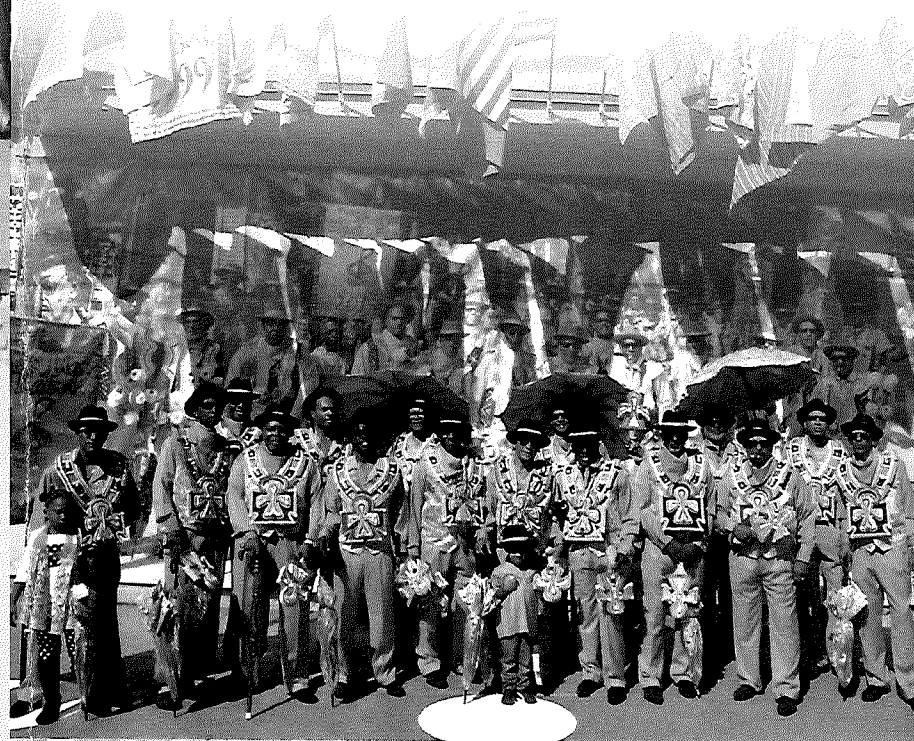




Black Men of Labor, INC.



Celebrates The Life of
Deborah "Big Red" Cotton
Sunrise 01-23-1965 – Sunset May 2, 2017

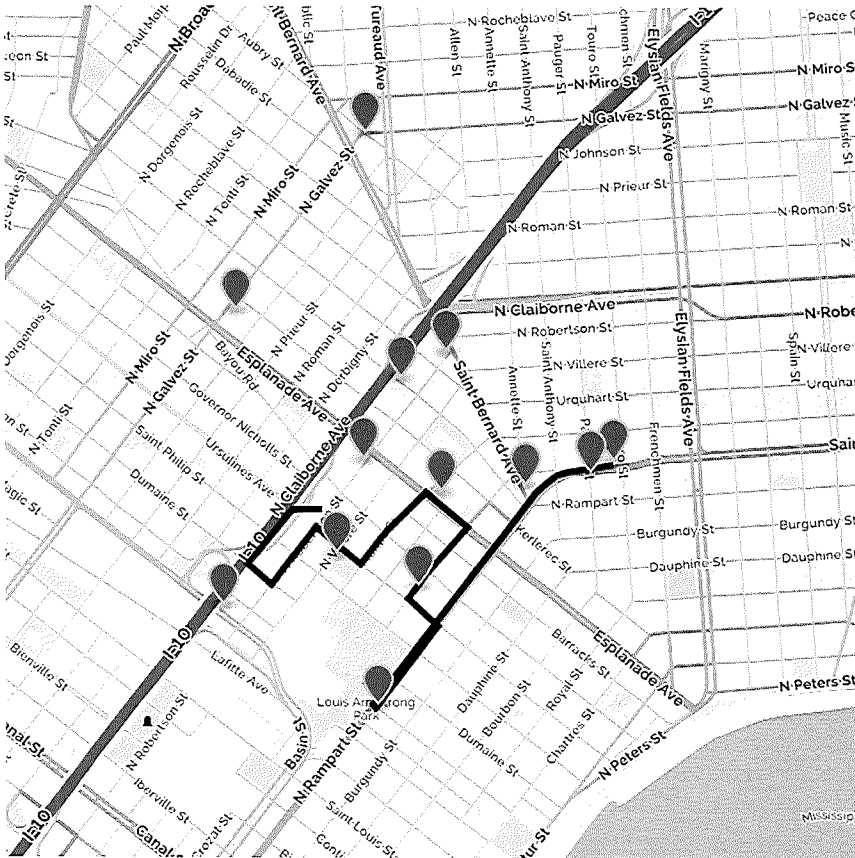
OBITUARY

Deborah Dione Cotton (a.k.a. Debbie, Yehnana, Deb, Big Red Cotton) was born to Hayes Cotton, Jr. (deceased) and Carolee Loewy Reed on January 23rd 1965 at Queen of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles, California. At the age of 3, she moved to Texas, then Oklahoma where she was raised by her father and grandmother Edwin Etta Cotton of Mexia, TX. She graduated from John Marshall High School in Oklahoma City in 1983. At age 19, Debbie moved to Los Angeles, reconnecting with her maternal family, discovering her Jewish roots, holding a variety of jobs in and around the entertainment industry—including working for Don Cornelius—and growing into the fabulous, vivacious woman so many knew and adored.

A champion of justice, lover of good food, music, dance, and fashion, Deb recognized the importance and value of New Orleans Social Aid and Pleasure clubs and began chronicling New Orleans Second Line culture. As Big Red Cotton, she created her own YouTube channel of incredible footage from the parades, blogged about the clubs and brass bands, and became a respected member of that community. Indeed, one of the many qualities that made her so very special was her ability to connect with and bridge different communities. Whether she was in church or in synagogue; on the mat of an Ifa priest or the middle of a roda di capoeira; at the Candelight or at Galatoires; at the Zulu Ball or a City Council meeting, Deborah Yehnana Big Red Cotton came with her whole heart. Perhaps this was never more evident than when she not only forgave and visited in jail the young man who shot her during the 2013 Mother's Day parade, but also became a vocal advocate for criminal justice reform until she departed this earth on May 2nd 2017.

Deb was preceded in death by her father, Hayes Cotton, Jr., and her grandparents Edwin Etta Cotton, Hayes Cotton, Sr., and Bert Loewy. She is survived by her mother Carolee Loewy Reed of Pasadena, CA; grandmother June "Bubbe" Loewy of Pasadena, CA; sisters Lisa Loewy of Berkeley, CA and Cathy Wallace Miles (Edward) of Sherman, TX; sister-cousins Joselyn "Le'Trese" Anglin of Pearland, TX, Sherry Burns Martin (Anthony) of Houston, TX, and Christie Burns Green of Round Rock, TX; uncles Michael "Iggy" Loewy of San Francisco, CA, and Mardy Loewy of Los Angeles, CA; five nieces and nephews; four great-nieces and nephews; a host of cousins; a collection of dear friends and admirers across the country and the world; and her beloved cat Bubbala. She will be forever missed.


Black Men of Labor, Inc.
 2017 Parade Route



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