

# The daughter of Music Icon Ray Charles; Sheila Raye Charles succumbs to breast cancer

SARASOTA, FLORIDA, MANATEE, June 15, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- American Vocalist, Songwriter, and National Recording Academy Member, [Sheila Raye Charles](#); the daughter of the music icon, the legendary Ray Charles and Sandra Jean Betts has passed away after a gallant battle with breast cancer. Sheila Raye was 53.

Sheila Raye has traveled across the United States and abroad spreading her message of love and redemption while also keeping her legendary father's memory alive through song, worship, and praise.

Having spent much of her life watching her famous father, Sheila Raye embarked on her own music career as an adult. Her debut album, *Introducing Sheila Raye Charles*, was released in 2005. This R&B singles collection included traditional standards and a touching tribute to her late father, "My Daddy."



Sheila Raye Charles-Steptoe

“

I know some of you out there are thinking, 'Oh, she's Ray Charles's daughter; what could she have possibly been through?' It is only by the grace of God that I'm not sitting in that chair right now.”

*Sheila Raye Charles*

Sheila Raye rose above her own tragic life choices to spring back with a message of hope for the world's children with a strong and compelling message based on her own experience of what faith and belief in 'God' can do.

Sheila Raye took her life's story out to the people who needed to hear her own trials most, spreading a legacy of her own of LOVE, HOPE, and FORGIVENESS. In her testimonies, she revealed that her 20-year drug addiction resulted in three stints in federal prison on grand larceny charges. She also revealed she had five children but lost custody of all five of them because of her drug abuse and that her drug use

caused her son to be born prematurely, weighing only 14 ounces at birth.

Sheila Raye didn't meet her father, Ray Charles until she was 14 and spoke of being sexually abused as a child. Two years later she was in a serious car accident that lodged her right eye into the back of her skull, taking her years to recover.

Years later, Sheila Raye began to follow in her father's footsteps, with her his help. Although she managed to tour with bigger named artist's, her career was unsuccessful. She struggled with daddy

abandonment issues stemming from childhood and spent years trying to break free from his shadow. Eventually, she ended up on crack. Sheila's lowest points came just before her third prison stint, her mother had died and her dad was no longer returning her calls.

Sheila had been drug-free for more than 10 years and began singing again. She reconnected with most of her children and spent every moment she could with her grandchildren.

Sheila Raye was recognized by the [Georgia General Assembly's House of Representatives](#) for helping to keep her father's legacy alive and well and, whereas Ray Charles' compilation of "Georgia On My Mind" was designated as the official song of the state of Georgia.

Sheila married Michael "Tony" Steptoe in 2010 and has since become a devout Christian and, as a published author of her life story "Behind the Shades" she provided insight into her life and her path to God.

She and husband developed the One Way Up Prison Ministry, where they use their life stories to encourage prison inmates that they too can change their lives. They also spoke at many churches, service organizations, and recovery programs. Together, Sheila and Tony founded "No More Chains"; a nonprofit organization that raises awareness and proceeds raised from these many worldwide events go to specific nonprofit organizations to aid in the fight of the growing epidemic of addiction, incarceration, and human trafficking.

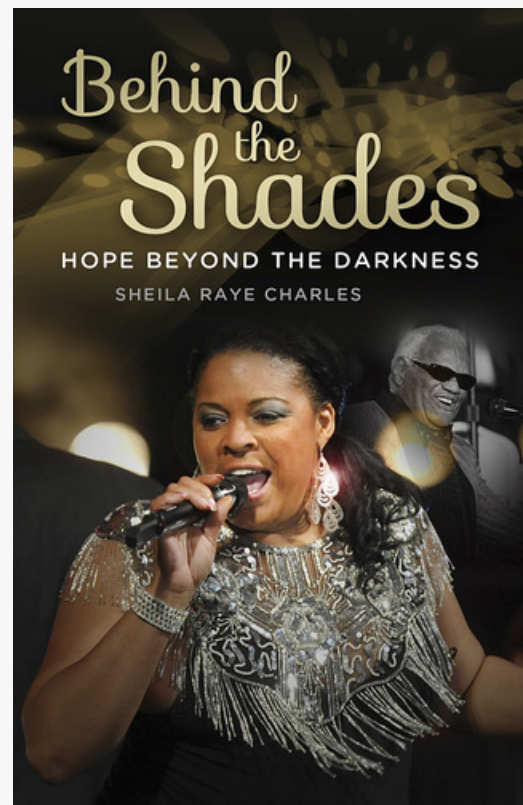
Sheila Raye opened one of her prison speaking engagements by stating: "I know some of you out there are thinking, 'Oh, she's Ray Charles's daughter; what could she have possibly been through?' It is only by the grace of God that I'm not sitting in that chair right now."

Donations to continue her work at "[No More Chains Heroes 4 Humans](#)" are being accepted at [www.chainsrgone.com](http://www.chainsrgone.com)

Sheila Raye Charles-Steptoe and her husband recently relocated to Sarasota, Florida and is survived



Ray Charles and his daughter Sheila Raye Charles-Steptoe



Behind The Shades Book

by her husband Michael Steptoe, her children, siblings, grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews.

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