

3rd Annual
2015

RHYTHM & BLUES
MUSIC HALL OF FAME
BLACK TIE AFFAIR
INDUCTION CEREMONY & CONCERT

LOCATED AT
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OFFICIAL PROGRAM
OCTOBER 4, 2015 • DETROIT, MI

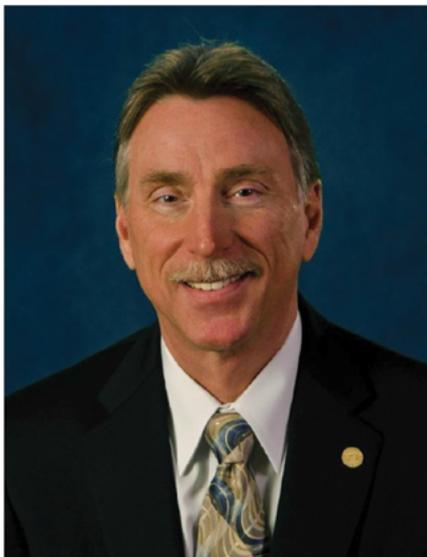


The UAW-Chrysler National Training Center supports the 3rd Annual Rhythm & Blues Music Hall of Fame Black Tie Affair

We congratulate this year's inductees for their musical contributions and lifelong achievements

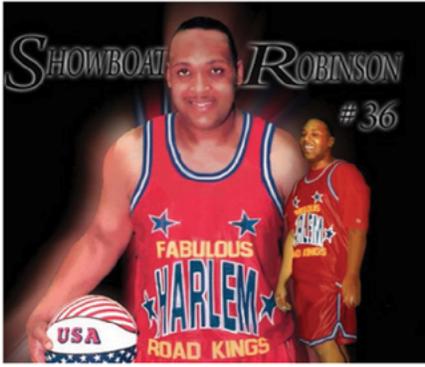


Rhythm and blues music has evolved over the years to become one of the most well respected genres ever. We join you in honoring these powerful men and women who helped shape the music industry. Just like the Motor City, they are leaving a proud, lasting legacy that will never be forgotten!



Norwood Jewell
Vice President and Director
Chrysler Department, UAW





FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Good Evening! Welcome to the Inaugural R&B Music Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. May we have a moment of silence for the memory of the members being inducted who are no longer with us, Thank you.

The work of the R&B Music Hall of Fame continues and we hope that you will continue to support us. This year's program, as all the others to follow, is full of stars, memories and wonderful music. We will try not to bore you with too many speeches but rather let the artist & music speak for themselves.

Thank you for coming and have a wonderful time.

LaMont "Showboat" Robinson

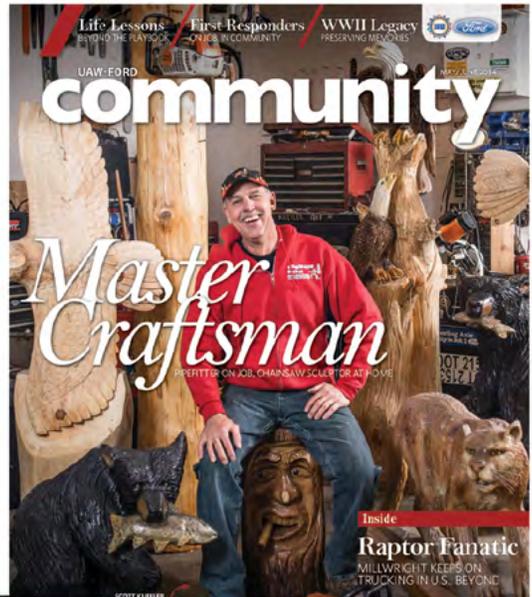
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to tell you how proud I am to be able to share this historic evening with you. This evening the R&B Music Hall of Fame plans to build a state-of-the-art facility over the next few years with money that will come from grants, private donation and other programs, for the artists who are the architects of rhythm & blues, gospel, jazz and hip-hop culture. Even in the face of adversity, these artists have persevered and generously shared their gifts with us, giving the universe decades of wonderful, soulful music. As we all know, music is the balm that heals all. It is humbling to be in the very presence of these artists, and we thank each and every one of these living American treasures for their precious gifts! I am proud to represent the R&B Music Hall of Fame Museum at this historic occasion and sincerely thank you for coming and for your continued support. With your assistance, we'll continue to meet our mission to *Preserve the music of Rhythm & Blues..*

Dr. Fred Wheatt



UAW-FORD community MAGAZINE



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ARETHA FRANKLIN



JERRY BUTLER



RAY CHARLES



UNDISPUTED TRUTH



MARTHA REEVES



DONNIE SIMPSON



MELBA MOORE



THE MIRACLES



JANIE BRADFORD



GINO WASHINGTON



THE CONTOURS



JJ BARNES



LAURA LEE



ORTHEIA BARNES



HANK BALLARD
& THE MIDNIGHTERS



TONY CLARKE



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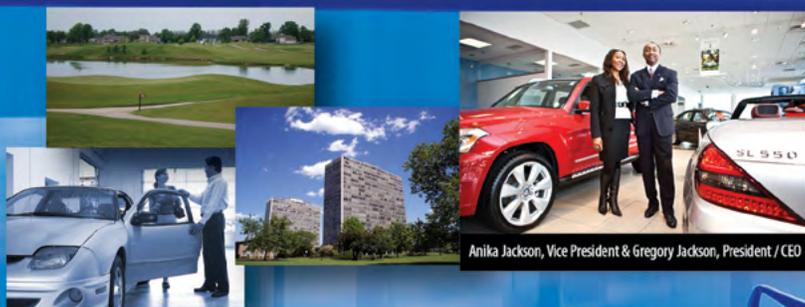
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Aretha Franklin



Aretha Louise Franklin (born March 25, 1942) is an American singer and musician. Franklin began her career singing gospel at her father, minister C. L. Franklin's church as a child. In 1960, at the age of 18, Franklin embarked on a secular career, recording for Columbia Records only achieving modest success. Following her signing to Atlantic Records in 1967, Franklin achieved commercial acclaim and success with songs such as "Respect", "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" and "Think". These hits and more helped her to gain the title The Queen of Soul by the end of the 1960s decade.

Franklin eventually recorded a total of 112 charted singles on Billboard, including 77 Hot 100 entries, 17 top ten pop singles, 100 R&B entries and twenty number-one R&B singles, becoming the most charted female artist in the chart's history. Franklin also recorded acclaimed albums such

as *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You*, *Lady Soul*, *Young, Gifted & Black* and *Amazing Grace* before experiencing problems with her record company by the mid-1970s. After her father was shot in 1979, Franklin left Atlantic and signed with Arista Records, finding success with her part in the film, *The Blues Brothers* and with the albums, *Jump to It* and *Who's Zoomin' Who?*. In 1998, Franklin won international acclaim for singing the opera aria, "Nessun Dorma", at the Grammys of that year replacing Luciano Pavarotti. Later that same year, she scored her final Top 40 recording with "A Rose Is Still a Rose". Franklin's other popular and well known hits include, "Rock Steady", "Something He Can Feel" (from the soundtrack to the 1976 film *Sparkle*), "Jump to It", "Freeway of Love", "Who's Zoomin' Who", "Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves", "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)" (with George Michael), "It Isn't, It Wasn't, It Ain't Never Gonna Be" (with Whitney Houston) and a remake of The Rolling Stones song "Jumpin' Jack Flash".

