

Kelly Anne Mays was born on November 21, 1974 in Detroit, Michigan, the youngest of three children to Ralph Mays and Janice Watkins-Mays. A mischievous child with a flair for drama, Kelly was always willing to lend a helping hand or a kind word to family and friends, a trait that she carried well into her adult life.

A graduate of Detroit Public Schools, Kelly later attended Central Michigan University where she received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She went on to receive her Masters of Science in Counseling at the University of Phoenix and was preparing to receive her Masters of Science in Education from Central Michigan in May. Passionate about educating herself, she received many certificates of completion for various trainings throughout her life including Assessing and Treating Suicidal Risk Co-morbidity, Partner Services Certification, Infant Mental Health and Mental Health Core Competencies to name a few.

Kelly accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior at an early age. Believing with her whole heart, she answered the call to the ministry by becoming ordained and took the Word of God to the streets with her energy, her passion and her smile.

Kelly worked at Hegira Health Inc. as a Community and Staff Training Program Manager and as a Mental Health Therapist with a focus on young children and teens. She was a world class published poet performing in slam poetry bouts around the country. She was a fierce advocate against domestic and sexual violence, advocating for suicide prevention and extremely outspoken in her support of the LGBTQ community, including her advocacy in her workshops and presentations. She was a guest as well as a host on many podcasts, a slam poetry judge as well as a participant, taught and mentored teens in how to write poetry, received her certification to be a practicing postpartum Doula and formed her own non-profit organization called A Survivors Story, which provided a safe space for survivors to tell their stories. Kelly was the current Poet Laureate of Westland, MI and one of the Crain's Detroit Business Association Notable Leaders of 2023.

Kelly was a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and worked proudly and tirelessly to better the lives of the Native American Communities as well as the African American communities, blending the cultures of her Afro-Indigenous heritage seamlessly.

Kelly's rambunctious and energetic spirit tragically departed this life on January 7, 2024. She leaves to cherish her memory; her beloved children Celeste and Cheyenne, her parents Janice and Ralph (Michelle), her brother, Robert (Melissa), twin sister, Stacey (Angelena) and numerous beloved aunts, uncles, cousins and dear, dear friends. She will be sorely missed.