

Hundreds at Franklin funeral

By **Jeff Karoub**
and **Nekesa Mumbi Moody**
The Associated Press

Pink Cadillacs filled the street early Friday outside Detroit's Greater Grace Temple, and hundreds of fans lined up as they awaited the funeral of Aretha Franklin, who was dressed in a sparkling gold dress for her final outfit.

Dignitaries attending Friday's service include Clive Davis, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Stevie Wonder and Jennifer Holliday.

Franklin's body arrived, in a 1940 Cadillac LaSalle hearse, more than two hours before the service was scheduled to start. She was dressed in a sparkling full-length gold dress with sequined heels for her final outfit — the fourth outfit Franklin has worn during a week of events leading up to her funeral.

Her casket was carried to the church that also took Franklin's father, legendary minister C.L. Franklin, and civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks to their final resting places at Woodlawn Cemetery, where the singer will join them. The Pink Cadillacs outside refer to a Franklin hit from the 1980s, "Freeway of Love."

Floral arrangements from such singers as Barbra Streisand and Tony Bennett and from the family of Otis Redding, whose "Respect" Franklin transformed and made her signature song, were set up in a hallway outside the sanctuary. An arrangement from singer Sam Moore included a card that read, "You know I always adored and loved you to bits and pieces ... Even when we would fuss."

Funeral organizers insist it will be a service, not a show. Yet the Queen of Soul's final send-off certainly will encompass many elements, emotions and grand entrances that were hallmarks of her more than six decades on sacred and secular stages. And it boasts a lineup of speakers and singers that would rival any of the hottest revues, past or present.

To be sure, the funeral which caps off a week of events that included high-profile public viewings and tribute concerts, comes with all-star speakers and performers. Among those offering words will be former President Bill Clinton, Jackson and Franklin's friend since childhood, Smokey Robinson. Songs will be provided by Wonder, Ariana Grande, Jennifer Hudson, Fantasia, Faith Hill, Shirley Caesar, Chaka Khan and more.

Bishop Charles Ellis III of Greater Grace knows well of the boldface guest list and surrounding pomp and circumstance, but he has a higher mission in mind for a service that may well exceed five hours.

"It is my goal and my aim to ensure that people leave here with some kind of spiritual

awakening," Ellis said. "This is not a concert, this is not a show, this is not an awards production. This is a real life that has been lived, that a person regardless of how famous she became no matter how many people she touched around the world, she still could not escape death. And hopefully, a lot of people here with money and fame and influence and friends and notoriety and wealth, hopefully they will think of their mortality and say there is something bigger than fame, there is something bigger than Hollywood, something bigger than being a recording artist and selling gold albums or what have you."

Of course, some get-down and lift-up need not be mutually exclusive.

"I really believe that this ... is going to be an eye-opening experience for everybody in the world watching," said gospel artist Marvin Sapp, also among the scheduled performers. "We really celebrate because we really recognize that those we call the dearly departed, they wouldn't want for us to cry and be sad and sorrowful. But they would want us to celebrate their lives because they transitioned from this life to a better one."

Sapp wouldn't reveal what he will perform Friday, but said every song is one picked out by Franklin. Robinson also didn't share what he will say, but that's for a different reason.

"I do not plan anything (with) someone I love like that," Robinson, the Motown great, told The Associated Press. "I love her. She was my longest friend."

Robinson said he will just make it "personal," since he remained close with Franklin until the end. He said they "talked all the time," the last just a couple weeks before she became too ill to speak.

"We saw all of our other close friends go," Robinson said. "We used to talk about that — we saw a lot of soldiers go."

Amid the sadness of these days, Robinson can find uplift — and believes Franklin's legacy is secure. A new generation of singers like Grande who are inspired by the late Queen of Soul is just the beginning.

"There are some girls who haven't been born yet ... who will be inspired by Aretha," he said.

Sabrina Owens, Franklin's niece, told the AP she started putting thoughts to paper about events earlier this year as her aunt's health failed. Since Franklin's Aug. 16 death at 76, Owens said a close group she described as "Aretha's angels" have "worked tirelessly" and have been guided by a single question: "What would Aretha want?"

"After all she gave to the world, I felt we needed to give her an appropriate send-off that would match her legacy," Owens said.

McCain says goodbye his way

By **Laurie Kellman**
The Associated Press

It's Washington's turn to say goodbye to John McCain. His way.

The six-term Republican senator, who lived and worked in the nation's capital over four decades, is lying in state under the U.S. Capitol rotunda for a ceremony and public visitation.

McCain's casket arrived at the Capitol Friday as his family watched from the steps. Family, friends, lawmakers and guests gathered in the vast Rotunda for a memorial service. Congressional leaders were to deliver remarks.

It's the first of two days of services in Washington honoring the Arizona senator, who served in Congress for 35 years.

On Saturday, McCain's procession will pause by the Vietnam Memorial and head for Washington National Cathedral for a formal funeral service. At McCain's request, two former presidents — Democrat Barack Obama and Republican George W. Bush — will speak.

President Donald Trump, who has mocked McCain for being captured during the Vietnam War, was asked to stay away, people close to the White House and the McCain family said.

McCain's funeral puts him back in the spotlight a few miles from Trump's doorstep, in the city where the senator, who died last Saturday at 81, worked and collected friends and enemies, some in both camps at different times. The procession was highlighting what McCain found important, some of which contrast with Trump's style and priorities.

Vice President Mike Pence was speaking at the Capitol ceremony Friday, and other officials will represent the administration in Trump's hard-to-miss absence. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis greeted the McCain family Thursday night when the senator's casket was flown into Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

McCain chose a Russian dissident as a pall-bearer, though Trump has professed repeatedly his affinity and admiration for Russian President, Vladimir Putin — praise that came amid special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

The procession's pause at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, where McCain's widow, Cindy, is expected to lay a wreath, will highlight McCain's military service and his more than five years as a prisoner of war.

Trump obtained deferments during the Vietnam War for his college education and then for bone spurs in his heels. Trump on Friday was expected to leave Washington in early afternoon, to head to North Carolina for an event on retirement security about the same time the public will start filing past McCain's casket.

The McCain farewell began Wednesday and Thursday in Arizona, where he and Cindy McCain raised their family. Former Vice President Joe Biden and others provided a preview of the tributes to come.

None of the speakers at the North Phoenix Baptist Church on Thursday uttered Trump's name. But Biden, who is considering challenging Trump in 2020, made what some saw as

a veiled reference to the president. He talked about McCain's character and how he parted company with those who "lacked the basic values of decency and respect, knowing this project is bigger than yourself."

Biden said McCain "could not stand the abuse of power wherever he saw it, in whatever form, in whatever country."

Longtime McCain friend Tommy Espinoza told the 3,500 mourners that "We all make America great," a similar phrase to Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again."

The church's senior pastor, Noe Garcia, pronounced McCain "a true American hero."

Much of the proceedings were lighthearted, noting McCain's penchant for battle.

Biden advised McCain's friends and family to remember snapshots of him, such as a glance or a touch. "Or when you saw the pure joy the moment he was about to take the stage on the Senate floor and start a fight. God, he loved it."

McCain's longtime chief of staff, Grant Woods, a former Arizona attorney general, drew laughs with a eulogy in which he talked about McCain's "terribly bad driving" and his sense of humor, which included calling the Leisure World retirement community "Seizure World." When McCain and Woods arrived at the community to apologize, Woods said, they saw a resident near the entrance making an obscene gesture at them.

The service brought to a close two days of mourning for the U.S. senator and 2008 GOP presidential nominee in his home state.

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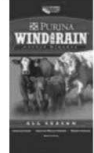
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