

## **Dionne Warwick - Greystone Oral History Project**

In June 2020, Dionne Warwick agreed to participate in this oral history project. Through her publicist, Ms. Warwick confirmed that she had worked at Greystone Hospital. Like many other Greystone employees who had family members working at the hospital, Ms. Warwick's uncle Hank was a supervisor and helped her find a job for the summers of 1960 and 1961. When asked by the Oral History Project Manager what her memories of Greystone are, Ms. Warwick replied, "It was not the most pleasant place as I remember it to be".

Ms. Warwick was raised in East Orange, NJ which is 23 miles from Greystone Hospital. Many of her family were members of the Drinkard Singers, a renowned family gospel group. As a teenager, Ms. Warwick sang background vocals for various artists in nearby New York City recording studios. In her *A & E* biography, she recollected that after school, she and her friends would take a bus to NYC, perform their background gigs and return to East Orange the same night. This pattern was maintained after Ms. Warwick finished her daily shift at Greystone. In 1961, Burt Bacharach heard Ms. Warwick singing background on a song he had composed and he invited her to produce a demo record. Bacharach and Hal David signed Ms. Warwick to their production company in 1962. In November 1962, her first solo single, *Don't Make Me Over*, became Bacharach and David's first top 40 pop hit. To date, Dionne Warwick has won 6 Grammy Awards and sold over 25 million albums. To hear the song that launched Ms. Warwick's stellar career, after her time at Greystone, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDbIF-J6qvY>