**Aretha’s Enduring Legacy**

African Americans have made an impact in all areas of culture, but when you consider music, Aretha Franklin's voice is one that stands out. Aretha Franklin's voice carries you on a journey where every note explains why she is the undisputed Queen of Soul. You can feel the power in her voice as she sings. She not only was a singer, but a cultural icon whose voice continues to impact audiences worldwide.

Aretha’s beginnings start in the church choir in Detroit, Michigan and end with dominating the charts and breaking barriers in the music industry. Her parents separated when Aretha was six years old and her mother passed away before her 10th birthday. Her grandmother, Mahalia Jackson, and other women in her life helped to raise her. This is when she learned how to play the piano by ear. Aretha Franklin had many personal struggles which included having two children by 15 and many failed marriages. However, her perseverance in overcoming these challenges proved her to be an inspiration to many people.

She was signed to a record deal at 18, but did not immediately become successful. It would take time for her famous hits to make an impact such as "Respect," "Natural Woman," and "Think.” These songs were not just hits on the music charts, but became anthems of empowerment and freedom for people everywhere. Outside of her musical success, Franklin was also active in the civil rights movement which further increased her legacy as a symbol of strength and inspiration.

In conclusion, the world mourned when she passed away in 2018. This was evidence of the effect she had on the world. She is one of the few artists to have had

hits in 5 decades. There were so many who found joy, strength, and peace in her music making her impact forever giving her a spot in cultural history.