Franklin has won a total of 18 Grammy Awards and is one of the best-selling female artists of all time, having sold over 75 million records worldwide. Franklin has been honored throughout her career including a 1987 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in which she became the first female performer to be inducted. She was inducted to the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2005. In August 2012, Franklin was inducted into the GMA Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Franklin is listed in at least two all-time lists on Rolling Stone magazine, including the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time, in which she placed number 9, and the 100 Greatest Singers of All Time in which she placed number 1.

Chuck Jackson



Chuck Jackson (born July 22, 1937) is an American R&B singer, who was one of the first artists to record material by Burt Bacharach and Hal David successfully. He has performed with moderate success since 1961. His hits include “I Don’t Want to Cry,” “Any Day Now,” “I Keep Forgettin’” and “All Over the World”.

He was born in Latta, South Carolina, but was raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Between 1957 and 1959, he was a member of The Del-Vikings, singing lead on the 1957 release “Willette.” After leaving them, he was “discovered” by Luther Dixon when he opened for soul legend Jackie Wilson at the

Apollo Theater. He signed a recording contract with Scepter Records subsidiary Wand Records. His first single, “I Don’t Want to Cry”, which he co-wrote, was his first hit (1961). The song charted on both the R&B and pop charts. In 1962, Jackson’s recording of the Burt Bacharach-Bob Hilliard song “Any Day Now” became a huge hit and his signature song. His popularity in the 1960s prompted him to buy up the time on his contract from Scepter and move to Motown Records. There he recorded a number of successful singles, “Honey Come Back.” He later recorded for All Platinum and other labels, but with minimal success.

After meeting producer/composer Charles Wallert at the Third Annual Beach Music Awards, the two collaborated to record “How Long Have You Been Loving Me” on Carolina Records.

In 1998 Jackson teamed with longtime friend Dionne Warwick to record “If I Let Myself Go”, arranged as a duet by Wallert for Wave Entertainment. The recording received critical acclaim and charted at number 19 on the Gavin Adult Contemporary Charts. Jackson followed with “What Goes Around, Comes Around”, another Wallert production and composition, and reached number 13 on the Gavin Charts.

Ray Charles



Ray Charles Robinson (September 23, 1930 – June 10, 2004), professionally known as Ray Charles, was an American singer, songwriter, musician and composer. He was sometimes referred to as “The Genius”, and was also nicknamed “The High Priest of Soul”.

He pioneered the genre of soul music during the 1950s by combining rhythm and blues, gospel, and blues styles into the music he recorded for Atlantic Records. He also contributed to the racial integration of country and pop music during the 1960s with his crossover success on ABC Records, most notably with his two Modern Sounds albums. While he was with ABC, Charles became one of the first African-American musicians to be granted artistic control by a mainstream record company.

Charles was blind from the age of seven. Charles cited Nat King Cole as a primary influence, but his music

was also influenced by jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, and country artists of the day, including Art Tatum, Louis Jordan, Charles Brown and Louis Armstrong. Charles’ playing reflected influences from country blues, barrelhouse and stride piano styles. He had strong ties to Quincy Jones, who often cared for him and showed him the ropes of the “music club industry.”

Frank Sinatra called him “the only true genius in show business”, although Charles downplayed this notion.

In 2004, Rolling Stone ranked Charles at number ten on their list of the “100 Greatest Artists of All Time”, and number two on their November 2008 list of the “100 Greatest Singers of All Time”. Billy Joel observed: “This may sound like sacrilege, but I think Ray Charles was more important than Elvis Presley”

Jerry Butler



Jerry Butler, Jr. (born December 8, 1939) is an American soul singer and songwriter. He is also noted as being the original lead singer of the famed R&B vocal group the Impressions, as well as a 1991 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee. Butler is also an American politician. He serves as a Commissioner for Cook County, Illinois, having first been elected in 1985. As a member of this 17-member county board, he chairs the Health and Hospitals Committee, and serves as Vice Chair of the Construction Committee.

Butler was born in Sunflower, Mississippi in 1939. The mid-1950s had a profound impact on Butler's life. He grew up poor, having lived in Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing complex. Music and the church provided solace from the poverty of the slums he lived in, and difficulties of a predominantly segregated society. He performed in a church choir with Curtis Mayfield. As a teenager, Butler sang in a gospel quartet called Northern Jubilee Gospel Singers, along with Mayfield.

Mayfield, a guitar player, became the lone instrumentalist for the six-member Roosters group, which later became The Impressions. Inspired by Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers, the Five Blind Boys of Mississippi, and the Pilgrim Travelers, getting into the music industry seemed inevitable.

He co-wrote, with Otis Redding, the song "I've Been Loving You Too Long" in 1965. Butler's solo career had a string of hits, including the Top 10 successes "He Will Break Your Heart", "Find Another Girl", "I'm A-Telling You" (all written by fellow Impression Curtis Mayfield and featuring Mayfield as harmony vocal), the million selling "Only the Strong Survive", "Moon River", "Need To Belong" (recorded with the Impressions after he went solo), "Make It Easy on Yourself", "Let It Be Me" (with Betty Everett), "Brand New Me", "Ain't Understanding Mellow" (with Brenda Lee Eager), "Hey, Western Union Man", and "Never Give You Up". His 1969 "Moody Woman" release became a Northern Soul favorite and featured at number 369 in the Northern Soul Top 500. Butler released two successful albums, *The Ice Man Cometh* (1968) and *Ice on Ice* (1969). *The Ice Man Cometh* garnered Butler three Grammy nominations. He collaborated on many of his successful recordings with the Philadelphia-based songwriting team, Gamble and Huff. With Motown, in 1976 and 1977, Butler produced and co-produced (with Paul David Wilson) two albums: *Suite for the Single Girl* and *It All Comes Out in My Song*.

Butler was dubbed the "Iceman" by WDAS Philadelphia disc jockey, Georgie Woods, while performing in a Philadelphia theater.

Martha Reeves



Martha Rose Reeves (born July 18, 1941, in Eufaula, Alabama) is an American R&B and pop singer and former politician, and was the lead singer of the Motown girl group Martha and the Vandellas. They scored over a dozen hit singles, including “Nowhere to Run”, “Jimmy Mack”, and their signature “Dancing In The Street”. From 2005 until 2009, Reeves served as an elected council woman for the city of Detroit, Michigan.

Martha Rose Reeves was born in Eufaula, Alabama, the first daughter of Elijah Joshua Reeves and Ruby Lee Gilmore Reeves, and the third of the couple’s 11 children. She was under a year old when the family moved from Eufaula to Detroit, Michigan, where her grandfather, Reverend Elijah Reeves, was a minister at Detroit’s Metropolitan Church. The family was very active in the church and its choir. Both Elijah and Ruby played guitar and liked to sing; the children acquired their love of music from their parents. At

Detroit’s Northeastern High School, her vocal coach was Abraham Silver, who also worked with Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson (of the Supremes) and Bobby Rogers (of the Miracles). Raised on gospel, and inspired by singers like Lena Horne and Della Reese, Reeves became a fan of R&B and doo-wop music. She joined the Fascinations in 1959, but left the group before they became a recording act. Her sister Lois Reeves is also a singer, and performed with the Vandellas and Quiet Elegance.

With her brassy and gospel-reared alto vocals, Martha Reeves helped Martha and the Vandellas ascend from background singers with early songs such as “Come and Get These Memories” and “(Love Is Like a) Heat Wave” distinguishing the group from contemporaries and labelmates the Marvelettes and the Supremes, who were more influenced by doo-wop.

