



## Mrs. Peggi Blu

May 26, 1945 - May 19, 2024

QUEEN PEGGI BLU

May 26, 1945 - May 19, 2024

Iconic Entertainer + International Singer + Broadway Actress + Legendary Vocal Coach + Recording Artist

Let the Good Times Roll

It's been said for millennia that a true lady knows how to make a grand entrance. Our elder storytellers remind us that on May 26, 1945, in Lumberton, North Carolina, the universe was graced with the arrival of a remarkable soul. This girlchild made her earthly debut unaccompanied by instruments and without any assistance from the attending physician. With eyes wide-open to the possibilities of life, she sang unto the Lord a new song. Her first sound was so unexpected and so melodic (and even in tune!) that her grandmother exclaimed, "Oh listen! She's SINGING!" Her parents named her Peggie Ann Blue, but to the world she would become a legendary voice that transcended generations: Peggi Blu, the iconic entertainer, international singer, Broadway actress, legendary vocal coach, and recording artist.

As a child, her Sundays were filled with soulful hymns at Mount Sinai Holiness Church and St. Mary Holiness Church. It was within these sanctuaries that her

gift was nurtured. Proverbs 22:6 guided her family, especially her devout Christian grandmother, Lenora Hailey Benton: “Train up a child in the way [she] should go: and when [she] is old, [she] will not depart from it.” She was raised with a strong belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This upbringing determined what she wore, how she looked, what she heard, and what she sang. By the tender age of three, this musical prodigy performed her first solo for the town mayor, celebrating his electoral victory with a rendition of “When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder,” a song her beloved grandfather, Rev. James, taught her to sing. That day, she captivated the hearts of her audience; it also marked the start of her professional journey, earning her first payment for her powerful delivery.

Deeply rooted in the church, she yearned to explore other musical genres and was especially drawn to the artistry of Big Mama Thornton and Elvis Presley. In fact, she would encamp in her bedroom listening to the Blues and Rock and Roll on the radio until she’d fall asleep – that is until one day her mother caught her and confiscated the radio! Growing up in the embrace of the family church’s choir—under the direction of her mother—she continued a family tradition steeped in musical excellence, spiritual leadership, and unwavering faith. Her lineage was rich with talented singers, musicians, bishops, pastors, and missionaries, all of whom contributed to the tapestry of her life. By twelve, she had become a sought-after gospel singer across North Carolina and Virginia, her voice a beacon of hope and inspiration. These were indeed good times!

### His Eye is On the Sparrow

Our songbird’s journey took a daring turn when—at 14—her family allowed her to relocate to New York City. It was there, under the guidance of her uncle, Bishop Walter L. Benton, and his choir, that she began to truly shine as a

multifaceted performing artist. She became one of her uncle's main soloists, thriving on stage as she spun tales and crafted vivid pictures through song. Soon she was captivating audiences with the popular Nathaniel Lewis Singers, her voice resonating with spiritual depth and soulful energy. The Nathaniel Lewis Singers landed a lucrative contract to perform in Las Vegas, where they sang gospel music for packed houses. The demand for her vocals was so high that she traveled with a chaperone and a private tutor, ensuring her education continued uninterrupted. She completed her studies at Lumberton's Hilly Branch High School.

### If You Believe

She believed in herself exploring the American Songbook and beyond, gleaned insights as she crafted her sound. The legendary crooner Frank Sinatra would become her vocal styling inspiration as she transformed all she learned into a unique vocal language of her own. By the mid-70s, she worked as a session vocalist on various gospel recordings, quickly earning a place as one of the most sought-after backing vocalists in the industry. Throughout that decade, she lent her powerful voice to Archie Shepp's "Rest Enough (Song To Mother)" from The Cry Of My People album; and to artists from Elkie Brooks and Esther Phillips to the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan. She joined forces with Louise Bethune and Dee Dee Kenniebrew and toured as The Crystals. Her gospel roots informed her career as a Broadway actress. She performed in Gospel on Broadway sharing the stage with incomparable groups of the day. From the Tony award-winning hit Bubbling Brown Sugar and Marilyn: An American Fable to Apollo Just Like Magic and Beehive: The '60s Musical, she was regarded as an entertainer par excellence. She starred in the 1984 Broadway Revival of The Wiz as Auntie Em and Glinda; her remarkable talent caught the eye of the King of Pop, Michael Jackson, who produced the play, Sisterella, and her single from it, "I Got The Money". She

starred in a successful 4-month long European tour of the play.

