

At Final Rites: Black Entertainers Laud Gertrude Gipson for 'Creating Careers'

By **BETTY PLEASANT**
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More than 1,000 of the city's famous and not-so-famous gathered Tuesday morning to sing the praises of Gertrude Gipson during funeral services for the legendary *Los Angeles Sentinel* entertainment editor and columnist.

Described as "a woman of class, a woman of style," the overflow crowd at Good Shepherd Baptist Church shared hearty laughs and agreeing nods as a long line of motion picture and recording stars, politicians, fellow journalists and community leaders spoke of the life and times of Gertrude Gipson.

Gipson, formally known as Gertrude Gipson-Penland, died May 25 from pneumonia.

The funeral speakers described Gipson as a "positive force in the black community" during her 30-year association with the *Sentinel*, and the entertainers—those who spoke and the scores who remained in the pews—readily conceded that they owed their success to her.

In addition to serving as the *Sentinel's* entertainment editor, Gipson wrote a syndicated column that ran in 125 black-oriented newspapers and hosted "Hollywood Update" on KJLA radio.

Gipson was honored with three NAACP Image Awards for community service and five National Newspaper Publishers Assn. awards for excellence during her years at the *Sentinel*.

Gipson was lauded as an entertainment writer/editor, publicist and "talent scout" who created the careers of many black entertainers by such speakers as Sidney Poitier, Nancy Wilson, Lou Rawls, Marla Gibbs and Frankie Beverly.

Ollie Woodson of the Temptations read the written remarks of Dionne Warwick and "Little Richard" Penniman and then sang a moving rendition of "Precious Lord," giving the funeral service its first touch of "sanctifiedness."

Other singers included Ernie Andrews, Howard Hewitt and Linda Hopkins.

County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke led the elected officials who spoke of Gipson's community boosterism and civic achievements, and was followed by Dist. Atty. Gil Garcetti, Rep. Maxine Waters, City Atty. James Hahn, former Sen. Diane Watson, former Assemblyman Willard Murray and School Board Member Barbara Boudreaux.



TRIBUTE TO A CLASSY LADY—Gertrude Gipson's family joins with more than 1,000 mourners in saluting the late *Los Angeles Sentinel* entertainment editor and columnist at her funeral Tuesday morning. From left are her daughter, Reve Gipson; her son-in-law, Joseph Abraham and her younger daughter, Shonte Penland Abraham.—FAREED MUWAKKIL PHOTO



FINAL JOURNEY—Eight pallbearers carry the bronze casket of Gertrude Gipson from the church to the hearse. The active pallbearers were Leroy Beavers, Jerry Edwards, Lt. Col. Lawrence Fryer Jr., Roy LeGras, Brad Pye Jr., Derrick Walker, Al Ward and Anthony Willoughby Esq.—FAREED MUWAKKIL PHOTO

SEE REMEMBERING / A-16

Remembrances of the Sentinel's Getrude Gipson-Penland



FAMILY FRIEND—Academy Award-winning actor Sidney Poitier greets fans as he enters Good Shepherd Baptist Church for the funeral services of his long-time friend, Gertrude Gipson. Poitier was one of the featured speakers at the service.



THEY CAME TO PRAISE HER—Among the speakers who credited Gertrude Gipson with boosting the careers of black entertainers were actress Marla Gibbs.



LOU RAWLS



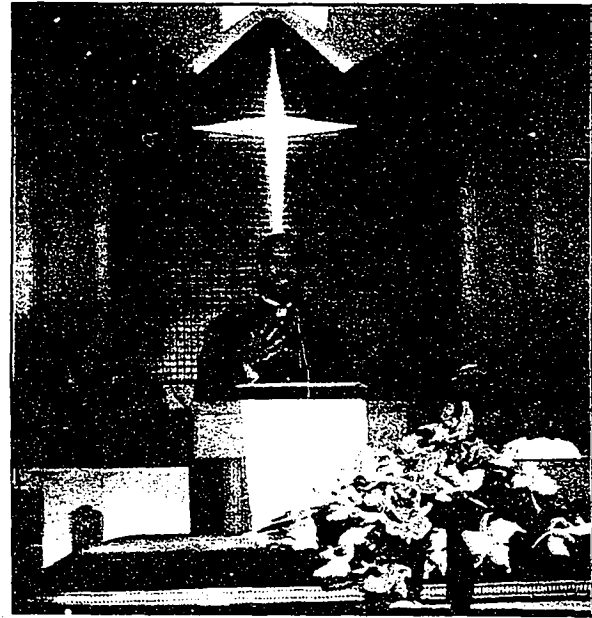
FROM THE SENTINEL FAMILY—Los Angeles Sentinel editor/writer Libby Clark recounts Gertrude Gipson's long journalism career, which included more than 30 years as the Sentinel's entertainment editor and columnist.



SONGS FOR GERTRUDE—Singer Howard Hewitt appeared during funeral services for Gertrude Gipson-Penland.



LINDA HOPKINS, who sang a personalized rendition of "How Great Thou Art," is assisted by ushers during Gipson's rites.



SOUL STIRRING REMARKS were delivered by Gipson's cousin, the Rev. Frederick Haynes III, pastor of the Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas.



COMFORTING WORDS—Gertrude Gipson's daughter, publicist Reve Gipson, is comforted by a group of mourners as she prepares to enter limousine for ride to Inglewood Park Cemetery for her mother's interment.

REMEMBRANCES: *CONTINUED FROM A-1*

When former Gov. Jerry Brown appointed Gipson to the California Motion Picture Development Council, she was the first woman and the first African-American to serve on the panel. She also served on the county's Filming Advisory Committee.

The service included tributes from the Regalettes Social and Charity Club, which Gipson founded; Libby Clark of the *Sentinel*, and entertainers Sir Lady Java and Blinky Williams.

The funeral program also featured "expressions" by the reverends O.C. Smith, Frederick Haynes III and Gharah L. Degeddingseza.

A huge bundle of red and white balloons was released into the air as the funeral service concluded and Gipson's body was borne off to Inglewood Park Cemetery for interment.

Gipson is survived by her daughters Reve Gipson and Shonte Penland Abraham; a brother, Randolph Lomax and niece and nephew, Lori Gray and Delo Gray Jr.