

TV Host's Ailing Mother Dies

Comes as Robin Roberts prepares for life-saving transplant

(AP)—Lucimarian Roberts, the mother of "Good Morning America" co-host Robin Roberts, has died a day after the anchor announced she was taking a medical leave for a bone marrow transplant.

The 88-year-old Roberts died in Gulfport, Miss., on Thursday night.

"Robin arrived home with her sister, Sally-Ann, forging through flooded and blocked roads to be with her beloved mother in time to see her," GMA Senior Executive Tom Cibrowski said in an email to the entire news division Thursday evening.

The Mississippi area was dealing with flooding from the effects of Hurricane Isaac.

Over the years, Lucimarian Roberts made numerous appearances on "GMA."

She was a Gulf Coast icon for more than four decades. She often was the first black woman to work with organizations and state and local agencies, and she became known for her ability to get things done.

She was the first black to serve as chairman of the Mississippi State Board of Education in the 1980s.

She also had a great passion for poetry and music.

Lucimarian Roberts collaborated with her daughter on a book titled, "My Story, My Song — Mother-Daughter Reflections on Life and Faith."

"I sing because the music of



"Good Morning America" co-host Robin Roberts (right), with her mother Lucimarian Roberts on the set in New York in 2006.

the church speaks my soul language," she wrote. "I sing because these songs are tightly woven in to the texture of who I am."

"She even recorded a CD of hymns for her family as a gift last year," said Cibrowski.

The family was gathered in Pass Christian, Miss., and planned a small private service, he said.

The death came on the same day Roberts said goodbye to her co-workers and audience before

starting her medical leave. Sally-Ann, a morning anchor at WWL-TV in New Orleans, is donating the marrow to her sister.

Robin Roberts' departure had been set for Friday. But in a last-minute change of plans, she told her viewers she was leaving a day early to visit her ailing mother.

In a statement on her Facebook page, Robin Roberts said she and

Sally-Ann arrived in Gulfport in time to visit with their mother before she died.

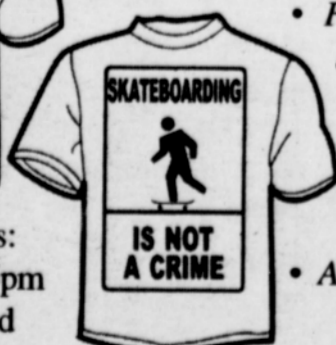
"A CD of her favorite hymns is playing in her room. So thankful for my sister, Dorothy, and the nurses who have been caring for her. I will cherish these moments I have with mom. Then focus on what is ahead of me undergoing a bone marrow transplant."

Besides her three daughters, Lucimarian Roberts is survived by a son and eight grandchildren.

Her husband, Col. Lawrence E. Roberts, died in 2004 at the age of 81. He was a member of the all-black U.S. Army Air Corps, also called the Tuskegee Airmen. He served in Vietnam, where he was awarded one of his three Legion of Merit medals.

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