

CELEBRATION PROGRAM

KIKI

JULY 15, 1951 - MARCH 16, 2026

SHEPARD

**“A LIFE SO
BEAUTIFULLY LIVED
DESERVES TO BE
BEAUTIFULLY
REMEMBERED”**

**“CELEBRATING A LIFE OF
LOVE, LAUGHTER, AND
LASTING MEMORIES”**

**“THE STORY OF A LIFE
WELL-LIVED, A HEART
WELL-LOVED, AND A SOUL
NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN”**



The Life Of

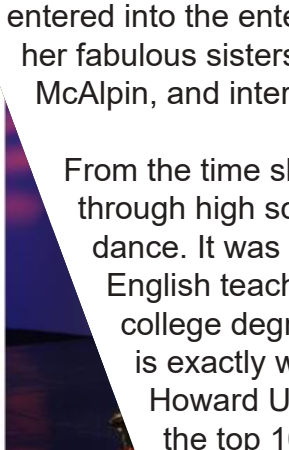
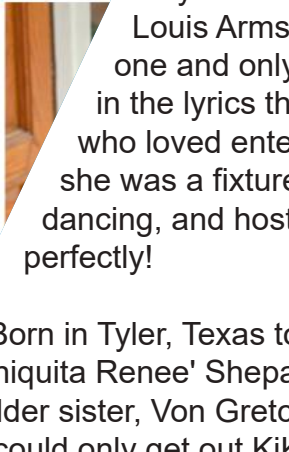
Chiquita "KiKi" Shepard

If you are familiar with the song "It's a Wonderful Life" by Louis Armstrong, you might think he was singing about the one and only, KiKi Shepard. Kiki's spirit was perfectly described in the lyrics throughout the song. KiKi was a versatile performer who loved entertaining. Whether on film, television, or the stage, she was a fixture on American television for over 30 years; acting, dancing, and hosting. That was KiKi's natural arenas and they fit her perfectly!

Born in Tyler, Texas to John and Dorothy Shepard on July 15, 1951, as Chiquita Renee' Shepard, she was renamed 'KiKi' five days later by her older sister, Von Gretchen, who could not pronounce Chiquita She could only get out KiKi, and it stuck. All three sisters grew up and entered into the entertainment world. KiKi was enormously proud of her fabulous sisters, renowned international model, Von Gretchen McAlpin, and international artist Cassandra Shepard.

From the time she could walk from kindergarten all the way through high school, it became apparent that KiKi's first love was dance. It was her true passion. Her mom, Dorothy Shepard, an English teacher for over 50 years, told KiKi she had to get her college degree and then she could follow her dreams, and that is exactly what she proceeded to do. KiKi graduated from Howard University with a BA in Business Administration in the top 10% (ten percent) of her class, promptly laid her degree in her mother's hands and announced her decision that a professional dance career would be her future.

During her time at Howard University, KiKi met and learned from the late great dancer/choreographers Mike Malone and Louis Johnson, both of whom opened the doors of a professional dance career for her through the DC Repertory Dance Company. Mike Malone encouraged and trained her to follow her dreams of professional dancing, under the tutelage of ballet master Charles Augins, and then, mentor, teacher, and acclaimed choreographer Louis Johnson opened up the New York-based professional world of dance for her after leaving Washington, D.C.



During her time at the DC Repertory Dance Company, KiKi performed in such notable ballets as – The Balls, Spirit in the Dark, When Malindy Sings - where she played Aretha Franklin, No Outlet, For All We Know, and Genesis, Juba, & Other Jewels: A Songstep of Black America, and Changes, to name a few..... all directed and choreographed by Mike Malone and Louis Johnson.

One of KiKi's most favorite and most challenging memories while at the DC Repertory Dance Company was performing in the ballet, "No Outlet." The ballet followed the story of a magnificently talented dark-skinned Black Ballerina who could not make it in the White Dance World because of the color of her skin, which finally drove the young ballerina crazy. This ballet told a true story that affected so many dancers of color as they strived to break color barriers in the dance world. It was an experience and story KiKi could identify with wholeheartedly. She once stated, "I too, could not blend in with the white ballet world because of the darkness of my skin, but I still knew I was exceptional. Others' opinions would not stop me. I was determined to excel in the world of dance. And I did!!!"

KiKi's six-year dance journey in Washington, D.C. culminated in the DC Repertory Dance Company's appearance at FESTAC, the 2nd WORLD BLACK ARTS' FESTIVAL in Lagos, Nigeria in 1977. What an amazing and memorable experience.