### I Made it Through the Rain

Although she had been a recording artist for sometime, she took the national stage by storm in 1986, winning the title of Grand Champion (Female Vocalist) on the popular television talent contest, Star Search. Her triumph on Star Search catapulted her further into the spotlight. Her debut solo album, "I Got Love," on MCA Records featured chart-topping hits like "All The Way With You" and "Tender Moments." Her subsequent works, including "Blu Blowin'" on Capitol Records and "I Want It All Now" on Injection Records, solidified her place in the music industry. Songs like "When We Loved," "Livin' On Love," "What About You," "Girls It Ain't Easy," and "Love Is The Magic" continue to enchant listeners worldwide. She is the Background Vocalist of Background Vocalists and she proudly declares on her social media channels, "Peggi Blu: Singer, Any part, All Genres," as testament to her adaptability and skill. She lent her voice, wrote for, performed with, and co-produced or co-arranged for an impressive array of artists, including President Bill Clinton (the President personally requested her to sing at his inauguration) Lou Courtney, Quincy Jones, The Manhattans, Stephanie Mills, Barbra Streisand (they sang together at Streisand's Millennium Concert on January 1, 2000), Bob Dylan, Burt Bacharach (she was his soloist with the Memphis and Hawaiian Symphony Orchestras), Edwin Hawkins, The Staple Singers, Stevie Wonder, Kylie Minogue, Barry Manilow, Luther Vandross, Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers, Phyllis Hyman, Alice Cooper, Melissa Manchester, Tracy Chapman, David Foster (The 1996 and 2002 Olympics Themes), Young M.C., Cherrelle, Linda Hopkins (Wild Women Blues), Smokey Robinson, Philip Bailey of Earth Wind & Fire, The Crusaders, Aaron Neville, Leonard Cohen, The Weather Girls, Philip Cody, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Jasmine Guy, and S. Epatha Merkerson among many others.

## I Did It My Way

She reached unprecedented heights as a vocal coach on the smash television show, American Idol. Dubbed the “Vocal Coach from Hell” by host Ryan Seacrest, she was—in truth—Heaven-sent, carrying a divine mandate to speak truth and inspire excellence in the entertainment world. She coached vocalists her way as only she could. Her passionate dedication and unyielding standards elevated aspiring singers to new heights. Her creativity knew no bounds. She wrote and starred in three one-woman shows including “Sinatra in Blu”. Her voice can still be heard on many movie soundtracks including “Set It Off” with Queen Latifah and Jada Pinkett Smith, “The Hurricane” starring Denzel Washington, and “Desert Heat” starring Jean-Claude Van Damme. She also arranged vocals and sang on the soundtrack for “I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry” starring Adam Sandler. Her influence extended to television with her work on “Motown Returns to the Apollo” and the iconic “Fame” with Irene Cara, where she not only sang but also arranged the vocals. She had many loves in life: she loved singing and acting. She cherished her children and her family deeply, though expressing it could be complex. She loved to cook and was a culinary artist known for her impeccable chicken dishes and unique salads. Her garden was a sanctuary, filled with roses, cucumbers, tomatoes, oranges, and onions, reflecting her nurturing spirit and love for nature. She loved the Holy Bible and the New Thought works of Florence Scovel Shinn and Catherine Ponder. She loved artistic freedom and she did it her way.

## I Want to Go to Heaven and Rest

Peggi Blu IS a beloved daughter, sister, cousin, aunt, mother, grandmother, friend, mentor, and diva. She transitioned from this life to eternal joy and peace on May 19, 2024. She was preceded in death by her grandparents; her parents, Avis Blue and James Edward Blue; and her brother, Edward “Buster” Blue, Jr.