Donnie Simpson



Donnie Simpson (born January 30, 1954) is a long-time American radio DJ as well as a television and movie personality. He hosted The Donnie Simpson Morning Show on Washington, D.C. radio station WPGC-FM from March 1993 to January 29, 2010. Currently, he hosts The Donnie Simpson Show on D.C.-based radio station WMMJ-FM (Majic 102.3 FM), which began airing on August 17, 2015. Simpson is the first urban-format radio personality to have an annual salary over \$1 million without being syndicated. He was Billboard's "1998 Air Personality of the Year". He is also known by the nickname "Dr. Green Eyes" for his luminous light green eyes.

Simpson began his career at age 15 at Urban Contemporary radio station WJLB in Detroit, Michigan, where he remained for eight years. In 1977 he relocated to Washington, D.C., where he began working at WRC-FM, known as "Disco 93.9" (now WKYS), as morning drive host and program director. He remained with WKYS for 15 years through its format migration from Disco-based Rhythmic Contemporary Hits to Urban Contemporary in the 1980s. In 1981, he was hired as back-up anchor for the George Michael

Sports Machine sports show on NBC's Washington television outlet, WRC-TV.

Simpson left WPGC-FM over a dispute with the station's owner, CBS Radio, regarding changes CBS requested to reverse falling ratings. On his final show, Simpson received phone call farewells from Toni Braxton, LL Cool J, Wyclef Jean, John Legend, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, and other musicians. As of January 2010, Simpson hadn't said what he'll do next. In 1983, Simpson was recruited by Bob Johnson, founder of BET, to host the network's primetime music video show, Video Soul. Simpson remained with the show until its cancellation in 1997. Between 1997 and 2000, Simpson hosted many network specials and tributes. In October 2004, he was inducted into the BET Walk of Fame.

On August 17, 2015, Donnie Simpson came out of retirement and returned to the radio airwaves, this time on WMMJ (a Radio One station based in D.C.) to host The Donnie Simpson Show. The show airs Monday thru Friday from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM (EST) on Majic 102.3 FM.

Melba Moore



Beatrice Melba Hill (born October 29, 1945), best known by her stage name, Melba Moore is an American singer, actress, entertainer. She is the daughter of saxophonist Teddy Hill and R&B singer Bonnie Davis.

Melba Moore was born in 1945 in New York City, New York, to Gertrude Melba Smith (known professionally as Bonnie Davis) and Teddy Hill, and raised in Harlem, New York, until she was 9 and her divorced mother remarried jazz pianist Clement Leroy Moorman. She attended Newark Arts High School in Newark, New Jersey. Her mother, Bonnie Davis, had a No. 1 R&B hit with “Don’t Stop Now”, prior to Melba’s birth. Although her biological father was Big Band leader and saxophonist Teddy Hill, it was her stepfather Moorman (who played on “Don’t Stop Now”) who became a prime influence and encouragement in Moore’s musical pursuits, insisting that she learn to play the piano. When she graduated from college she worked as a music teacher, but she soon decided to pursue the spotlight. She chose her stage name by shortening her stepfather’s surname from Moorman

and using her middle name, “Melba”.

In 1975 Moore signed with Buddah Records and released the critically successful R&B album, *Peach Melba*, which included the minor hit, “I Am His Lady”. The following year she scored her first significant hit with the Van McCoy-penned “This Is It”, which reached the Billboard Hot 100, the top-20 position on the R&B chart, and top-10 in the UK, becoming her biggest success in that country. “This Is It” also became the number-1 disco track in the UK for that year. In 1976 she scored her third Grammy nomination with the R&B ballad “Lean on Me”, which had been recorded originally by Vivian Reed and later by Moore’s idol Aretha Franklin who recorded the song as a b-side to her 1971 hit “Spanish Harlem”. The song is most notable for Moore’s extended long note at the end. In 1983 she re-recorded the song as a tribute to McCoy, who had died 4 years earlier.

In 1981 Moore signed with Capitol Records and reached the top 5 on the R&B charts with the dance-pop/funk single “Love’s Comin’ At Ya”, which also hit the top 20 in the UK and became a sizable hit in some European countries for its post-disco sound. A string of R&B hits followed, including 1983’s “Keepin’ My Lover Satisfied” and “Love Me Right”, 1984’s “Livin’ For Your Love”, 1985’s “Read My Lips”—which later won Moore a fourth Grammy nomination for Best Female Rock Vocal Performance, making her just the third black artist after Donna Summer and Michael Jackson to be nominated in the rock category—and 1985’s “When You Love Me Like This”. In 1986, she scored two number-one R&B hits, including the duet “A Little Bit More” with Freddie Jackson and “Falling”. She scored other popular R&B hits including “Love the One I’m With (A Lot of Love)” and “It’s Been So Long”. In 1986, Moore also headlined the CBS television sitcom *Melba*.

The Miracles



The Miracles (also known as Smokey Robinson and the Miracles from 1965 to 1972) were an American rhythm and blues vocal group that was the first successful recording act for Berry Gordy's Motown Records, and one of the most important and influential groups in pop, rock and roll, and R&B music history. Formed in 1955 by Smokey Robinson, Warren "Pete" Moore, and Ronnie White, the group started off as the Five Chimes, changing their name to the Matadors two years later. The group then settled on the Miracles after the inclusion of Claudette Robinson in 1958. The most notable Miracles line-up included the Robinsons, Moore, White, Bobby Rogers and Marv Tarplin. After a failed audition with Brunswick Records, the group began working with songwriter Berry Gordy, who helped to produce their first records for the End and Chess labels before establishing Tamla Records in 1959 and signing the Miracles as its

first act. The group eventually scored the label's first million-selling hit record with the 1960 Grammy Hall of Fame smash, "Shop Around", and further established themselves as one of Motown's top acts with numerous hit singles.

Referred to as Motown's "soul supergroup", the Miracles recorded 26 Top 40 Pop hits, sixteen of which reached the Billboard Top 20, seven top 10 singles, and a number one single ("The Tears of a Clown") while the Robinsons and Tarplin were members.

The Miracles have been awarded many top music industry honors over the years. In 1997, the group received the Pioneer Award at the Rhythm and Blues Foundation for their musical achievements. Four years later, in 2001, they were inducted to the Vocal Group Hall of Fame. In 2009, the group received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Throughout their careers, the Miracles were also enshrined with honors for their songwriting by both BMI and ASCAP. In 2008, Billboard listed them at #61 on their 100 most successful Billboard artists ever list. After much controversy, the Miracles were inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2012.

Janie Bradford



Janie Bradford (born June 2, 1939 in Charleston, Missouri) is an American songwriter, most known for her tenure with Motown. With Berry Gordy, she co-wrote “Money (That’s What I Want)”, originally recorded by Barrett Strong and used by The Beatles on their second album *With The Beatles*. “Money” is also on The Rolling Stones’ first U.K. EP (January 17, 1964).

Other hits by Bradford include “Too Busy Thinking About My Baby” by Marvin Gaye (although originally by The Temptations), and also recorded by Phil Collins, & “Your Old Standby” for Mary Wells. She worked at Motown for more than 25 years.

Currently, Bradford is the executive director of the Janie Bradford HAL Scholarship Fund and producer of the Heroes And Legends aka HAL Awards, an annual event that raises funds for performing arts scholarships while paying tribute to entertainment legends, including many of Motown’s biggest stars. She has also established Twinn Records with songwriter and singer Marilyn McLeod.

