



Carolyn
ELIZABETH TONIC

SUNRISE: APRIL 16, 1942  SUNSET: APRIL 26, 2025

“A LIFE FRAMED BY FAITH, FASHION,
AND FEARLESS EXPRESSION”



Carolyn
ELIZABETH TONIC
“SHE MODELED GRACE, SPOKE TRUTH,
AND LEFT A LEGACY IN EVERY STAGE SHE TOUCHED.”

Carolyn Elizabeth Tonic was born on April 16, 1942, in Passaic, NJ, to Charles and Helen Tonic. She was raised in Bloomfield, NJ, where she received her formal education alongside her five brothers: Charles Jr., Donald, Roger, Kenneth, and Norman Tonic.

Her first knowledge of self came by way of a singing group named The Flextones, a 1960s-style “girl group” co-founded by Carolyn during her teenage years at Bloomfield Senior High School. It wasn’t long before the glamour of New York City and the renowned halls of the Ophelia DeVore School of Charm—a finishing school for African American women—set the pace for future endeavors. At DeVore, the acclaimed actress Cicely Tyson was Carolyn’s speech instructor.

The Grace Del Marco Modeling Agency, one of the first in the United States, soon took notice and chose to showcase Carolyn’s unique blend of presence, poise, and wit on stage as a model at the Ed Sullivan Theater during the 1970s. However, a growing family and marriage made it necessary for her to balance personal ambition with the needs of her children.

Carolyn decided to refocus her energy closer to home. In true trailblazer fashion, she founded Essence—an all-female, African American softball team that placed in the top three regionally in Northern New Jersey. She began designing clothes and dressing local talent, creating her own sewing patterns and building a strong creative presence in her community.

Politically active in Bloomfield, Carolyn helped organize the Neighborhood Development Association, all while leading her three children—Dale, Leslie, and Shawn—into higher education. Never one to settle, she set personal goals in academia, earning a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Arts from Montclair State University. She later became a certified Teacher of the Disabled and a Substance Abuse Counselor.

Though her roles expanded, the draw of the stage never left her. In the 1980s, Carolyn’s wit and charm filled the radio airwaves as an on-air personality for WNJR-AM in the New York Metropolitan area. She was the Co-founder and Co-host of the provocative “GospelTainment & the Arts” talk-radio show, interviewing luminaries such as the late Queen Mother Moore, an American civil rights leader and Black nationalist.

Carolyn also gravitated toward regional theater, earning wide acclaim in Northern New Jersey stage productions as both a speaker and performer. With her children firmly established in their own careers, she relocated to the Philadelphia area, where she continued her broadcasting journey. She hosted programs on WT’M-AM, WIMG-AM, and WTSR-AM, covering the Ewing, Trenton, and greater Delaware Valley markets.

She was later promoted to Guidance Counselor at Columbus School in Trenton, NJ, where she served until her retirement—but not before earning a U.S. patent for instructional devices designed to assist mentally and physically challenged elementary school students.

Carolyn also returned to modeling—this time as an exclusive model of African fashion for Kum-Ba-Ya, a Trenton-based retailer specializing in unique African couture. Her artistry blossomed as she became a master puppet maker, a copyrighted lyricist, and a distinguished member of both the Garden State Storytelling League and the National Association of Black Storytellers. Through these platforms, she brought African-inspired fictional stories to life using her handmade puppets.

Carolyn Elizabeth Tonic–Robinson passed away on April 26, 2025. She is survived by her three children: Dale Robinson, Leslie Robinson-Wapples, and Shawn Robinson-Graham; six grandchildren: Donovan Robinson, Dr. Brianna Wapples–Mwangi, Vanessa Wapples, Bryan Graham, and Olyvia Graham; and five great-grandchildren: Indigo Robinson, Juniper Robinson, Urielle Robinson, Neveah Robinson, and Joyelle Mwangi.

She is also survived by two brothers, Kenneth and Norman Tonic; her god-sister, Renee (Cookie) Franklin; and extended family members Charesse and Shantae.



Never Forget

How far you have come.
Everything you have gotten through.
All the times you have pushed on
even when you felt you couldn't.
All the mornings you got out of bed
no matter how hard it was.
All the times you wanted to give up but
you got through another day.
Never forget how much strength you have learned
and developed along the way.



Acknowledgements

The family of Carolyn Tonic would like to express our sincere appreciation to everyone who shared in our grief during this difficult time.

We are truly grateful for your love, prayers, and acts of kindness.

May God bless each of you for your heartfelt expressions of compassion and continued support.

Special thanks to Grand Montecito Memory Care of Las Vegas, NV,
for your loving care of our mother,
and to **Giddens Memorial Chapel** of Las Vegas, NV, for your compassionate service.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to
the **Alzheimer's Association** at www.alz.org, in tribute to **Carolyn E. Tonic**.

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