



Marsha D. Sumner

April 20, 1945 - January 24, 2015

BELOVED WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA GOSPEL RADIO ANNOUNCER MARSHA D. SUMNER DIES AT 69

Marsha D. Sumner, a native, lifelong Washingtonian and a 20-year local gospel radio announcer, died on Saturday, January 24th after suffering a short illness. She was 69.

Sumner, who was born on April 20, 1945, attended DC public schools and graduated from Theodore Roosevelt Senior High School, where she excelled in sports and was offered an athletic scholarship to Tennessee A&I State University. Marsha declined the offer saying: "All they wanted me to do was run track and that rubbed me the wrong way." Alternatively, she started a career in government service, working at HUD and FEMA for 30 years as a housing inspector and in areas that included recovery work at natural disaster sites. "I felt like I had found my niche," she once said. "At the end of the day, I could always see that I had helped somebody."

"While she was traveling around the country covering earthquakes, hurricanes and floods for FEMA, I always told her she had a very distinct voice for radio," said her long-time friend and former media executive Portia Scott, who first met Sumner at a church they both attended in the mid-1980s. "I encouraged her dream and the next thing I knew, she had a vocal coach, enrolled and

graduated from the Columbia School of Broadcasting,” Scott continued.

In the late 1980s, Sumner began to volunteer at the University of the District Columbia’s radio station WDCU 90.1 FM. “She did that so she could be in the broadcasting environment and learn to work the boards,” Scott adds. Before long, Sumner was hosting her own gospel music program at UDC on Sunday mornings during the 6 to 8 AM slot. She remained there for about a decade until the station was sold to C-SPAN in 1997. Following that tenure, Sumner briefly worked for WWGB 1040 AM in Suitland, MD before she was hired by CBS Radio’s WPGC Heaven 1580 AM, where she held down midday and overnight on-air positions for a dozen years.

Sumner used her radio platform to expand her mentoring and evangelistic ministry, focusing on youth in the DC metropolitan area. She founded Marsha Sumner Ministries, Inc., a community-based organization with a tri-fold purpose: to promote the positive efforts of Christian youth; to sponsor and support youth-oriented programs, events and organizations; and to establish a network of communications between churches' youth departments. Some of her youth programs included organizing Youth in Praise Rallies that she called “Holy Ghost Throw Downs,” which ministered to thousands of area kids. She hosted “gospel nights” at various roller skating rinks and was also one of the first regional radio announcers who sought to include Christian rap in the traditional-styled gospel radio format. “I want them to come off the street and get this message while they [come together] and have fun,” she told The Washington Post in a 1993 article.

“I was immediately drawn to Marsha’s warm smile and quiet strength,” Heaven 1580’s former Program Director Matt Anderson said of Sumner in a recent Facebook posting. “She knew the DMV and they knew her. Everybody liked Marsha, in part, because of her contribution to the team. She was unique in her approach to radio and listening to her was like talking to an old friend.” At

the WPGC station, Sumner interviewed some of the biggest names in gospel music, namely Yolanda Adams, Candi Staton, Richard Smallwood and Israel Houghton, among others. Her favorite was CeCe Winans. "She has a sweet spirit and is always the same. Interviewing her was like a paycheck to me," she once said.

Heaven 1580 briefly flipped to a Christian Talk station where Sumner hosted a "Cross Talk-Urban Style" program for a few months in 2009. On this show she led discussions involving an array of public issues and said at the time, "Now I feel like I am helping people by keeping my community informed." After that station flipped again, Sumner chose to retire to her home in Silver Spring, MD. However, she continued to actively attend and participate in her evangelistic ministry as a member of the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in Fort Washington, MD, along with maintaining a presence at various local gospel and community events.

In her leisure, Marsha spent time in daily Bible Study, listening to classical music, ministering to young people and watching old cowboy movies.

She was a licensed evangelist and a member of Ebenezer AME Church, 7707 Allentown Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744; under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Grainger Browning, Jr., Senior Pastor and Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Browning, Co-Pastor. She has worked in prison ministry for many years in facilities at the Lorton, VA and Hagerstown, MD facilities. She prided herself on being real in Christ and simply loved to represent Him wherever she went.

Marsha Sumner's parents Miriam and Hubert Sumner, Jr., and several aunts preceded her in death. She is survived by her loving brother Hubert L. Sumner III, several cousins, two goddaughters and a host of special friends. Many who knew Marsha will recall that she loved "hugging necks and kissing babies," while using her signature and most memorable phrase, "Love you most much!"

Funeral services for Marsha Sumner will be held on Tuesday, February 3,

2015, at the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, 7707 Allentown Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744, viewing from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., service starting at 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, tax deductible donations may be made in support of a scholarship created in Marsha's memory. Checks made payable to: The Scott Lee Foundation, Inc. (SLF), marked for the "Marsha Sumner Memorial Scholarship (MSMS)," and mailed to 14625 Baltimore Avenue, Suite #279, Laurel, MD 20707.

Cemetery Details

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery

4101 Suitland Rd
Suitland, MD 20746

Previous Events

Service

FEB 3. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

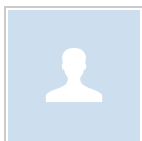
Ebenezer AME Church
7707 Allentown Road
Fort Washington, MD

Service

FEB 3. 12:00 PM (ET)

Ebenezer AME Church
7707 Allentown Road
Fort Washington, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *Marsha D. Sumner*

October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *I am truly sorry to hear of the passing of Marsha. She will sorely be missed. I worked with Marsha at FEMA located at 500 C St., Washington, DC. in the eighty's. I would always go in her office to sit down and we would just talk about what she was going to do after she retired from FEMA and many other things. I remember that a gospel radio station was in her plans. I would see her when she attended Ebenezer's women conferences. and we would laugh and talk. Although there is little that we can say at a time like this but we can share memories. May God be with you in your time of sorrow and continue to treasure Marsha's memories. God bless you and your family.*



Patrice McCrimmon

Patrice McCrimmon - February 03, 2015 at 07:09 PM



“ *We the March Family and Marshall-March Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

Marshall-March Funeral Homes - January 30, 2015 at 03:05 PM