Upon her return to the US, KiKi knew it was time to make that move. In 1978, she struck out for the bright lights of New York City and Broadway. This big move laid the foundation for the next thrilling and amazing 11 years of her career.

Once KiKi arrived in New York, she hit the ground running. She was immediately cast in the first national tour of the hit musical "Bubbling' Brown Sugar," choreographed by the legendary Billy Wilson, and went on to perform across America. She then returned to New York and Broadway production for 2 years. Shortly after that, KiKi was called to do the first international tour of Bubblin' Brown Sugar with most of the original cast in Amsterdam and Paris, France. The French press called her legs "simply beautiful."

KiKi performed in other hit Broadway productions for ten straight years such as, "Alice" with Debbie Allen and Paula Kelly, choreographed by Talley Beatty "The Wiz," choreographed by George Faison, "Comin' Uptown" with Gregory Hines, choreographed by Michael Peters. "Reggae" choreographed by Otis Sallid: "Your Arms Too Short to Box with God" choreographed by Talley Beatty, for over 5 years, featuring Jennifer Holiday, and later, Patti Labelle and Al Green. She also danced in the pre-Broadway show Sing, Mahalia, Sing, choreographed by George Faison.

From 1977-1989, KiKi appeared in the movies: "The Wiz" starring Diana Ross, 1977, choreographed by Louis Johnson; "A Rage in Harlem" in 1981, starring Gregory Hines and Forest Whitaker, choreographed by Otis Sallid; "Cotton Club", 1984 starring Gregory Hines,



choreographed by George Faison and Arthur Mitchell; "The Josephine Baker Story", choreographed by George Faison, starring Lynn Whitfield and Kene Holiday; in 1995- 97 "Ms. Evers Boys", "Harlem Nights", and "Sunday Evening Haircut". She also appeared in videos with Roberta Flack, Glenn Jones, Betty Carter, Cameo, Evelyn Champagne King, Earth, Wind, & Fire, Aretha Franklin at Radio City Music Hall, and the final performance with Lionel Richie and the Commodores, also at Radio City Music Hall.

KiKi collaborated with the amazing choreographer Ed Love for over 7 years, where she performed and assisted on videos like "Pink Cadillac" with Aretha Franklin, and taught Mariah Carey how to walk up and down stairs without looking down in one of her earliest videos. She also assisted Mr. Love in the creation of the fantastic musical "American Jukebox," a fabulous farce where 50's rock & roll artists take two young kids on a tour of the music of the 50's, the amazing songs, and R&R history,,,, all inside a big jukebox!! KiKi stepped in many times and performed the Tina Turner role to Rollin on the River, and the killer 4-minute-long dance number, "Devil in a Blue Dress". KiKi and Ed Love also choreographed numerous commercials during their time together and created and choreographed a visitor's commercial for the island of Cancun, Mexico where KiKi danced the role of the Sun Goddess.

KiKi was blessed to be a part of two outstanding All-American national productions with choreographer/director Michael Peters. The first was the 100th anniversary of Coca Cola presented in Atlanta, Georgia. The second was the 100th Anniversary of the US held all over New York City. A huge full city and national celebration.

In 1989, a little-known TV show called "It's Showtime at the Apollo" changed her life completely. KiKi was originally cast as one of six dancers and as the assistant choreographer to Otis Sallid. After only three episodes, Otis departed the show, and with his blessings, KiKi became the choreographer for the new late-nite variety show and choreographed the now famous white feather fan dance opening, and the finale that ran for over 12 years.

KiKi quickly became best known as the Apollo 'Queen of Fashion.' For 15 years, she starred as the smashing co-host of the original "It's Showtime at the Apollo" with four co-hosts



including Sinbad, Steve Harvey, Mark Curry, and Rudy Rush. Every weekend, the public rushed to the television to see what KiKi would wear as she introduced and graced the stage with budding performers on Amateur Nite. KiKi was featured in the Apollo Minute, and she also became the host of the Amateur Teens segment. She performed on the show with the dancers and also did a special dance performance with Freddy Jackson.

In 1993, KiKi decided to expand her career into acting and moved to Hollywood, California to test the waters in television and film. After the end of the run of "It's Showtime at the Apollo" the same producers called her with great news. A new late-nite variety show, shot in Los Angeles, and KiKi would be the Host of the show. The new show was called NBC's "Live in Hollywood" which KiKi hosted for two seasons. Then, along came TV ONE'S Game show, "The Bid Whist Party Throwdown," a great show which aired for one season.