Gino Washington



George “Gino” Washington (born 1946) is an African American R&B and rock singer from Detroit, Michigan with cross-racial appeal. While attending Pershing High School, he achieved local hits in 1963 and 1964: “Out of This World” and “Gino Is a Coward”. To his credit, he was the first artist signed to Ric-Tic Records. In 1964 he was drafted into the U.S. Army, serving in Japan and South Vietnam; upon return his music career stalled. He hosted his own variety television show in Detroit during the 1970s.



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The Contours



The Contours were one of the early African-American soul singing groups signed to Motown Records. The group is best known for its classic chart-topping 1962 hit, “Do You Love Me,” a million-selling single that became a major hit all over again in 1988.

Joe Billingslea (born November 14, 1937) and Billy Gordon founded a singing group called The Blenders in their native Detroit, Michigan in 1959. They completed the group with Billy Hoggs and Billy Rollins, who had responded to an ad placed in the local newspaper by Billingslea. The group soon added Leroy Fair (in place of Billy Rollins) and bass singer Hubert Johnson and changed the name to The Contours. In the fall of 1960, the group auditioned for Berry Gordy’s Motown Records. Gordy turned the act down, prompting the group to pay a visit to the home of Johnson’s cousin, R&B star and Gordy associate Jackie Wilson. Wilson in turn got The Contours a second audition with Gordy, at which they sang the same songs they had at the first audition, the same way, and were signed to a seven-year contract.

The group’s first single, “Whole Lotta’ Woman,” was released in January 1961 and failed to chart. Within months of its release, Leroy Fair was replaced by Benny Reeves, brother of Martha Reeves. Shortly there-

after, Benny Reeves left to serve in the United States Navy and he was replaced by Sylvester Potts. In 1961 the group’s second single, “The Stretch”, was released and it also failed to chart. In early 1962, Gordy had The Contours record “Do You Love Me,” a composition allegedly originally meant for The Temptations. But, in a 2008 interview for MOJO Magazine, original Contour Joe Billingslea stated that this was not the case. In the article, Billingslea stated to author Phil Alexander that the song’s author, Motown founder Berry Gordy, offered the song to The Contours first, only intending to give The Temptations the song after he saw that The Contours were having trouble with it. However, after practicing the tune again, Gordy gave the nod—and the song—to The Contours.

The resulting record, with its shouted lead vocals from Billy Gordon, hit #1 on Billboard’s R&B chart and crossed over to #3 on the Hot 100 in 1962. It sold over one million copies, and was awarded a gold disc.

Ortheia Barnes



Ortheia Barnes-Kennerly (1945 – May 15, 2015) was an American R&B and jazz singer who opened for Motown greats including Stevie Wonder and later entered the ministry.

Barnes-Kennerly recorded in the 1960s for Detroit's Mickay Records and Coral Records, a Decca Records label. While never signing with Motown Records, she opened for a number of its stars, including Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Gladys Knight.

Barnes died in May 2015, in St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where she went for a performance, friend and bass player, Ralphe Armstrong told the Detroit Free Press. She had at least two strokes in recent years and died of heart failure, she was 70.

Tony Clarke



Tony Clarke (April 13, 1940 – August 28, 1971) was an American soul singer-songwriter.

Clarke, born Ralph Thomas Williams in New York City, was raised in Detroit. He wrote the songs "Pushover" and "Two Sides to Every Story", hits for Etta James. Clarke scored a chart hit of his own with "The Entertainer" which hit #10 R&B and #31 Pop in the US in 1965

In the early hours of August 28, 1971, Clarke is alleged to have broken into his estranged wife, Joyce Elaine's, home armed with a tire jack. She shot and killed him in self-defense. After his death, his career saw a resurgence in the 1970s on the United Kingdom's Northern soul scene particularly with his recording of "Landslide"

Hank Ballard

& The Midnighters



Hank Ballard (November 18, 1927 – March 2, 2003), born John Henry Kendricks, was a rhythm and blues singer and songwriter, the lead vocalist of Hank Ballard and The Midnighters and one of the first rock 'n' roll artists to emerge in the early 1950s. He played an integral part in the development of the genre, releasing the hit singles “Work With Me, Annie” and answer songs “Annie Had a Baby” and “Annie’s Aunt Fannie” with his Midnighters. He later wrote and recorded “The Twist” which spread the popularity of the dance and was notably covered by Chubby Checker. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990.

In 1953, Ballard joined doo-wop group The Royals, which had previously been discovered by Johnny Otis and signed to Federal Records, (a division of King Records), in Cincinnati. Ballard joined Henry Booth, Charles Sutton, Sonny Woods and Alonzo Tucker in the group, replacing previous singer Lawson Smith.

The Royals released “Get It” (1953), an R&B song with possibly sexually oriented lyrics,

which some radio stations refused to play, although it still made it to number 6 on the Billboard R&B chart.

The group then changed its name to The Midnighters to avoid confusion with The “5” Royales. In 1954, Ballard wrote a song called “Work with Me, Annie” that was drawn from “Get It”. It became The Midnighters’ first major R&B hit, spending seven weeks at number 1 on the R&B charts and also selling well in mainstream markets, along with the answer songs “Annie Had a Baby” and “Annie’s Aunt Fannie”; all were banned by the FCC from radio air play. Their third major hit was “Sexy Ways”, a song that cemented the band’s reputation as one of the most risqué groups of the time.

They had four other R&B chart hits in 1954–55, but no others until 1959, by which time the group was billed as “Hank Ballard and The Midnighters” with their label changed from Federal to King, the parent label. Between 1959 and 1961 they had several more both on the R&B and Pop charts, starting with “Tear-drops on Your Letter”, a number 4 R&B hit in 1960 that had as its B-side the Ballard-written song “The Twist”. A few months later, Chubby Checker’s cover version of the song went to number 1 on the pop charts. Ballard & the Midnighters had several other hit singles onto 1962, including the Grammy-nominated “Finger Poppin’ Time” (1960) and “Let’s Go, Let’s Go, Let’s Go” (1960) which hit number 7 and number 6, respectively, on the Billboard pop charts. They did not reach the charts again after 1962 and dissolved in 1965.



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Johnnie Mae Matthews



Johnnie Mae Matthews (December 31, 1922 – January 6, 2002) was an American blues and R&B singer, songwriter, and record producer from Bessemer, Alabama. Known as the “Godmother of Detroit Soul” and as the first African American female to own and operate her own record label (Northern Recording Company) she was an early influence on the careers of many of the now-famous recording stars who began their careers in Detroit, Michigan such as Otis Williams, David Ruffin, and Richard Street of the Temptations, Jimmy Ruffin, Joe Hunter of the Funk Brothers Band, Richard Wylie, Norman Whitfield, Berry Gordy, founder of Motown Records, Timmy Shaw, Barbara Lewis, Bettye LaVette and many more.

In 1957 she joined a local quintet called the Five Dapps, assuming lead vocals on “You’re So Unfaithful,” which was the B-side of their 1958 debut single, “Do Wop a Do”. The Instrumental backing on the record was done by pianist Joe Hunter, who would frequently collaborate with Matthews in the years to follow, and later led Motown’s famed studio band, the Funk Brothers.

In 1958, Matthews formed her own record label, dubbed the “Northern Recording Com-

pany”. Headquartered in an office at 2608 Blaine in Detroit, just a few blocks from her home, she used \$85 borrowed from her husband’s paycheck to become the first African-American woman to own and operate her own label. With sessions typically recorded at either nearby “Special Studio” or at radio station WCHB, Northern Recording Company was largely used as a vehicle to launch her own solo recording career. Her first release, “Dreamer”, in 1959, was credited to Johnnie Mae Matthews & the Daps. Her follow-up single, “Mr. Fine”, featured on its B-side, a song named “Someday”, which was a solo tune by local singer Chet Oliver.

