

Exclusive Portraits: Remembering Gregg Allman, Who Dies at 69

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 28, 2017 - 9:14am

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SAVANNAH, GA – He survived a life of excess, musical triumph and celebrity coupling. Rocker Gregg Allman, one of the founding members of The Allman Brothers Band, died at his home in Georgia on May 27th, 2016. The influential innovator of the Southern rock sound and for a brief period, the husband of Cher, was 69 years old.

Gregory Lenoir Allman was born in Nashville, the second boy in his family after his brother Duane. He bought his first guitar after his family moved to Daytona Beach, Florida, and graduated from high school there in 1965, just as the British rock invasion in America was exploding. He and brother Duane formed a band called The Escorts, but recorded their first album for Liberty Records in 1967 and called themselves Hour Glass. After one more album, that group disbanded.

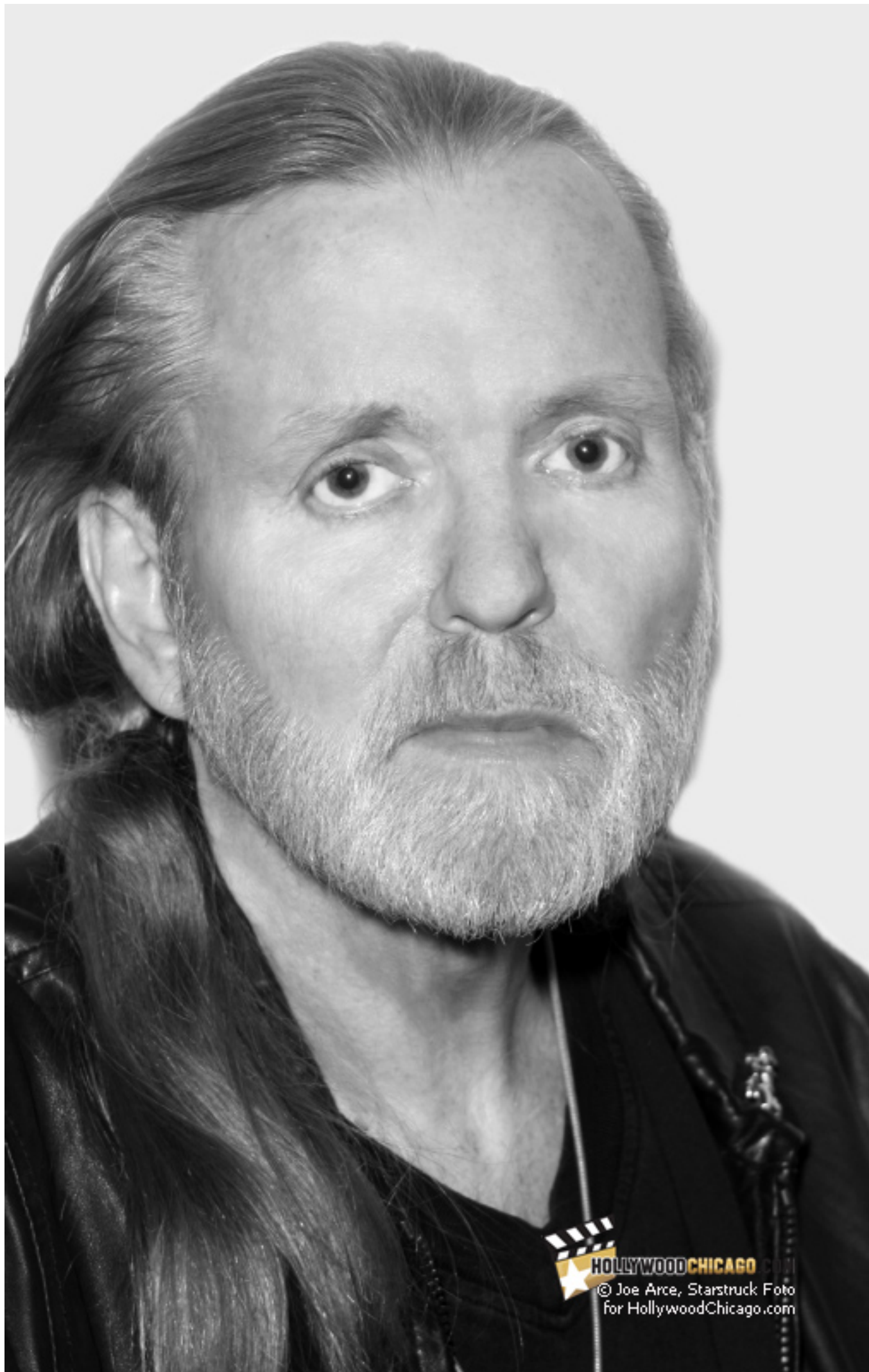


Gregg Allman in 2012, Promoting his Book 'My Cross to Bear'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

After fulfilling the contract with their first label, The Allman Brothers Band was born, with their self-titled debut album released in 1969. After that album and a subsequent album failed to click, they realized that live performance was their showcase, and the famous "At Fillmore East" recording was the band's breakthrough. Just as the album went gold in sales, Duane Allman was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1971. Devastated, Gregg Allman never really recovered from that blow, but led the band into their most fruitful period with the release of "Eat a Peach" (1972) and "Brothers and Sisters" (1973). But the whirlwind pressure of the previous four years has escalated the drug abuse for Allman and the band, which led to their break up in 1976.

At that point, even as he played his music with the new Gregg Allman Band, the rocker became part of a 1970s super couple after he had married singer Cher in 1975. They recorded an album "Two the Hard Way," and had son Elijah Blue. Their lifestyles clashed and crashed, and the two divorced in 1978. A second reformation of The Allman Brothers Band resulted in another breakup in 1982, but Gregg Allman had another hit record later that decade with the appropriately title, "I'm No Angel" (1987). It was also his heaviest period for drug and alcohol abuse, despite the amiable third reforming of The Allman Brothers Band. At their 1995 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Gregg Allman was too drunk to make it through the acceptance speech. That was the catalyst for finally achieving sobriety a year later.



Remembering Gregg Allman

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Despite the resignation of main Allman Brother's band member Dickey Betts in 2001, the group soldiered on up to 2014, even as Allman was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 2007. He had a liver transplant three years later, but succumbed to liver cancer, according to his publicist. Gregg Allman was married five times, and is survived by five children.

Photographer Joe Arce of HollywoodChicago.com took these Exclusive Portraits of Gregg Allman in 2012, during the Chicago stop on the book tour for Allman's autobiography, "My Cross to Bear."

He always credited his died-too-young brother Duane with his inspiration, "The best advice I got really had nothing to do with singing; it came from my brother, who always told me to stick to my guns and to believe in myself. I think Duane saw my talents and believed in me long before I ever did, and that meant the world to me."

Source material for this article was from Wikipedia and the New York Times. Gregg Allman, 1947-2017

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Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 20 2024 - 3:11am*):
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