

R.I.P. Ben E. King

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Ben E. King, who became famous for singing "Stand By Me" passed today at the age of 76. King started his career in the '50's as a member of the doo-wop group The Drifters. He was a co-writer and the lead singer of their big hit "There Goes My Baby" and he was also "This Magic Moment's" lead vocalist. After two years and 13 songs King left The Drifters and started his solo career on Atlantic's Atco imprint. "Stand By Me" was co-written by King and the legendary Mike Leiber and Jerry Stoller songwriting team with whom he had written "There Goes My Baby" two years earlier. The title of the 1986 movie *Stand By Me* was inspired by the song and this year it was entered into the National Recording Registry by the Library Of Congress. King, who hailed from North Carolina and moved to Harlem at age 9, was a constant presence in the '60's. His entry into the popular imagination came from other songs as well including "Spanish Harlem," "Amor," "Don't Play That Song (You Lied)" and "Supernatural Thing, Part I" from the '70's. King's contribution to '60's R&B made him a pioneer of rock and the singer of some of the most important songs in the American songbook. The RIAA called "Stand By Me" one of the most relevant songs of the century. Everyone from Bobby Womack to Tracy Chapman covered "Stand By Me" and The Isley Brothers and De La Soul are just two of many artists to sample it. King made his last concert appearances in 2014.