

Gospel music legend Rance Allen dies at 71

by [Roxanne Stone](#) in the [December 2, 2020](#) issue



(Video screengrab via Warner Music Group)

Rance Allen, a Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee perhaps best known for his hit “Something About the Name Jesus,” died on October 31 at the age of 71.

A five-time Grammy nominee, Allen formed the Rance Allen Group in 1969 with two of his brothers, Thomas and Steve. They released their first gospel album in 1971 after catching the attention of a Detroit music promoter and signing with Gospel Truth, a subsidiary of Stax Records.

As the lead vocalist for the group, Allen was widely praised for his vocal range, and the group became known for incorporating rock, soul, and R&B with traditional Black gospel music. They performed with a number of gospel greats, including Andraé

Crouch, Marvin Winans, BeBe and CeCe Winans, Kirk Franklin, and more. The group also performed for President Barack Obama in 2015 at an event celebrating the history of gospel music.

Even as he appeared on stages around the world, Allen remained committed to his pulpit at the New Bethel Church of God in Christ in Toledo, Ohio, where he served as pastor from its founding in 1985. In 2011, he became a bishop for the COGIC Michigan Northwestern Harvest Jurisdiction.

“I’ve been singing over 60 years, and it’s all been, as far as I was concerned, a ministry,” Allen told a Toledo TV station after being honored for Black History Month this year. “Then to get to be 71 years old and someone says, ‘we want to honor you,’ it made me want to put my suit on today. It’s a wonderful thing, and I’m enjoying every bit of it.” —Religion News Service