Motown Records founder, Berry Gordy has often credited Matthews with teaching him the ropes of the recording industry. He acknowledged her assistance in helping land a distribution deal with Chess Records for The Miracles’ 1959 hit “Bad Girl”. Matthews also fostered the early careers of such future Motown stars as David and Jimmy Ruffin. Some say that she is the un-credited author of Mary Wells’ breakthrough hit, “Bye Bye Baby.” It is impossible to know how differently Matthews’ own recording career might have turned out had she accepted any of invitations of Berry Gordy to record for Motown, particularly during the mid-1960s, when she was delivering some of her finest material, most notably “Lonely You’ll Be” and “Cut Me Loose,” in 1967, the latter of which was subsequently licensed for national distribution on the Atco label.



CITY OF DETROIT
MAYOR'S OFFICE

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
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January 9, 2015



Dear Mr. Robinson,

It gives me great pleasure to learn of your interest to bring the Rhythm & Blues (R&B) Music Hall of Fame Museum to Detroit. As you know, Detroit is commonly referred to as "Motown" because of our rich R&B History. A place such as the R&B Music Hall of Fame would provide a great platform to express our appreciation to those that helped to shape an entire genre of music.

As the proud home of various art museums and institutions, this would be an awesome addition to our great city. Again, thank you for your desire to contribute to the resurgence of Detroit. On behalf of the City of Detroit, I wish you much continued success.

Sincerely,

Mike Duggan,
Mayor



MICHAEL E. DUGGAN, MAYOR



JOHN CONYERS, JR.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

November 1, 2014

*Mr. Lamont D. Robinson, Founder/CEO
The Official Rhythm & Blues Music Hall of Fame Museum
10377 Valley View Road
Suite 560022
Cleveland, Ohio 44056*

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I write in support of the proposed development of The Official Rhythm & Blues Music Hall of Fame Museum Project in Detroit, Michigan. As a lifelong advocate of historical music genres I fully respect the inherent value of Rhythm and Blues as an American treasure and a powerful influence on our culture. The emphasis on rhythm and the raw, daring and diverse storytelling, reflects the sum of the African-American experience in a way that is truly unique. Detroit, with its diverse historical roots of music and Motown, is the ideal location to showcase and celebrate the evolution of this art form.

I am excited about this opportunity to enrich the City of Detroit and all residents in Southeast Michigan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Conyers, Jr." in a cursive style.

*John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress*

The Fabulous Peps



Detroit soul group the **Fabulous Peps** was comprised of vocalists Tommy “Storm” Hester, “Little Joe” Harris, and Ronnie Abner, the latter a former member of the Vibratones. According to an article on the www.soulfuldetroit.com website, the group was founded in 1962 and spent its formative years gigging at Motor City nightclubs and working sessions for the local Thelma Records label. Credited as Tom Storm & the Peps, they cut 1964’s “That’s the Way Love Is” for the Ge Ge imprint, soon followed by “This Love I Have for You,” this time billed simply as the Peps. Both records recalled Curtis Mayfield’s Impressions and neither made much of an impression, but by the time they joined producer Mike Hanks’ D-Town label in 1965, the Peps were one of Detroit’s most popular live acts, famed for their energetic stage shows complete with choreographed dances, splits, and back flips.

The Spinners



The Spinners are an American rhythm and blues vocal group that formed in 1954 and are still active. They enjoyed a string of hit singles and albums during the 1960s and 1970s. Formed in Detroit, Michigan, the group still tours regularly as of 2015, although Henry Fambrough is the only remaining original member.

The group is also listed as the Detroit Spinners and the Motown Spinners (for their 1960s recordings with the Detroit label). These other names were used in the UK to avoid confusion with a British folk group also called the Spinners.

In 1954, a group of friends who grew up together in Ferndale, Michigan, a northern suburb of Detroit, came together to make music. For a time, several of the band members resided in Detroit’s Herman Gardens public housing project. Billy Henderson, Henry Fambrough, Pervis Jackson, C. P. Spencer, and James Edwards called themselves The Domingoes. But James Edwards remained with the group only a few weeks. He was replaced by Bobby Smith, who sang lead on most of the Spinners’ early records (and many of their biggest Atlantic hits). C. P. Spencer left the group shortly afterwards and later went on to become a member of the Voice Masters and the Originals. He was replaced by George Dixon. The group renamed themselves the Spinners in 1961.

Pat Lewis



Pat Lewis is an American soul singer and backing vocalist since the 1960s. Patsy Lewis was born October 23, 1947 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1951. In the early 60s, Pat, her sister Dianne, and two friends (Betty and Jackie Winston) formed the group, The Adorables, who recorded a record and began singing backing vocals for Golden World Records. Pat herself debuted as a solo artist in 1966 with *Can't Shake It Loose* while also beginning to do outside backing vocals sessions. She met Motown Records' in-house backing group The Andantes, and one day when one of the girls couldn't make the session for Stevie Wonder's *Up-Tight*, Pat stepped in and did it as well as

several other Motown sessions. She signed to Solid Hit Bound Records and released a string of singles, including "Look At What I Almost Missed", "Warning", "No One to Love", "No Baby No", and "The Loser". From the late 60s on, she became a permanent backing singer for Aretha Franklin, Isaac Hayes and later on George Clinton too. She wrote several songs for Isaac Hayes.

In 1989, Pat as well as The Andantes were among the invited artists to join UK producer Ian Levine's mega-project Motorcity Records, a label formed to record new material on former Motown artists. Pat became the main backing vocals coordinator for the label and did several hundred arrangements while she recorded more than 50 tracks with herself and as a lead singer for the re-formed Andantes. Her single *Separation* (1991) (co-written by Levine and Billy Griffin) was Single of the Week when reviewed in British soul magazine *Blues & Soul*. After the label's demise in 1992, Pat continued to work with Ian Levine on a regular basis. In 1997, she recorded 50 cover versions of selected Motown and Northern Soul classics although only a handful of tracks have been released on various artists compilations. In 1999, she recorded 76 gospel tracks with Levine for K-Tel. As for the present, Pat occasionally tours with Martha Reeves's original backing group The Vandellas and most recently performed in Manchester, England in October 2007 where she had also been scheduled to record a new track for Levine's latest album *Disco 2008*, an engagement she had to cancel due to health problems.

Melvin Davis



Melvin Lee Davis is an American bass player, vocalist, keyboard player, producer, TV composer and engineer based in Orange County, California. He is the music director for Grammy-award winning artist Chaka Khan, and has toured with and played as a session musician with The Pointer Sisters, Lee Ritenour, Bryan Ferry, Patti Austin and Gladys Knight & The Pips and others. In addition, he co-wrote the Soul Train theme song, Soul Train's A-Comin'. His records, Tomorrow's Yesterday and Nature's Serenade were released through The Orchard; LTV: Love, Truth & Victory was released through P-Vine Records.

Born and raised in Orange County, Melvin Lee Davis played the violin at age 4 and the saxophone at age 6; he took up the guitar while he was in high school. He was discovered by a saxophone player in Buddy Miles' jazz band who was dating his sister while Davis was playing at a club. Miles flew Davis to New York City to audition and hired him on the spot.

