

### Etta James Speech

A lot of people may know Etta James for her powerful vocals that she uses in the most moving songs, but Etta James will always be remembered for many things as well.

Etta James was born Jamesetta Hawkins on January 25, 1938 in Los Angeles, California. Her mother was only 14 when she had her and she was raised by friends and relatives. She grew up singing in the choir at her church and by the age of 5, she was known as a gospel prodigy. At the age of 12, Etta moved to Sacramento where she formed a singing group with her friends called the Creolettes. The trio got a lot of attention with bandleader Johnny Otis when he heard their song "Roll with Me Henry" which was renamed the "The Wallflower". After the group's second hit the group's name was changed to the peaches which was also Etta's nickname. Soon after, Etta James solo career started to take off.

After signing with Chicago's Chess Records in 1960, James's career began to soar with chart topping hits like "All I Could Do Was Cry", "Trust in Me", and "At Last". She kept singing throughout the 60s and early 70s. In 1973 she won her first grammy for her self titled album "Etta James". Although Etta James had a successful career, her personal life wasn't so peachy keens. When she was a teenage she had experimented with drugs and by the time she was 21, she was a heroin addict. As she grew older, it had gotten harder and harder to balance her career and her addiction. She finally got clean in the late 70s and got signed to Warner Brothers Records. In 1993, Etta James was inducted into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame. Etta James kept performing and recording music well into the 1990s and the 2000s. In 2006, James released the album *All the Way*, which featured cover versions of songs by Prince, Marvin Gaye and James Brown.

The story of Etta's days signed with Chess Records came to big screen as Cadillac Records with Beyonce playing Etta James herself. As time progressed Etta started having health issues. She was hospitalized in 2010, because of blood infection and other ailments. She was later diagnosed dementia and Hep C and started getting treatment for Leukemia. Etta released her last album in 2011, *The Dreamer*, a few weeks before the doctors announced that she was terminally ill. Etta's two sons, Donto and Sametto, proceeded to take care of her in her home in Riverside, California. On January 20, 2012 Etta James was pronounced dead in her California home. Today, Etta James continues to be considered as one of music's most dynamic singers and her music will live on for decades.