

Marvin John Henson

July 21, 1964 ~ December 13, 2025

Marvin John Henson, known lovingly and famously as *Marvelous Marvin*, passed away on Saturday morning, December 13, 2025, at 9:58 a.m. in Salt Lake City, Utah. His fragile, battle-worn body finally gave way, but his mind remained sharp, present, and luminous until the very end.

Marvin was born on July 21, 1964, in Birmingham, Alabama, to Marvin Barnabus Henson Jr. and Annie Marie Colafrancesco Henson. He was born alongside his twin sister, Madeline Jane Henson, a bond that remained unbreakable throughout his life.

He was preceded in death by his father, Marvin Barnabus Henson Jr.; his mother, Annie Marie Colafrancesco; his sister, **Sylvia Bennati**; his brother, Daniel Henson; his beloved grandmother, Clara Smith Henson; his father-in-law, **John Ephraim Versluis**; and other aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Marvin is survived by his devoted husband and soulmate of 33 years, **Robert Versluis**, whom he met in 1992 and married on June 25, 2008; his twin sister, **Madeline Reiss** (Jake); nephew **Sam Reiss** (Maggie); great-nephew **Noah**; niece **Katie Reiss**; nephew **Damien Bennati**; Aunt **Providence Hooper** (Sam); Aunt **Catherine Jane Willis** (Bob); cousins **Susan** (Don), **Patti** (Jeff), **Bobby** (Kathleen); and many other aunts, uncles, cousins, second cousins, and extended family.

He is also survived by his beautiful mother-in-law, **Utahna Asay Versluis (John)**, who became his second mother and was always there with her love and light; and by Rob's siblings, whom Marvin loved deeply as his own family: **Scott Versluis**, **Tony Versluis (Dena)**, **Tahna Elwood (Steve)**, **Susan Todd (Steve)**, **Joseph Versluis (Kelly)**, and **Jordan Versluis (Crystal)**. He is also survived by his beloved second family — those of **Pratt City and "Drift Track"** — whom he loved as blood, never once turned his back on, and who always had his back in return. He loved his FAM. It is impossible to name everyone, but just a few included; Helen Ford, Ginger Pickett, Alma Lynn, the late Top Cat, Stevie, the Jelkes, the Bradberry's, the late Barbara Ann, Angela and the legendary, late, Chester Ware. As well as every single person who remembers him or had the privilege of connecting with him, he loved each of you very, very much.

From a very young age, Marvin was legendary in his neighborhood. He possessed a tongue of fire and ice, and one learned quickly not to cross him. His wit was surgical, his timing impeccable, and his presence unforgettable.

Marvin attended **St. Joseph's Catholic School**, where he learned to navigate the formidable nuns of the 1970s—habits, rulers, and all—with intelligence, humor, and charm, eventually becoming a favorite among sisters and priests alike. He later attended **Ensley High School** from 1978–1982, where his extraordinary gifts were immediately recognized by his mentor, legendary drama teacher **Paul Spina**. Marvin won numerous awards for acting, including Best Actor and Best One-Act Performance, and was repeatedly voted Class Favorite. At the end of

his junior year, he was elected **Student Body President of the Ensley High School Class of 1982**, proudly attending the same High School in the footsteps of his Aunt Provy Hooper.

During his senior year of High School, Marvin began attending the **University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)**, where he excelled in theater, political studies, and psychology. It was there that he formed lifelong friendships, including **Zac Abramson (Barry)** of Florence, Alabama, with whom Marvin reunited nearly 40 years later—just weeks before his passing. Despite illness, their reunion was magical, as though no time had passed at all.

While in college, Marvin was a founding member of **Post Passport Players**, later known as ***The Bookends***, performing throughout Alabama to promote literacy in schools. Which included Kerry Haynie, Robin Watts, Judd McCluney and many others. In his senior year of College, he was selected as one of only a few students to represent Birmingham abroad and traveled to **Hitachi, Japan**, to perform for nearly eight weeks—an experience that remained one of the great highlights of his life.

In 1987, Marvin moved to **Hollywood, California**, where he was hired at **The Nantucket Computer Corporation** (creators of dBase) and formed deep friendships with the late owners **Barry and Terry Rebell**, as well as **Brey Brian Edwards** (hey girl). Marvin later enrolled at **UCLA Extension**, studying acting under the infamous **Don Richardson**, who, after seeing Marvin perform once, told him to get his money back and join his private class. Many of Marvin's most enduring friendships were forged there, including **Loretta Fox** (Lou DiMaggio, and son of Lou & Loretta; **Daniel DiMaggio**), **Arlene Malinowski** (Dan Clark) **and so many others,** too many to mention. Marvin knew many celebrities and famous people, but like so many others, they thought *he* was one of a kind—and in many cases, he was the celebrity to them.

In 1992, during a Labor Day weekend trip to Palm Springs, Marvin met the love of his life, **Robert Versluis**. The magic was instant. By Halloween, they were living together and had begun a journey that would span more than three decades. With Robert came a large and loving Mormon family, whom Marvin embraced fully and cherished as his own.