Davis played in New York City clubs and met Soul Train producer Don Cornelius through a mutual friend, Ron Kersey. According to Davis, Davis made many of his contacts in R&B through Cornelius. "...if you were a black musician in the business of making R&B and soul music and wanted to get on television, you had to go through Don Cornelius," he said.

His association with Cornelius lead him to co-writing the Soul Train theme, Soul Train's A-Comin'. Davis has worked for Grammy award winning singer Chaka Khan as a session and touring bassist in addition to music director. He's also worked with jazz artists including Lee Ritenour and Patti Austin, as well as R&B notables Gladys Knight & The Pips and The Pointer Sisters as well as former Roxy Music frontman and glam rock/new wave musician Bryan Ferry.

Jimmy Ruffin



Jimmy Ruffin (born Jimmie Lee Ruffin, May 7, 1936 – November 17, 2014) was an American soul singer, and elder brother of David Ruffin of the Temptations. He had several hit records between the 1960s and 1980s, the most successful being the Top 10 hits “What Becomes of the Brokenhearted” and “Hold On (To My Love)”.

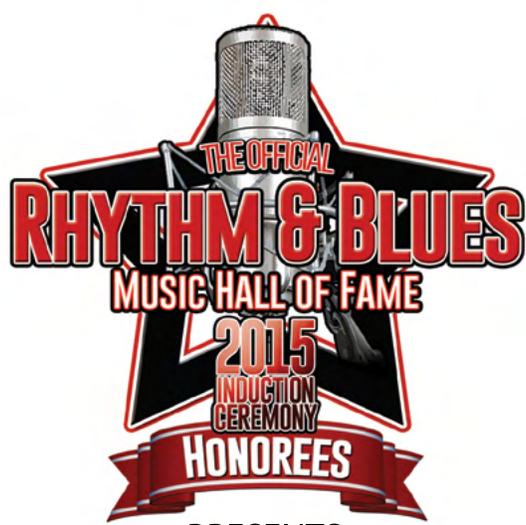
Jimmy Ruffin was born in 1936 in Collinsville, Mississippi, to Eli, a sharecropper, and Ophelia Ruffin. He was approaching his fifth birthday when his younger brother David was born. As children, the brothers began singing with a gospel group, the Dixie Nightingales.

In 1961, Jimmy became a singer as part of the Motown stable, mostly on sessions but also recording singles for its subsidiary Miracle la-

bel, but was then drafted for national service. After leaving the Army in 1964, he returned to Motown, where he was offered the opportunity to join the Temptations to replace Elbridge Bryant. However, after hearing his brother David, they hired him for the job instead so Jimmy decided to resume his solo career. Ruffin recorded for Motown’s subsidiary Soul label, but with little success.

In 1966, he heard a song about unrequited love written for The Spinners, and

persuaded the writers that he should record it himself. His recording of “What Becomes of the Brokenhearted” became a major success. The song reached #7 on the Billboard Hot 100 and #6 on the R&B Chart. It also initially reached #10 in the UK singles chart, rising to #4 when it was reissued in the UK in 1974. “What Becomes of the Brokenhearted” remained Ruffin’s best-known song. Follow-ups in the US were successful, with “I’ve Passed This Way Before” and “Gonna Give Her All the Love I’ve Got” reaching the US charts in late 1966 and early 1967.



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Spyder Turner



Spyder Turner (born Dwight David Turner, February 4, 1947, Beckley, West Virginia) is an American soul singer. Turner was raised in Detroit, and sang in doo wop groups and high school choirs while young. He first began recording after winning a contest at the Apollo Theater in New York, recording some solo sides and singing backup for groups called The Stereophonics and The Fabulous Counts.

In 1966, record producer Clay McMurray had Turner's group do a recording session, and soon after Turner signed to MGM Records and released a single, a cover of the soul number "Stand by Me," imitating not only Ben E. King, but Smokey Robinson, Chuck Jackson and Billy Stewart, among others. The tune climbed to #3 on the U.S. Billboard Black Singles chart and #12 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart early in 1967. Soon after, a full-length album was released, peaking at #14 on the

Black Albums chart and #158 on the Billboard 200. A second single from the album, "I Can't Make it Anymore", peaked at #95 on the Hot 100 pop chart.

Turner left his management after dissatisfaction with MGM's soul division (which consisted only of Howard Tate and himself), and played regionally in the South in the early 1970s.

Later that decade, Turner began working with Norman Whitfield, and wrote the tune "Do Your Dance" for Rose Royce, which was a top ten R&B hit. He continued recording in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including a song for the movie *The Last Dragon* (billed on the soundtrack as Dwight David). He did some acting as well. He continues to perform in Michigan, and released his most recent album in 2006 through CD Baby.

In March 2008 Turner appeared on English man Carl Dixon's BandTraxs session at Studio A/Detroit, where he provided vocals and writing skills to complete the songs, along with singers Pree, Gayle Butts and other Detroit musicians including Dennis Coffey (co producer) and Uriel Jones. Turner performed lead and backing on "Tell me (crying over you)" - "Glory fleeting" and in addition backing vocals on "Suddenly there's you", and as group personnel of 'BandTraxs' singing on the funk/rap styled "Detroit (city by the river)". The session was arranged by ex Motown arranger David J. Van De Pitte.



ALL OF US

*Attorney Rosalind R. Ray, Attorney Johnny Mercer, Attorney Arnold Gaines, Attorney Fred Samuels,
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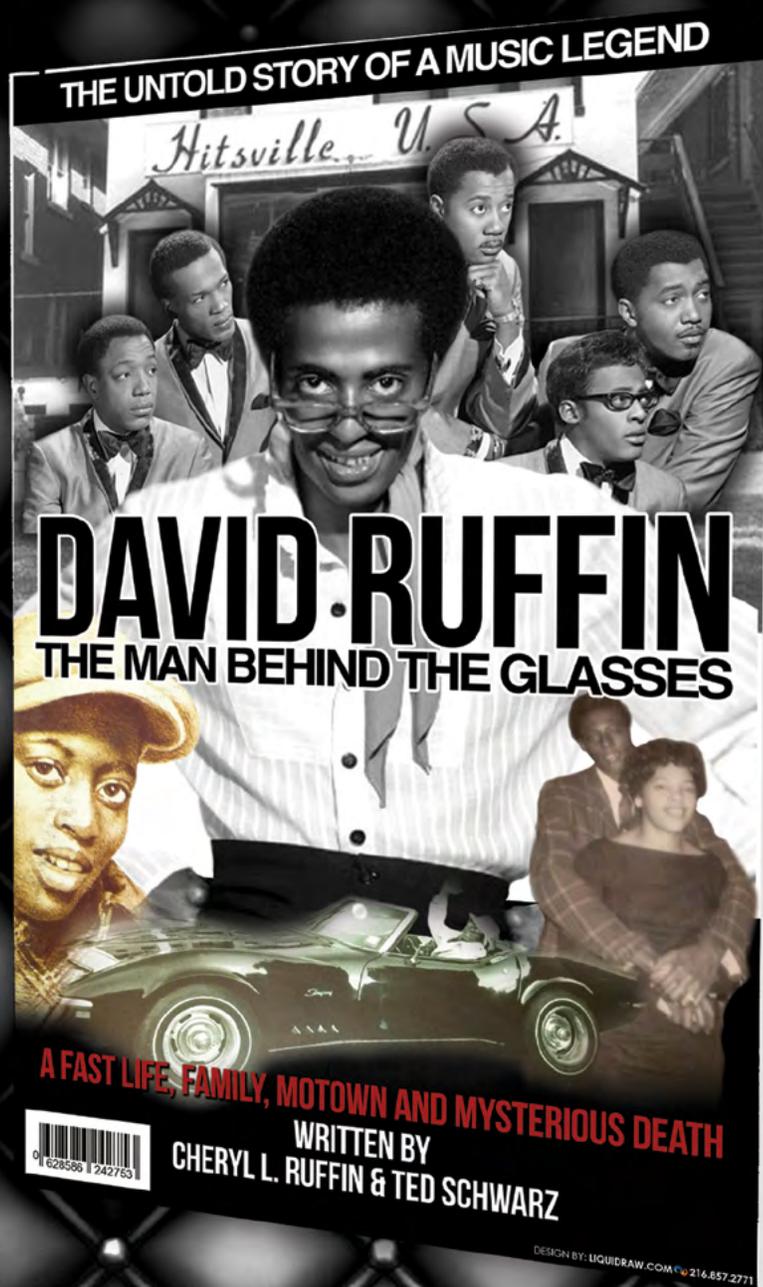
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Johnnie Taylor



