



Mrs. Anita Joyce Dixon-Brown

September 26, 1956 - January 4, 2026

Anita Joyce Dixon-Brown

Certain individuals leave behind a legacy that resonates like a timeless symphony; even after the final note is played, the essence of their work continues to inspire and guide.

Anita Joyce Dixon-Brown was one such visionary. Her life served as a masterclass in cultural preservation, advocacy, and the transformative power of storytelling.

Foundations and Early Years

Anita's journey began on September 26, 1956, in Kansas City, Missouri. Born to Lloyd

Dixon Sr. and Frozella James Dixon, she spent much of her youth in Denver, Colorado,

where she graduated from South High School in 1975. However, the pull of her

birthplace remained undeniable. She eventually returned to Kansas City, a place whose

rich jazz heritage and community spirit would become the cornerstone of her life's work.

Her academic path led her to Donnelly College, where she graduated in 1984

with a Bachelor of Science in Social Science. Her commitment to her community was so profound that her alma mater later inducted her into its Alumni Hall of Fame, recognizing that Anita did not just study social science—she practiced it daily through her unwavering devotion to the public good.

A Champion for African American Heritage

Anita wore many hats—journalist, educator, and historian—but her most vital role was that of a cultural protector. She dedicated herself to ensuring that the contributions of African American musicians, particularly those who defined the Kansas City jazz scene, were recognized and preserved for future generations.

Her media career began in 1982, bolstered by the support of the very musicians who frequented the 18th & Vine district. They recognized in her a dedicated advocate who would fight to restore the area's historical prestige. Anita viewed this early support as a lifelong pledge, and she spent the following decades fulfilling that promise with tireless energy.

National Impact and Global Recognition

Anita's influence reached far beyond local borders. During the 1990s, she collaborated with the National Park Service to document and protect landmarks associated

with the Underground Railroad. Her expert testimony before the U.S. Senate played a pivotal role in the 1998 enactment of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act. This landmark legislation paved the way for a network that now encompasses hundreds of historical sites across the country. Furthermore, in 1992, she launched Passage Unlimited, a pioneering tour company dedicated to Black history, proving that heritage tourism could be a powerful tool for education.

As the leader of the Mutual Musicians Foundation International, she acted as a bridge between the past and the future, keeping the stories of the 18th & Vine district alive for new audiences.

One of her most remarkable achievements occurred during a period of significant personal health struggles. Despite recovering from major heart surgery in 2015, she spearheaded Kansas City's application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Her passion was so evident that during a presentation in Kentucky, she moved international officials by singing a traditional hymn acappella. Her efforts were rewarded in 2017 when Kansas City was officially designated as the first UNESCO City of

Music; in the
United States.

A Legacy of Opportunity

Anita's work also transformed the professional landscape for artists. In 2018, she successfully lobbied the U.S. Department of Labor to recognize "musician" as a legitimate trade for federal apprenticeship programs. This led to the creation of the American Music Apprenticeship Program (AMAP), which continues to provide a structured path for aspiring artists today. In the summer of 2025, through a collaborative effort with The Historic Boone Tabernacle Church of God in Christ in Kansas City, she helped launch an inaugural program introducing community youth to a diverse range of musical genres.

Anita passed into eternal rest on January 4, 2026. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers, Ralph Dixon and Marcus Dixon.

Her memory is carried forward by her husband, Len Brown; her daughters, LaTyna Johnson and Celeste Yeargens; and her siblings, Lloyd Dixon Jr., Tina Dixon, and Stephen Dixon. She is also remembered by her bonus children, Derek Brown, Rusty Brown (Katie), Natalie Kane (Matt), and Yani Andrews; her grandchildren, Zion

Pierce,
LaNiyah Smith, Xavier Jalieba, Mandy Brown, Miles Kane and Georgia Kane;
her great-
grandchild, Aslyn Pierce; and a vast network of nieces, nephews, cousins,
friends, and
peers across the globe.

Anita Joyce Dixon-Brown understood that history is not merely something to
be
remembered, but something to be honored through action. Her life remains a
testament
to the idea that by preserving our cultural roots, we compose a better future
for
everyone.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2026, 11:00am at
Boone Tabernacle COGIC. Interment Lincoln Cemetery. Visitation from
10:00am-11:00am at the church. Services conducted by Lawrence A. Jones &
Sons Funeral Chapel. Condolences may be shared on our website.

Cemetery Details

Lincoln Cemetery

8604 East Truman Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64106

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 31. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Boone Tabernacle COGIC
1317 E 12th St,
Kansas City,, MO 64106

Funeral Service

JAN 31. 11:00 AM (CT)

Boone Tabernacle COGIC
1317 E 12th St,
Kansas City,, MO 64106