made a difference. In her own words: "Being the Queen is not all about singing and being a diva is not all about singing. It has much to do with your service to people. And your social contributions to your community and your civic contributions as well."

My husband first made me aware of how amazing Aretha Franklin is. He has been a fan since his teenage years. He loves her voice and her energy. I also love how she dressed. And on his 40th birthday, we saw her Live in concert, unforgettable! (www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FOUqQt3Kg0)

Did you know she had a vocal range of over three octaves? Because of her incredible talent, she was able to step in at a moment's notice for Mr. Pavarotti at the 1998 Grammy Awards, when he fell ill. And how beautiful she sang the "Nessun Dorma," Mr. Pavarotti's trademark piece. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8LB7iuVUIk)

Think about it, she is not an opera singer, she is not a tenor, and she had only an hours' notice. This is beautifully recalled in the following article; (nypost.com/2018/08/16/that-time-aretha-franklin-swooped-in-and-saved-the-grammys/) She later performed it again in front of Pope Francis in Philadelphia in 2015.

Remembering some of her autobiography, which I read years ago, President Clinton's remarks at Ms. Franklin's funeral struck a chord with me: "She lived with courage, not without fear, but overcoming her fears. She lived with faith, not without failure, but overcoming her failures. She lived with power, not without weakness, but overcoming her weaknesses."

Another "Did you know" (I did not): In 1987 Aretha Franklin became the First Female Artist inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

One of her signature songs, R.E.S.P.E.C.T., originally [a minor hit by Otis Redding](#) in 1965, was given a new arrangement and new lyrics by Ms. Franklin, about a woman boldly demanding respect. "RESPECT, find out what it means to me," these words are characteristic of Ms. Franklin's life to me. She expected, actually demanded, respect, not with words, but rather with her presence, you can see it when you watch her perform. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4F4SbGtqL4)

Do you remember the Blues Brothers movie in which Ms. Franklin performed her song "Think"? A song written by her and her husband Ted reflecting this quote by Ms. Franklin, "We all require and want respect, man or woman, black or white. It's our basic human right."

Think about it! Let's leave the world a better place than we found it.