Johnnie Harrison Taylor (May 5, 1934 – May 31, 2000) was an American vocalist in a wide variety of genres, from blues, rhythm and blues, soul, and gospel to pop, doo-wop and disco.

Johnnie Taylor was born in Crawfordsville, Arkansas. He grew up in West Memphis, Arkansas, performing in gospel groups as a youngster. As an adult, he had one release, “Somewhere to Lay My Head”, on Chicago’s Chance Records label in the 1950s, as part of the gospel group Highway QCs, which had been founded by a young Sam Cooke. His singing then was strikingly close to that of Sam Cooke, and he was hired to take Cooke’s place in the latter’s gospel group, the Soul Stirrers, in 1957.

A few years later, after Cooke had established

his independent SAR Records, Taylor signed on as one of the label’s first acts and recorded “Rome Wasn’t Built In A Day” in 1962. However, SAR Records quickly became defunct after Cooke’s death in 1964.

In 1966, Taylor moved to Stax Records in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was dubbed “The Philosopher of Soul”. He recorded with the label’s house band, which included Booker T. & the MGs. His hits included “I Had a Dream”, “I’ve Got to Love Somebody’s Baby” (both written by the team of Isaac Hayes and David Porter) and most notably “Who’s Making Love”, which reached No. 5 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and No. 1 on the R&B chart in 1968. “Who’s Making Love” sold over one million copies, and was awarded a gold disc.

During his tenure at Stax, he became an R&B star, with over a dozen chart successes, such as “Jody’s Got Your Girl and Gone”, which reached No. 23 on the Hot 100 chart, “Cheaper to Keep Her” (Mack Rice) and record producer Don Davis’s penned “I Believe in You (You Believe in Me)”, which reached No. 11 on the Hot 100 chart. “I Believe in You (You Believe in Me)” also sold in excess of one million copies, and was awarded gold disc status by the R.I.A.A. in October 1973. Taylor, along with Isaac Hayes and The Staple Singers was one of the label’s flagship artists. He appeared in the documentary film, *Wattstax*, which was released in 1973

The Shades of Blue



The Shades of Blue were an American blue-eyed soul vocal group from Livonia, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit.

The band started in high school as The Domingos. By 1965 The Domingos signed a recording contract for the Detroit-based Golden World label. John Rhys, a sound engineer, suggested a name change and The Shades of Blue was the result.

Their biggest hit was the 1966 song “Oh How Happy”, written by Edwin Starr, which reached number 12 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, number 16 on the US Billboard R&B chart, and the Top 10 in Canada. That same year, the song “Lonely Summer”, again written by Starr,

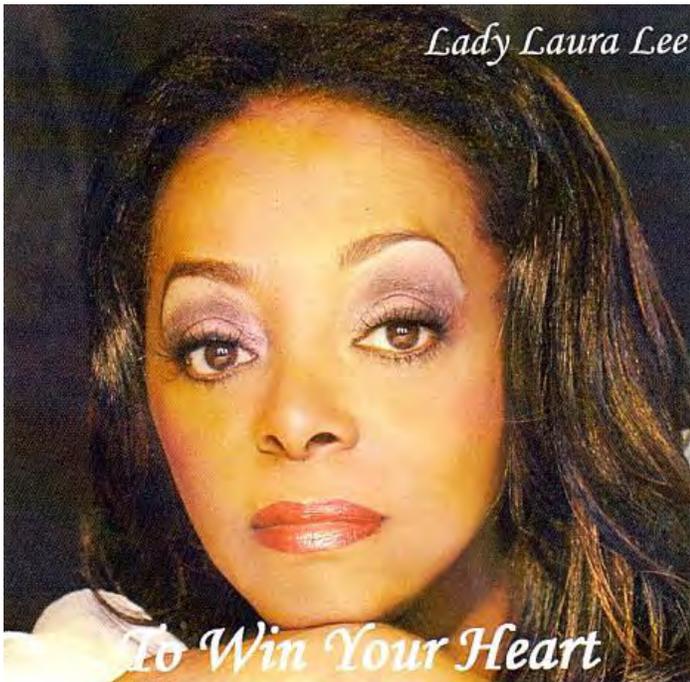
reached number 72, and then “Happiness” peaked at number 78 in the Hot 100.

Taste in popular music changed in the late 1960s, and the group’s later single efforts failed to chart and they disbanded in 1970.

In 2003, 33 years after they disbanded, the group reformed and continue to tour with new lineups.

Original group members included Nick Marinelli, Ernie Dernai, Linda Allen, and Bob Kerr.

Laura Lee



Laura Lee (born Laura Lee Newton, 9 March 1945, Chicago, Illinois) is an American soul and gospel singer and songwriter, most successful in the 1960s and 1970s and influential for her records which discussed and celebrated women's experience.

Lee was born in Chicago, but as a child relocated to Detroit with her mother. After a few years, she was adopted by Rev. E. Allan Rundless, who had previously been a member of the Soul Stirrers, and his wife Ernestine, who led a gospel group, The Meditation Singers. Featuring Della Reese, they were the first Detroit gospel group to perform with instrumental backing. The group recorded on the Specialty label in the mid 1950s, appeared on the LP Della Reese Presents The Meditation Singers in 1958, and in the early 1960s recorded for Checker Records.

As Laura Lee Rundless, she replaced Reese in The Meditation Singers in 1956, and over the next few years toured widely around the country. In 1965, as Laura Lee, she launched her secular solo career as an R&B singer in clubs in Detroit, although she also continued to record occasionally with The Meditation Singers. She first recorded solo for Ric-Tic Records in 1966, with "To Win Your Heart".

The following year, she signed with Chess Records and, after initially recording in-house with the label's producers in Chicago, it was decided to send her to Rick Hall's FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals to record "Dirty Man". This became her first hit, reaching #13 R&B and #68 pop. She stayed with Chess until 1969, also recording "Up Tight Good Man" (#16 R&B) and "As Long As I Got You" (#31 R&B).

A short spell with Atlantic subsidiary, Cotillion resulted in two singles and then in 1970, Lee moved to former Motown producers, Holland, Dozier and Holland's newly established Hot Wax label in Detroit. One of her first recordings for Hot Wax, "Women's Love Rights", became one of her biggest hits, reaching #11 on the R&B chart in 1971 and #36 pop. In 1972, "Rip Off" became her biggest R&B hit at #3 but only climbed to #68 on the Billboard Hot 100. She also recorded an album, *Two Sides of Laura Lee*, while in a relationship with singer Al Green. Most of her material on Hot Wax was produced by William Weather- spoon, formerly with Motown.

