



Dorothy Hill

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The Queen of the Blues has left the room but she will remain in our hearts forever.

According to the Chicago Tribune, Koko Taylor more than once said she hoped that when she died it would be onstage, doing the thing she loved most: singing the blues. She died on June 3rd, 2009 of complications from gastrointestinal surgery but less than four weeks earlier she was dancing her way across the stage to accept her 29th Blues Music Award. She followed that up with a tremendous performance with the Mannish Boys on her signature tune "Wang Dang Doodle." She was gracious and accessible that evening—posing for my camera along with Lil' Ed Williams with his award for Best Band of the Year.

The blues community reacted with sadness and insight into what made her such a blues icon.

Bruce Iglauer, owner of Alligator Records and Taylor's friend, producer and manager since 1974 made the statement: "Her music was extremely direct, raw, emotional, straight from the soul." "It was intentionally very, very unvarnished music. There was no sweetness to her music. Her signature was a raw throaty growl that she injected into a lot of songs that came straight out of the Delta."

Chicago blues artist Ronnie Baker Brooks said "The passion that she brought and the fire and the growl in her voice when she sang was the truth," "The music will live on, but it's much better because of Koko. It's a huge loss."

Koko Taylor shattered the glass ceiling for women in blues leaving us with a rich legacy...let there be no sadness of farewell...we mourn the loss but celebrate the richness she brought us all.