

APPRECIATION



1980 PHOTO BY DAVID REDFERN/GETTY IMAGES

Well-deserved respect

Aretha Franklin's singing resonated through the civil rights movement and beyond

BY CHRIS RICHARDS | Somebody somewhere once asked the human embodiment of American soul music how she would define American soul music. Aretha Franklin replied, "Being able to bring to the surface that which is happening inside." ¶ Sounds about right. That ability — to externalize humanity in melody — made Franklin one of the most pivotal vocalists of the 20th century, the same way it made her rendition of Dinah Washington's "Nobody Knows the Way I Feel This Morning" from 1964 seem almost funny. Listen to how Franklin shakes out the word "feel" over the course of this song, first like a dinner napkin, then like a beach towel, then like a bedsheet. After five minutes, everybody knows exactly how she feels this morning. ¶ Franklin — who died Thursday at age 76 — didn't invent the notion that singing should expose something profound about the singer, but she did show us how it's done, freighting her words with maximum emotion and routing her syllables through two dozen different notes in a single exhalation. **ARETHA** CONTINUED ON C3