



Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin celebrates her birthday at gala in her home in suburban Detroit.

Ms. Franklin receives birthday greetings from her son, Eddie Franklin (l) and other family members (l-r) sister-in-law, Earline Franklin; cousin, Betty Corbett; sister, Erna Franklin; niece, Sabrina Garrett; and son, Ted White Jr.



ARETHA FRANKLIN, Queen Of Soul, Holds Royal Birthday Bash

Nobody can throw a party like the Queen of Soul.

Aretha Franklin recently celebrated her birthday in a royal bash fit for a queen at her mansion in an affluent Detroit suburb.

The guests, some in stretch limousines, made their way up the winding driveway to the Franklin estate located on a private road in the hills. They were greeted by a valet who parked their car and directed them to the head of security who cleared their name on the VIP guest list.

About 150 of the Queen's special friends enjoyed the music, food and merriment as they helped her mark another year.

Among the well-wishers were sultry Emmy Award-winning TV star Jackée, Detroit Pistons



Celebrating at Ms. Franklin's black-tie birthday affair are TV star Jackée and talented singers Keith Washington and Dee Harvey.

basketball star Isiah Thomas, singers Levi Stubbs and Lawrence Payton of the legendary soul group The Four Tops, hit-making producer Michael Powell, Rev. Jesse Jackson's son, Jonathan and noted pianist-singer Jo Thompson.

The Queen was serenaded throughout the evening in a star-studded show with performances by the world-famous Duke Ellington Orchestra, led by the son of the late bandleader-composer, Mercer Ellington; hit balladeer Keith Washington, and Motown recording stars Dee Harvey and Shanice.

While some news media and Hollywood celebrity registers say she is 50, the Queen insists, she's "35 and holding."

Ms. Franklin is congratulated by Mercer Ellington, leader of the famed Duke Ellington Orchestra, which performed at birthday bash.

As far as the celebrity registers and media reports go, she says, "Oh, they're always wrong, what do they know? What do they know?" she laughs. "Whatever the celebrity registers say, they'll have to check with the soul register, the lady's register. They'll have to check with me."



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Aretha Looked Like 'Satin Doll'

The Ellington Orchestra performed all the Ellington classics including *Satin Doll* and *Sophisticated Lady*. Dressed in a strapless, white beaded and sequined dress, the "Sophisticated Lady of Soul" looked like a lovely "satin doll" as she listened to her favorite jazz band play.

Hit singer Shanice performs her top hit I Love Your Smile, as the Four Tops' lead singer Levi Stubbs greets the Queen of Soul.



Ms. Franklin enjoys birthday guests Detroit Pistons basketball star Isiah Thomas and wife, Lynn.

"The Ellington Orchestra was fabulous," she told J&R after their swinging performance. "When they got in high gear, they were all the way up, all the way live. Mercer has taken over that band fabulously," she raved.

The Queen had royal praise for her other special guest performers. "Keith is beautiful. He's really just a beautiful person. He rose to the occasion," she exclaimed. "I hope that he will maintain his naturalness. He's very passionate and he has a lot of heart and soul."

She continued, "Shanice is delightful. She's got a record in the top 10 *I Love Your Smile*. She's a lovely young lady. She's very wholesome and that's very refreshing; wholesome and a very nice young lady."

As for Dee Harvey, "he is one of the newest, best young singers I've heard lately," she said. "He is definitely one of the best male



Ms. Franklin thanks her former elementary school teachers Julia Kendrick Preer and Irene J. Morgan for attending her birthday bash.

vocalists in any category."

After the show, guests made their way downstairs to the dance floor and had a real down-home, soulful time as they partied to such hits as Ms. Franklin's *Jump To It*, Ce Ce Peniston's *Finally* and Michael Jackson's *Remember The Time*. And the Queen was

right there with her guests on the dance floor, having the time of her life.

As always, the Queen did not spare any expense. Guests enjoyed an assortment of hors d'oeuvres—lobster, shrimp, filet mignon, shrimp and vegetable tempura, chicken and green onion

The Queen of Soul receives heartfelt best wishes from her former elementary school classmates (l-r) Yvonne Robertson Price, Dolores Coleman Yancey, Patricia Solomon Mann and Carol Jefferson Sharp.



ted material



Pianist/singer Jo Thompson, who appeared at a Carnegie Hall recital to raise scholarship funds for her late husband Al Dunmore, attended Aretha's gala birthday party with her son, Detroit newspaper columnist Gregory Dunmore.

Guests Feasted On Soul Food

on a skewer—and a variety of cheeses and fresh fruit.

Later in the evening, the guests feasted on a down-home soul food buffet including, chitterlings, baked chicken and dressing, candied sweet potatoes, collard greens, potato salad, corn on the cob, rice pudding and pineapple upside down cake.

The Queen's birthday cake was a three-layer pound cake with

raspberry and lemon cream filling. The guests sang *Happy Birthday* to the Queen, whose latest hit is *Ever Changing Times* with Michael McDonald, and wished her many more years of happiness, success and soul.

—CLARENCE WALDRON

Aretha Gives Tips For Throwing A Good Party

Aretha Franklin's parties are almost as famous as she is. Detroiters and society folks across the country mark their calendars for her parties—oftentimes the social events of the year.

They know it's going to be an evening of elegance, soul and pure down home fun.

During her recent bash, the Queen revealed the key to throwing a good party.

"The key to giving a good party," she says "is good friends, good music, good conversation and good food."

She adds that it helps to give partygoers an element of surprise. "You don't want to do the same things over and over again. She says a party giver should give the guests "something new and exciting."

And above all, it helps when the host puts his or her heart and soul in the party. You have to enjoy entertaining to give a good party.

"I like to celebrate and certainly, celebrate myself and invite my friends and have a good time," she says.

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