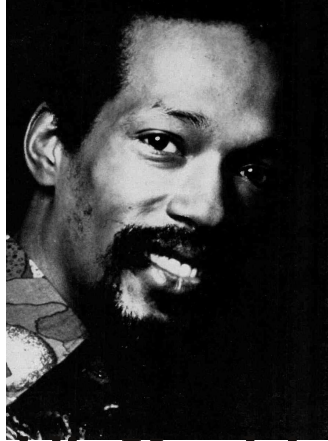




Eddie Kendricks

December 17, 1939 - October 5, 1992

Birmingham, Alabama

Eddie Kendricks, whose soaring falsetto floated above the Temptations' harmonies and gave Motown some of its sweetest records, died of lung cancer on October 5, 1992, at Baptist Medical Center-Princeton in Birmingham, Alabama. He was fifty-two and had been in the hospital since late September.

He was born Edward James Kendrick on December 17, 1939, in Union Springs, Alabama, and grew up in Birmingham's Ensley neighborhood, singing in church with his close friend Paul Williams. As teenagers the two left home to try their luck up north. In Detroit they formed the Primes, and in 1960 and 1961 they merged with members of a rival group, the Distantos, to form the Temptations, who soon signed with Berry Gordy's Motown label.

His high, gentle voice led The Way You Do the Things You Do in 1964, the group's first big hit, and later Get Ready and Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me), a number-one record in 1971 and his last lead with the group before he went solo. On his own he reached the top of the charts in 1973 with the dance record Keep On Truckin', followed by Boogie Down in 1974.

He reunited with the Temptations for a 1982 tour and in 1985 joined his old bandmate David Ruffin and the duo Hall and Oates for the reopening of Harlem's Apollo Theater and again at Live Aid in Philadelphia. The Temptations were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989.

A year before his death, doctors removed one of his lungs. He blamed thirty years of cigarettes and spent much of his remaining time urging young people never to start. Late in life he dropped the final s from his stage name

and went back to Kendrick, the name he was born with.

Birmingham has named a memorial park for him. Notice Nearby marks October 5 for the Ensley boy whose falsetto still sounds like a Sunday morning.

Services

Died at Baptist Medical Center-Princeton, Birmingham, Alabama, October 5, 1992. Founding member and falsetto lead of the Temptations; solo artist. Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, 1989. Portrait: 1974 Motown trade-advertisement photograph (public domain), cropped, hosted by Notice Nearby.

NN-OBIT-2026-H233

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