KiKi was blessed to appear in numerous TV sitcoms, movies, and studio films. Guest starring roles include "Everybody Hates Chris," "NYPD Blue," "LadyBoss," "Family Law," "Yes Dear," "General Hospital," "A Different World," and she costarred as 'Trelawney' in the Hulk Hogan action series "Thunder in Paradise". Other film credits include: the awardwinning film short, "Sunday Evening Haircut" written by and starring Reginald VelJohnson and Victoria Rowell's "BlackJack Christmas" movie airing on BET.

Ms. Shepard's notable stage venture, "Moments in Time- An Interview," was a conversation with today's movers and shakers from all walks-of-life. Interviews highlighted the lives of Phylicia Rashad, Obba Babatunde, Lynn Whitfield, Tamara Tunie, Mike Epps, Terrence Howard, Camryn Manheim, and Vivica Fox. KiKi's one-woman show, "Its Showtime...An Evening with KiKi Shepard", premiered at the Black Academy of Arts and Letters in Dallas, Texas, where critics called her an "Utter Delight". The show traced her 20 years in the dance world before embarking upon an acting career.

Through the many accomplishments and accolades KiKi achieved, she was most enthusiastic about her work raising awareness, advocacy, and education about Sickle Cell Disease.

In 1993, at the request of Glynn and Jo-An Turman, KiKi appeared as a celebrity guest at a golf tournament in the Bahamas for the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America. That experience triggered a memory of a doctor's visit in New York where she was told that she had the sickle cell trait. KiKi immediately went to the then National Director and said, 'use me,' and they did!! She toured the country as a national spokesperson and celebrity host for 10 years, raising awareness of SCD. When the national leadership team moved from LA to Baltimore, KiKi started sponsoring her own bowling tournament for Sickle Cell Disease awareness. The bowling tournament became so well-attended and loved; it convinced her to start her foundation. In 2006, with the support of some very dedicated advocates, family, and friends, KiKi began her personal path of advocacy to raise awareness and educate the

public about Sickle Cell disease. In 2006, she established The KIS Foundation, Inc. which strives to improve the social health and quality of life for patients and families living with Sickle Cell Disease.

Today, KiKi's KIS Foundation hosts an Annual Celebrity Golf Classic, a backpack drive-thru give-a-way, COVID-19 Recovery Relief Box, and scholarships for Sickle Cell warriors.

Up until her passing, KiKi continued to mentor young people and encourage education. She was most proud of her two grand nieces, Lauryn Alexis, and Taylor Vaughn. She raised them for over twenty years in her role as Aunty/Mom, and they are two great young productive women. She is also proud of her nephew, Steph McAlpin, who is pursuing a career in acting.

KiKi was also a dedicated and active member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.



KiKi Shepard lived a life full of love and energy. Her smile lit up any room she entered, and her spirit will always soar to the highest.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
Chiquita “KiKi” Shepard

WELCOME.....Wren Troy Brown

OPENING PRAYER.....Pastor Jordan Allen

PRAISE & WORSHIP.....FCBC Praise Team Led By
Chris Cave

Song: Lift Those Hands by Marvin Sapp

Performance: Chris Cave, Rob J. Thrash IV, Yvette Mitchell,
Tamara Lewis, Caprishia Smyles-Garrett, LaShana Dendy,
Tina Sago, and Michael Saunders

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE.....Kym Whitley

VIDEO TRIBUTES & PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Robert Hooks, Amii Stewart, Debbie Allen, Ted Lange, Rocky
Carroll, Reginald Vel Johnson, Jackeé Harry, Mykelti
Williamson, Otis Sallid, Oz Scott, Chanté Moore, Sinbad

IN HER OWN WORDS.....KiKi Shepard

VIDEO TRIBUTES & PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

LaTonia Robinson, Byron Scott, David Cameron,
André Dawson, Tim Charles, Luenell

GEORGE W. FAISON PRESENTS
“SOUNDS BY BETTY CARTER” featuring KIKI SHEPARD
Wren Troy Brown

TRIBUTE IN DANCE.....Eartha Robinson
Director/Choreographer/Dancer
Music from Box,
“Something Is Wrong In Jerusalem”

TRIBUTE IN WORD & SONG.....Dawnn Lewis
Poem: Let Me Go
Accompanied By: Curtis Dowd
Song: Gone Too Soon

Obba Babatundé
Song: Look At That Face

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE.....Sweet Honey In The Rock:
Nitanju B. Casel, Louise Robinson,
Arnaé Batson, Rosie Lee Hooks,
and Carol Maillard
Song: In the Morning When I Rise

VIDEO TRIBUTE.....Wayne Lindsey, Piano Solo
Freda Payne
Song: For All We Know

FAMILY REFLECTIONS.....Von Gretchen - McAlpin Shepard
Lauryn, Taylor & Stevie

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Happy Birthday (Song)
Cutting Of The Cake

CLOSING REMARKS

Wren Troy Brown

MIX and MINGLE





IN MEMORY OF MY BELOVED SISTER, KIKI

This dedication is in loving memory of my sister KiKi, whose life was a beautiful dance of joy, grace, strength, and love. People say that big things always come in small packages. Even though KiKi was the smallest of the Shepard girls, she always had the biggest and brightest spirit that instantly filled every room she entered with a kind of electricity.

