

Grammy Winning Gospel Legend Sandra Crouch Dies at 81 / Co-wrote "Jesus is the Answer"

*Singer, Songwriter and Percussionist
Worked With Michael Jackson And A
Who's Who in Music*

PACOIMA, CALIFORNIA, USA, April 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sandra Crouch, Grammy® Award winning twin sister of gospel legend Andraé Crouch, and an artist in her own right, passed away on Sunday, March 17, 2024 @ 12 PM PST at Northridge Hospital in Northridge, CA. She was 81. She died of complications from radiation for a non-cancerous brain lesion. Crouch was an integral partner in her brother's trailblazing career as the most popular crossover gospel artist of the 1970s and co-wrote one of his biggest hits, "Jesus is the Answer." She was also a percussionist on recordings by The Jackson 5, Neil Diamond, and Janis Joplin. In the 1980s, she produced a trio of Grammy® Award-nominated albums that birthed the hits "Completely Yes," and "We Need To Hear From You."



Left to right: Andraé Crouch, Sandra Crouch, Robert Shanklin, and Michael Jackson - December 1994, Hit Factory, New York, NY Courtesy of Capital Entertainment

“

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*Donald Lawrence, Grammy
Award Winning Producer*

Television producer , Ken Erlich, worked with Sandra Crouch many times. “I just remember what a presence she was,” he says. “...On the Grammy® shows, in the early years that I was doing them in the 1980s... We would do a big gospel number and quite often, most of the time, or a lot of the time, it was with Andraé, but a lot of it was with Sandra and her choirs.” One such time was when Michael Jackson did the "The Way You Make Me Feel" and "Man in the Mirror" medley in 1988 at Radio City Music Hall for the

Grammy Awards. "She pulled the choir together for that."

Sandra Elaine Crouch and her twin brother, Andraé Edward Crouch, were born on July 1, 1942, in Los Angeles, CA. Their parents, Benjamin E. and Catherine Crouch, founded Christ Memorial Church C.O.G.I.C. in San Fernando Valley in 1951. While the twins were students at San Fernando Valley High School, they formed The COGICS. Their first recording was "It Will Never Lose Its Power" for Vee Jay Records. Then, they formed Andraé Crouch & the Disciples while Sandra worked as a percussionist in Hollywood. Among the notable recordings she played on were The Jackson 5's "I Want You Back," Neil Diamond's "Cracklin' Rosie," and Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby McGee."

By the 1970s, Crouch rejoined her brother as a key member of The Disciples. Aside from singing and playing with the group, she co-wrote songs such as "Jesus is the Answer" that was a huge crossover hit on both white and black gospel radio stations. Over the years, it's been covered by over 75 artists including Paul Simon, and Michael W. Smith. The group dominated the airwaves during the period with hits such as "Take Me Back," "Soon and Very Soon," "Through It All," and "My Tribute (To God Be the Glory)." They performed on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson" and "Saturday Night Live," and at The White House during the Carter Administration.

In 1983, Sandra Crouch bankrolled, composed, and produced her first solo LP, *We Sing Praises*. It won a Grammy® Award and birthed the radio hits "He's Worthy," "There is Power in the Blood," and "We Need to hear From You." Its unexpected success helped save Light Records from financial bankruptcy. Her next set, *We're Waiting*, appeared in 1985 and included the massive hit



2023 Sandra Crouch Promo Photo by Alonso Garcia



Sandra Crouch testifying at New Christ Memorial Church in Pacoima, CA circa 2005

"Completely Yes" that was sung by church choirs nationwide. It earned three Grammy® Award nominations in 1989. Her final solo album, *With All of My Heart*, was released on Sparrow Records in 1992.

"Sandra Crouch was a friend," says R&B legend, Candi Staton. "We were even nominated for a Grammy in the same year and same category. We hung out that day. There was no jealousy nor competition. I think that is the truly genuine thing about Sandra is that she was all about the ministry and not the awards."

Over the years, Andraé Crouch began to work on film soundtracks and always included Sandra. Quincy Jones tapped them to work on "The Color Purple." They wrote "Heaven Belongs to You" for it and they sang "Maybe God Is Trying to Tell You Something" on the soundtrack. That led to other scores for the films "The Lion King" and "Free Willy." In addition, the twins assembled choirs that backed Madonna on "Like A Prayer," Diana Ross on "Force Behind the Power," and Michael Jackson on "You Are Not Alone" and "Man in the Mirror." The Sandra Crouch Singers backed Beyoncé, Common, and John Legend on the closing segment of the 57th annual Grammy® Awards in 2015 with a riveting medley of "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," and "Glory" from the *Selma* motion picture soundtrack. She also produced one of the few televised Grammy® gospel performances ever with Al Green as the star of the segment. It's just one of innumerable achievements from Sandra Crouch's illustrious career.

In 1998, Andraé Crouch, who assumed leadership of his parents' church when his brother, Pastor Benjamin Crouch Jr. passed, defied the COGIC denomination's policy against female preachers and ordained Sandra as a co-pastor. They renamed Christ Memorial COGIC as New Christ Memorial Church to signify a new era. Andraé Crouch passed away on January 8, 2015. Upon his death, Sandra Crouch assumed the role of Senior Pastor and had been active up until recently. "Sandra genuinely did not mind shining from the back," Grammy winning producer, Donald Lawrence, remembers about her many backstage musical credits. "She loved seeing others win."

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024

4 PM Viewing

7 PM Musical Tribute

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

11 AM Celebration of Life /Homegoing Service

All Celebration of Life activities will take place at New Christ Memorial Church, 13333 Vaughn Street, San Fernando, CA 91340. In lieu of flowers, please make tax deductible donations to Christ Memorial Church at www.newchristmemorial.org

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