Marvin and Rob shared a profound love for animals. Their first "child" was **Truman**, an orange tabby named for Marvin's hero, Truman Capote. Over the years came **Tallulah**, **Wills**, **Zen**, **Francis**, and finally **Golda**, who became Marvin's constant comfort during his final months. Just two days before his passing, Golda lay beside him in the hospital, bringing him immeasurable peace.

At the end of 2024, Marvin and Rob left Los Angeles and began anew in **Salt Lake City**, never knowing this brave chapter would mark the beginning of the end. Yet Marvin was surrounded by extraordinary love—his sister Madeline and brother-in-law Jake, Rob's siblings, nieces, nephews, and countless friends who carried him through his final months.

In May 2025, Marvin was diagnosed with **Stage IV cancer**. He faced treatment with courage and determination, undergoing emergency surgery in August and radiation therapy soon after. Along the way, he met what he lovingly called **Marvin's Angels**, which included **Jane and Dani**.

Marvin was a man of deep faith. Raised Catholic, he loved the Lord, revered the Saints, and possessed encyclopedic knowledge of them. He also held a profound love for Judaism, often saying it was his "second religion," embracing its traditions with sincerity and joy. The combination was ironic and epic; Catholic, LDS (Mormon) and Jewish. He represented equality, tolerance and support for peace.

Marvin could **act, sing, dance, and tell stories like no one else**. One of his greatest joys was singing at the piano while Rob played. In January 2025, Rob's sister **Susie** gifted them recording studio time, and Marvin recorded **13 songs**, treasured recordings that may one day be shared.

Marvin's cooking skills were exemplary. He could whip up just about anything, and somehow it would taste completely unimaginable. He always gave credit to his Pratt sisters, where he learned cooking, singing, dancing, and laughter—gifts he carried and shared throughout his life. They were part of his soul, part of his internal being. As Marvin often said, *"I may look light-colored, but I am all Black on the inside."*

Marvin left a trail of people who loved him fiercely. He made everyone feel like his best friend—and when you were with him, you were. His talents were extraordinary—his singing, acting, dancing, and especially his storytelling. His stories often ran three at a time, always enthralling, and almost always landed with a punchline. He might enter a

story through a side window or a back door, and you never quite knew where it was going to end—until it did, perfectly. His gifts, intuition, and abilities were unmatched. We will never know another Marvin John Henson again.

There were so many of you he longed to see again, so many he loved and praised. He was deeply impressed by your talents and gifts. One of the last things he said, just a day before he departed, was, *"I thought I'd have more time."* It was both heartbreaking and a profound lesson for all of us.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to **Visit Salt Lake**, **Kaitlin Eskelson**, **Katie Means**, **Jayna Carpenter**, and **Julie Rhoads**; the **Salt Palace Convention Center**; **Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson**; **Father Andre and the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake**; **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**; The Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra on Temple Square, the remarkable people of **Pratt City – Drift Track**; **Larkin Mortuary**; **Highland Memorial Gardens of Bessemer, Alabama**; **Jefferson Memorial of Birmingham, Alabama**; **Delta Air Lines**; **Intermountain Health**; Intermountain **LDS Oncology**; Intermountain **LDS Radiation**; Intermountain LDS and Murray emergency room staffs, social workers, doctors, and every caregiver who walked with Marvin these last seven months; and finally the **Versluis, Reiss, Henson, Hooper, and Willis families**, **Mr. Marc J. Graboff**, **Ms. Gail Berman Masters**, **CBS Television**, **Fox Networks Group**, and **NBCUniversal Television**.

Funeral services will be held on **Thursday, December 18, 2025**, at the **Salt Palace Convention Center, Room 250 A & B** (90 S. West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102). Parking is available in the Salt Palace South Lot on 200 South (validations provided), City Creek Mall (two hours complimentary), or surrounding street parking at standard city rates. Doors open at **10:00 a.m.** for refreshments and reception. Services will begin promptly at **11:00 a.m.** The service is open to the public; all family and friends are welcome. The service will be live-streamed; information and streaming links will be provided via social media and by **Larkin Mortuary of Salt Lake City**.

Marvin will be returned to **Birmingham, Alabama**, where he will be laid to rest beside his parents, siblings, and grandparents. A **graveside service** will be held on **Monday, December 22, 2025**, at **1:00 p.m.** at **Highland Memorial Gardens** in Bessemer, Alabama. All are welcome to attend.

One day, we will see him again—whole, radiant, and ready, with stories to tell, songs to sing, and love to give.

There will never be another *Marvelous Marvin*.

May God be with you, 'til we meet again.

Those wishing to view the service via Zoom can Click "Watch Service" or follow the link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/HAJ4e_ILF3v-YXreorohUT5RwneelwEA0kTyqo-fuIuAQ7N3pbwdcCEifUxQwHIr.vceh6