Since childhood, you moved through life with the heart of a dancer - bringing laughter, beauty, passion and light wherever you went. Your life was a gift to all who knew you, your love was unwavering, and your presence brought warmth and light to everyone who knew you.

You were more than my sister - you were my best friend, my confidant, and my other half. Your laughter still echoes in my heart every day reminding me that you are always with me, and I will find comfort in knowing that even though I can no longer see you with my eyes, I will feel you in my heart and know you still walk beside me forever. Your legacy lives on through Lauryn, Taylor, Stephen and me, in the many other lives you have touched, the lessons you have taught and the lifetime of memories I will cherish and relive every moment of every day.

KiKi was a true moon child and marched to her own tune. So many people walk through life trying to fit in, but the truth is, my beautiful sister, you were always meant to stand out - and boy, you did just that. So, even in heaven, KiKi - Dance. Dance the Dance only you can Dance.

With my endless love, profound gratitude for sharing a lifetime with you,
and the promise that you will never be forgotten~
Forever in my heart - Forever my Sister, Forever, my KiKi.

Von Gretchen Shepard-McAlpin



To our Sweet Auntie Kiki,

Words could never truly express the love and gratitude we feel when we think of you. You were our light, our strength, our happiness, and so much more than an aunt—you were a parent to us.

Thank you for every sacrifice you made and every lesson you taught us. You showed us how to be strong, independent Black women, to always have our own, and to never depend on anyone. But the one thing we always knew was that we could depend on you, no matter what.

From changing our diapers and caring for us when we were sick, to cheering us on at our school events and celebrating every milestone, your love never wavered. The list of everything you've done for us could go on forever.

Auntie, losing you has completely broken our hearts. While it's incredibly painful knowing you're no longer here with us physically, we feel your presence everywhere we go. We know you'll continue to watch over us as we grow into the women you raised us to be.

We promise to live life to the fullest, just as you did. We'll strive to be kinder, more selfless, more patient, and stronger every day because that's the example you set for us. Your love, your wisdom, and your spirit will forever be a part of who we are.

We love you more than words can ever say, Auntie Kiki. Thank you for loving us so deeply. We will carry you in our hearts, honor your legacy, and keep your name alive forever.

FOREVER YOUR GIRLS

-Lala and Taytay



*Thank you for
loving us so deeply.*



MY BIG BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE



LET ME GO



When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little, but not for long
And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that once we shared
Miss me, but let me go.

For this is a journey we all must take
And each must go alone.
It's all part of the master plan
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick at heart
Go to the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do
Miss me, but let me go.

by Christina Rossetti

Acknowledgements

THE MCAPLIN FAMILY would like to thank all in attendance for the kind words and wishes that have been extended to this Family. Thank you to all the Artists who have participated in today's celebration. I'm sure my Sister was thoroughly enthralled. For all those who took the time to send videos we greatly appreciate you.

And a special thank you to Wren T. Brown, the Nate Holden Theatre and their amazing Staff. Thank you Pastor Allen for blessing us with your words.

Thank you to Gina & James Pickens Jr., for their generous contribution.

Thank you to Beebe Smith for your kindness and culinary delights.

Thank you Curtis Dowd for your special brand of caring.

Thank you DJ Tailwind, p/k/a, Dorian Missick for the soundtrack of KiKi's Life Journey.

A heartfelt thank you to our alcohol sponsor, Starlerra Simmons for providing generous beverage support.

Danielle Banks thank for your brilliant graphic design of the Program Book.

To The KIS Foundation, Inc., for your loving care and your commitment to the protection of my Sisters dream, we offer you a huge thank you.

Thank you to all of our incredible performers. Your talent, energy, and professionalism brought this Celebration to life, and we are truly grateful for the joy and impact you created. We appreciate each of you for sharing your gifts with us.

And last but not least to the Producers of this Celebration: Obba Babatundé, Dawnn Lewis, LaTonia Robinson, and LaShirl Smith, thank you for your tireless commitment to this Family and my Sister, we will be forever grateful.

Love, The McAlpin Family

