

DETROIT NATIVE SUN

In Memoriam: Legendary Soul Icon Frankie Beverly passes away at 76

James Earl Jones, Iconic Voice of Darth Vader and EGOT Winner, Dies at 93



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Frankie Beverly, the iconic frontman of the soul, R&B, and funk band Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly, has died at the age of 76. His family confirmed the news in a devastating post on social media. "Grieving the loss of a loved one is a deeply personal and emotional experience," the family wrote. "During this time, as we are navigating feelings of sorrow, reflection, and remembrance, we kindly ask for privacy and understanding, allowing us the space to grieve in our own way."

The statement continued, "Howard Stanley Beverly, known to the world as Frankie Beverly, lived his life with pure soul. He lived for his music, family, and friends. For us, no one did it better. Love one another as he would want that for us all."

Beverly, born Howard Stanley Beverly on December 6, 1946, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, rose to prominence as one of the most influential figures in the music industry. Growing up in the East Germantown section of Philadelphia, he began his musical journey singing gospel in local churches. At just 13 years old, he joined the ensemble The Silhouettes and later formed his own group, The Blenders, inspired by doo-wop icons like Frankie Lymon. In a nod to his musical idol, Beverly changed his first name to Frankie, setting the stage for his future legacy.

In 1970, Beverly founded the band Maze in Philadelphia, originally named Raw Soul. The group's big break came when R&B legend Marvin Gaye, impressed by their talent, suggested they change their name to Maze. Beverly relocated to San Francisco in 1971, and the rest is history.

Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly debuted its self-titled album in 1976, which went on to sell more than 500,000 copies and earned gold status. The album featured timeless tracks like "While I'm Alone," which climbed the Billboard

charts, reaching No. 21 on the R&B chart and No. 89 on the Hot 100. Over the next decade, Beverly and Maze released a string of hits, including "Feel That You're Feelin'" from their 1979 album *Inspiration*, which reached No. 7 on the R&B chart, and "Southern Girl" from the 1980 album *Joy and Pain*, which peaked at No. 9 on the R&B chart.

The group's live performances, particularly their 1981 album *Live in New Orleans*, showcased their musical brilliance, with standout tracks like "Running Away" and "Before I Let Go," the latter of which became an enduring classic in R&B and funk circles, reaching No. 13 on the R&B chart. In the mid-1980s, the group continued their success with hits like "Too Many Games" and "Back In Stride" from their album *Can't Stop the Love*, cementing their place in music history.

Throughout his career, Beverly demonstrated a unique ability to craft timeless music that resonated with generations of fans. His contributions to soundtracks, including the 2005 film *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, further solidified his impact. His song "Hustler's Ambition" earned a nomination for "Outstanding Original Song" at the Satellite Awards that year.

Frankie Beverly's influence didn't go unnoticed. In 2012, he was honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the BET Awards. In 2019, at the age of 72, he delivered a powerful performance at the Essence Festival in New Orleans, proving that his music still moved the masses.

Beyond his musical accolades, Beverly's family said he was a devoted father to his son, Anthony Beverly, and a loving grandfather to three grandchildren. They said his legacy, marked by five gold albums and countless unforgettable songs, will continue to inspire and resonate with fans for years to come.

"He lived for his music, family, and friends. For us, no one did it better," the family stated.



James Earl Jones, the legendary actor whose deep, resonant voice became synonymous with some of the most iconic characters in film history, passed away today at his home in Dutchess County, New York. He was 93.

His representatives at Independent Artist Group first confirmed the actor's death to Deadline. Over a remarkable career that spanned six decades, Jones earned an indelible place in both Hollywood and Broadway. He became one of only a few entertainers to achieve the prestigious EGOT, winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony.

Best known to many as the commanding voice behind Darth Vader in *Star Wars*, Jones brought depth and gravitas to the villainous character, making him one of cinema's most unforgettable antagonists. He reprised the role in *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith* (2005) and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016), further cementing his legacy in the galaxy far, far away.

Born on January 17, 1931, in Arkabutla, Mississippi, Jones's contributions to the arts extended far beyond *Star Wars*. He voiced the beloved character Mufasa in Disney's animated classic *The Lion King* (1994) and again in the 2019 live-action remake. His unmistakable voice was also a signature of CNN's "This is CNN" campaign.

Jones's acting career began on the stage and in film with his breakout role in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). His powerful on-screen presence led to roles in a variety of acclaimed films including *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), *Coming to America* (1988), *The Hunt for Red October* (1990), and *The Sandlot* (1990). He earned an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Jack Jefferson in *The Great White Hope* (1970), a role that also won him his first Tony Award.

On Broadway, Jones was a force to be reckoned with. He earned four Tony nominations and took home two wins for *The Great White Hope* in 1969 and *August Wilson's Fences* in 1987. His contribution to the stage was celebrated with a Special Tony Award in 2017.

Jones's talents were equally recognized on television, where he won two Primetime Emmys in 1991 for *Gabriel's Fire* and *Heat Wave*. His voice and presence on-screen were magnetic, a testament to his versatility as an actor who could excel in drama, comedy, and everything in between.

A recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors in 2002, Jones's lifetime of achievements earned him accolades from SAG-AFTRA and the National Board of Review and a Grammy for Best Spoken Word Recording in 1977.

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