

The United States Postal Service Honors Allen Toussaint

By

Russ Dutcher

(Treasury Administration Employee)

The United States Postal Service has a long history of including on its stamps, the likeness of Americans who have had a positive impact on American society. The newest and 48th addition to the USPS Black Heritage series will honor New Orleans musical and cultural great, Allen Toussaint.

Born in New Orleans on January 14, 1938, Toussaint can be referred to as a musical prodigy, mastering the piano as a child and then continuing his musical pathway as a member of the band, the Flamingos. He played in various clubs and in 1957 made his first recording in collaboration with Fats Domino. That same year, he also entered the world of record producing with the song *"Walking with Mr. Lee."*

Allen Toussaint's career flourished throughout the 1960's well into the 2000's when he continued to collaborate with musicians such as Patti LaBelle with their highly successful and critically acclaimed album, *Nightbirds*. He also teamed with Paul McCartney, the Pointer Sisters, and Glen Campbell, with songs such as *"Southern Nights, and "Yes We Can Can."*

Staying close to his home in New Orleans where he was not only a hometown, but international celebrity, Toussaint's home was ravaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He continued to write, perform, and produce songs of various genre and acted as a mentor to many up and coming performers including singer/song-writer, Theresa Anderson.

For his contributions to the world of music, Allen Toussaint was honored by his peers with inductions into the Rock and Roll Hall of fame in 1998, the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame in 2009, and both the Songwriter's Hall of Fame and Blues Hall of fame in 2011. This wonderful life culminated with the presentation of the National Medal of the Arts by President Barrack Obama in 2013.

Allen Toussaint continued to tour internationally, but on November 10, 2015, he was stricken with a massive heart attack and died suddenly in Madrid, Spain. This great artist and musical genius will be remembered by many for his innovative and unique musical style, as well as for an outgoing and caring demeanor which touched the hearts of all those who were privileged to know him.