

Dramatics founder Ron Banks, 58, dies



By Gail Mitchell

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LOS ANGELES (Billboard) – Singer Ron Banks, a founding member of R&B group the Dramatics, died Thursday (March 4) at his Detroit home of a reported heart attack. He was 58.

Banks, whose sweet falsetto helped give the Dramatics its signature sound, was a Detroit native who was born May 10, 1951.

Originally a vocal sextet known as the Dynamics in the early '60s, the group changed its name and became a quintet comprising Banks, William Howard, Larry Demps, Willie Ford and Elbert Wilkins.

The Dramatics scored its first R&B-charting single (No. 43) in 1967 on the Sport label with "All Because of You." But it wasn't until four years later that the group broke into national consciousness with the 1971 Stax/Volt hit "Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get," which peaked at No. 3 on the R&B chart and No. 9 on the pop list. It claimed an R&B No. 1 the following year with "In the Rain."

Between 1972 and 1980, the Dramatics also recorded for ABC and MCA, notching seven more top 10 R&B singles. Those songs include a cover of "Me and Mrs. Jones," "You're Fooling You," "Be My Girl" and "Welcome Back Home."

Over the ensuing years, the Dramatics underwent several personnel changes, the most notable occurring in 1973 when L.J. Reynolds and Lenny Mayes replaced Howard and Wilkins in 1973.

Banks is survived by his wife, Sandy, and six children.

He's the fourth Dramatics member to pass away, following the deaths of Wilkins (1992), Howard (2000) and James Mack Brown (2008).