When we think of her, let us think about her radiant spirit, her daring charm, and the power embodied in her essence. Envision her delighting whenever she sang or shared her wisdom with others. Let's remember her as you savor a piece of gourmet dark chocolate and champagne, her indulgences of choice. When we think of her, let us recall her in regal blue or daring red, colors that reflected her grace, vibrancy, and strength. Think of her when you hear the majestic strains of two songs that expressed her faith and soul, "Precious Lord" and "His Eye is On the Sparrow". When we think of her, let us remember the flair with which she dressed, a fashionista unmatched, always exuding elegance and grandeur. Let's remember her at Christmastime—a season she considered holy. Think of her whenever you see butterflies, symbols of transformation and beauty that she adored. Let's remember the zeal with which she lived for nearly 79 years.

Her legacy will be sustained by her children, Terry Denise Henry, John Roderick Henry, and Christopher (Marah) Perlman; and her grandchildren, Judah Danielle Norman, Jalen Rene' Henry, Mason Lee Henry, Hayleigh Myranda Perlman, Jacob Derden, and Jason Derden. Others who count it a blessing to have known her are among an endless list of people with whom she developed special bonds—especially Cheryl Lynn, Theresa Ford, Carol Dennis, Joan Faulkner, Anne Jones Pierre, Keith Borden, Clent Bowers, Charles Valentino, Cysco X. Drayton, Fred "Skippy" Benton, Lena Benton, Cynthia "Lolly" McLellan, Pat Benton, and S. Epatha Merkersen; other devoted friends and family; legions of fans and admirers around the world. An incomparable presence as an artist, her powerhouse vocals will be heard for eternity.

# Cemetery Details

## True Believers Cemetery

2640 7th Street  
Lumberton, NC 28358

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 14. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Colvin Funeral Home  
1904 Elizabethtown Road  
Lumberton, NC 28348  
(910) 738-4544  
info@hmcolvin.com  
<https://www.HMColvin.com>

## Celebration of Life

JUN 15. 1:00 PM (ET)

True Believers Church  
2640 7th St.  
Lumterton, NC

# Tribute Wall



“ Colvin Funeral Homes & Cremations created a Tribute Video in memory of Mrs. Peggi Blu



H. M. Colvin Funeral Home - June 14, 2024 at 07:12 PM

TH

*My mother was definitely one of a kind in every sense. God literally kissed her voice and gave her an uncommon shine. I miss you, Ma. You've touched so many lives and although the grief is tough, I know that you finally have peace and resting in God's love. Sleep well. 💙*

Terry Henry - June 17, 2024 at 08:33 AM

IG

“ Sending condolences to the family of Peggy Blu. I was always blessed that whenever she had time for social media she would pop on and you had an opportunity to chat. Those were the greatest times with your mom. Life changes and we are all working more so our social media moments became Less and less but I would always keep up with her new projects. She was as you all stated a diva a woman who loved the light of God and did not shy away from shining the light of his brightest colors. Rich deep and beautiful colors. And yes I shall think of your mom , grandmother every single time that I see a butterfly , she fluttered gracefully throughout our lives. How blessed we are. Family stay close and comfort each other and don't stop getting together , keep the love and laughter going. What a great laugh she truly had. Thank you for sharing her tribute video with her fans very special. Thank you so so much!!

ingrid Gardner - June 15, 2024 at 04:29 PM

MH

“ MARVIN LYRONE HARGROVE lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Peggi Blu



MARVIN LYRONE HARGROVE - June 14, 2024 at 09:45 PM

WW

“ Willie W. purchased the Ocean Breeze Spray for the family of Mrs. Peggi Blu.



Willie W. - June 12, 2024 at 04:56 PM

VF

“ *Valentino and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mrs. Peggi Blu.*



---

**Valentino and Family** - June 12, 2024 at 01:52 PM

SW

“ *My heartfelt condolences are extended to the family & friends of Mrs. Peggy Blu during this most difficult time. I pray that Gods caring and comforting presence will help ease the pain of your loss.*

---

**Sheriff Burnis Wilkins** - June 11, 2024 at 08:53 AM