

R.I.P. Geri Allen

[youtube id="XHs-pNjC4eo"] Detroit jazz piano legend Geri Allen passed Tuesday at her home in Philadelphia at the age of 60 after a bout with cancer. Allen was recognized for mastering jazz tradition and branching out into other genres in her sound. She was influenced by Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, and Cecil Taylor and she told the *Detroit Free Press* in 1996 that her challenge was to find her voice among their contributions. Her respect for the greats that came before her did not stop her from becoming a charter member of the Black Rock Coalition Brooklyn's M-Base collective. She played on several albums by Steve Coleman and later went on tour with Mary Wilson of The Supremes. Her career as a bandleader began in 1984 with the release of her *Printmakers* album. Allen recorded 20 albums as a leader and worked with jazz luminaries like Charlie Haden, Ron Carter and Ornette Coleman as well as funk/rock leader Vernon Reid. She received the first Soul Train Lady Of Soul Award for jazz in 1995 for Twenty-One recording. In 2012, Terri Lynne Carrington formed a trio with Allen and Esperanza Spalding and performed some critically-acclaimed concerts at the Village Vanguard.

Allen also worked as an educator having taught at the University of Michigan and being an Associate Professor Of Music at her alma mater, the University of Pittsburgh. The Berklee College Of Music awarded her an Honorary Doctorate of Music in 2014.