

Julie Belafonte, Harry Belafonte's Wife of 50 Years Passes Away at 95

Julie Belafonte, a beloved actress and dancer renowned for her principal role with the Katherine Dunham Company, took her final bow, March 9th, 2024

NEW YORK, NY, USA, March 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Julie Mary Robinson Belafonte, a beloved actress and dancer renowned for her principal roles with the Katherine Dunham Dance Company, took her final bow, on March 9th, 2024 at 9:20am PST, due to cardio pulmonary failure. She was 95. Julie's life was a tapestry woven with threads of love, activism, and artistic expression.

"Our mother left us within months of our father, Harry Belafonte, her first and only husband and partner of 50 years until their divorce in 2007. Julie's

journey was intertwined with love, as she became his political companion and wife. Together, they shared a life filled with political organizing, activism, love, laughter, and artistic inspiration. Julie bore witness to the turbulent times of the 1960's Civil Rights Era, marched along side her husband, endured racial hatred and abuse through the years when a high profile relationship and marriage between a Black man and a White woman was dangerous. Bearing children in that climate was an affirmation of their commitment to the need for diversity in the world. Together, they navigated the complexities of life with unwavering commitment, leaving an indelible mark on the world around them. Their home was a tapestry of inclusivity, a hot spot for artists and political luminaries to gather, and it is comforting for us to know that she is joining our father after a lifetime together," said Gina and David Belafonte in a joint statement.

Born to Clara and George Robinson, Julie's passion for dance was evident from a young age. A principal dancer with the internationally acclaimed Katherine Dunham Dance Company, Julie graced stages worldwide and will forever resonate in the hearts of those who witnessed her mesmerizing performances, artistry, and skill. Beyond her illustrious career in dance and



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Gina & David Belafonte

activism, Julie was an artistic, free spirited soul... a dancer, a designer, and a producer who aligned herself with a likeminded community of women and men who strived to make the world a better place. She was a beacon of style and sophistication, with an impeccable sense of fashion. Her vibrant colors choices, and daring designs illuminated every room she entered, leaving admirers in awe of her effortless elegance. She performed and toured with her husband and later designed his touring costumes. She was a devoted political organizer and activist, and later in life a documentary film producer with Ritmo del Fuego, and Flags Feathers and Lies about the devastation of hurricane

Katrina and the resilience of the Mardi Gras Indians, amongst her credits.

As an instructor at the Dunham school Julie taught renowned dancer Alvin Ailey and Marlon Brando with whom she began a relationship while touring with the show A Streetcar Named Desire. Marlon Brando ultimately introduced her to Harry Belafonte whom she married in 1957.

Julie Belafonte was ahead of her time from her politics to her elevated style and love of celebration and revelry. Whether it was a lively soiree with friends or her curiosity of culture or even a spontaneous dance party that lasted into the early hours of the morning, Julie's infectious joy and enthusiasm lit up the night sky. She was an incredible host, always inclusive and always making sure everyone felt welcome.

Julie was a loving mother, grandmother, stepmother, and mother-in-law. She is survived by her two children and their families; daughter Gina Belafonte, husband Scott McCray, and their daughter Maria; and son David Belafonte, wife Malena Belafonte, and their two children Sarafina and Amadeus (in whom she instilled to always be a little naughty), and her step children Adrienne Biesemeyer Belafonte and Shari Belafonte, and their families.

"Julie's legacy extends far beyond her immediate family, touching the lives of nieces, nephews, and countless admirers who were fortunate enough to cross her path. Let us remember her vibrant spirit, her passion for dance, art, politics, immaculate taste, and the unwavering love she shared with her family. As we bid farewell to this remarkable soul, let us also carry forward her spirit of resilience, loyalty, creativity, and fervor. Though Julie may no longer dance upon this earthly stage, her memory will continue to dance in our hearts and continue to inspire and uplift us all. A testament to a life lived with passion, purpose, and unbridled joy. Our mom will be deeply missed but forever cherished in our hearts, her legacy an eternal source of inspiration and admiration," said Gina and David Belafonte.

In accordance to her wishes, Julie Belafonte was cremated on March 18, 2024, and a private

memorial service will be arranged at a later date.

Michelle Zemi

Pink Pirate Agency

+1 917-397-1010

pinkpirateagency@gmail.com

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