Lee left Invictus / Hot Wax in 1975 and signed with Ariola Records, but became seriously ill shortly afterwards and retired from the music industry for several years. She returned in 1983 with a gospel album, *Jesus Is The Light Of My Life*, on which she worked with Al Green. By 1990 she was recovered from her illness, and had been ordained as a minister. She has continued recording music, mostly gospel.

The Detroit Emeralds



The Detroit Emeralds were an American R&B/soul vocal group, best known in the early 1970s. They enjoyed a run of successful records in the decade including their 1973 transatlantic hit single, “Feel The Need In Me”.

“The Emeralds” were formed as a vocal harmony group in Little Rock, Arkansas, and originally composed of four brothers, Ivory (September 14, 1941 - September 13, 2014), Abrim (January 12, 1945 – July 6, 1982), Cleophus and Raymond Tilmon. After Cleophus and Raymond left, the remaining Tilmon brothers were joined by childhood friend, James Mitchell. Moving to Detroit, Michigan and expanding their name to the Detroit Emeralds, the trio had their first R&B chart success on Ric-Tic Records, with “Show Time” in 1968.

In 1970, they joined another Detroit-based label, Westbound Records. When touring in Memphis, Tennessee, they recorded some demo tracks at the Hi recording studios, run by top producer Willie Mitchell, to which they added vocals and strings back in Detroit. This approach worked and brought them another hit, “If I Lose Your Love”, which was followed by a run of successes including “Do Me Right”, “You Want It, You Got It” and “Baby Let Me Take You (In My Arms)” which all made the US R&B Top 10, while the latter also reached number 24 on the US Billboard Hot 100 pop chart in 1972.

The song for which they are now best remembered, “Feel The Need In Me”, reached number 22 US R&B in 1973 and a new longer version four years later also charted. The original track made the top five in the UK Singles Chart in 1973 and the later production also made the UK chart in 1977 (number 12). “You Want It You Got It” was re-released in the UK as a follow-up to the initial “Feel The Need In Me”, also reaching the UK Top 20 in 1973. Abrim Tilmon wrote all of their hits, while also arranging and producing the tracks. The horns and strings were arranged by the Grammy award-winning arranger, Johnny Allen. The horns and strings were recorded in Detroit with Carl Austin as concertmaster and Johnny Trudell leading the horns.

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Sam Cooke



Mayfield, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Billy Preston and popularized the likes of Otis Redding and James Brown. AllMusic biographer Bruce Eder wrote that Cooke was “the inventor of soul music”, and possessed “an incredible natural singing voice and a smooth, effortless delivery that has never been surpassed.”

Cooke had 30 U.S. top 40 hits between 1957 and 1964, plus three more posthumously. Major hits like “You Send Me”, “A Change Is Gonna Come”, “Cupid”, “Chain Gang”, “Wonderful World”, and “Twistin’ the Night Away” are some of his most popular songs. Cooke was also among the first modern black performers and composers to attend to the business side of his musical career. He founded both a record label and a publishing company as an extension of his careers as a singer and composer. He also took an active part in the Civil Rights Movement.

Samuel Cook (January 22, 1931 – December 11, 1964), professionally known as Sam Cooke, was an American recording artist, singer-songwriter and entrepreneur generally considered among the greatest of all time.

Influential as both a singer and composer, he is commonly known as the King of Soul for his distinctive vocals and importance within popular music. His pioneering contributions to soul music contributed to the rise of Aretha Franklin, Bobby Womack, Al Green, Curtis

L.C. Cooke



The younger brother of Sam Cooke, L.C. Cook was also a singer, although he achieved his greatest prominence on paper, as a songwriter, thanks to his more famous brother's tangled contractual relationships. L.C. Cook (the "e" being absent from the family's spelling of the name) was born two years after Sam, the fifth of ten children of the Rev. Charles Cook and his wife Annie May. The entire family was musical, steeped in gospel, and while Sam was the most obvious potential star, L.C. was also a budding singer while still a young boy. In the late '30s, Sam organized a group called the Singing Children with two of his sisters, which L.C. later joined to make a gospel quartet. The

two sang together in the family quintet the Singing Children, and later in the Nobleairs, and achieved some success together in the late '40s as members of the Highway Q.C.'s. They stopped singing together when L.C.'s older brother was recruited into the ranks of the Soul Stirrers in 1951.

In 1956, Cook joined the Chicago-based R&B vocal group the Magnificents, which had been formed by Johnny Keyes not much more than a year earlier. At the time, the Magnificents recorded for Vee-Jay Records and were enjoying huge success with their half-million selling single "Up on the Mountain." Cook also began recording, cutting the single "I Need Your Love" for Chess Records. In 1960, he signed with his brother's newly-formed SAR Records label. Cook recorded several singles for SAR, but despite the uncanny similarities between his and Sam Cooke's voice, his early efforts were all failures. The closest that L.C. Cook ever came to even a modest hit at SAR was also his first not to be produced by Sam. "The Wobble" and "Put Me Down Easy," both written by Sam Cooke and recorded by his brother in 1963, failed to chart, but at least had a run at success, particularly the former, a novelty dance tune. Ironically, Cooke had a major chart hit with a song -- Chester "Howlin' Wolf" Burnett's "Little Red Rooster" -- that L.C. Cook rejected as a single for himself. In the wake of Sam Cooke's death in late 1964, L.C. Cook announced plans for a tribute, and he continued to perform and record, but his career never ascended to anything resembling his brother's, as a singer or songwriter.

The Temptations Review

feat. Dennis Edwards



Dennis Edwards (born February 3, 1943) is an American soul and R&B singer, notably a lead singer in The Temptations, on Motown Records. Edwards joined the Temptations in 1968, replacing David Ruffin and sang with the group from 1968 to 1976, 1980 to 1984 and 1987 to 1989. In the mid-1980s, he attempted a solo career, scoring a hit in 1984 with “Don’t Look Any Further” (featuring Siedah Garrett). Today he is the lead singer of The Temptations Review featuring Dennis Edwards, a Temptations splinter group.

As a teenager, Edwards joined a gospel vocal group called The Mighty Clouds of Joy, and studied music at the Detroit Conservatory of Music. He was disallowed from singing or listening to secular music at home, and his mother did not approve when he began pur-

suit of a career singing rhythm and blues music. In 1961 he organized his own soul/jazz group, Dennis Edwards and the Fireballs.[3] In 1961, Edwards recorded a single for the obscure Detroit label, International Soulville Records, “I Didn’t Have to (But I Did)” b/w “Johnnie on the Spot”.

Following time served in the US military, in 1966 Edwards auditioned for Detroit’s Motown Records, where he was signed but placed on retainer. Later that year, he was as-

signed to join The Contours after their lead singer fell ill. In 1967, the Contours were the opening act for several Temptations concerts, and Temptations members Eddie Kendricks and Otis Williams - who were considering replacing their own lead singer, David Ruffin, took notice of Edwards and made his acquaintance.

During the 1990s, Edwards began touring under the name ‘Dennis Edwards & the Temptations’, prompting a legal battle between himself and Otis Williams. It was decided that Edwards’ group would be called The Temptations Review featuring Dennis Edwards (this name remains extant). Edwards’ current group includes Paul Williams Jr. (son of original Temptations member Paul Williams), David Sea, Mike Patillo, and Chris Arnold.

J.J. Barnes



J. J. Barnes (born James Jay Barnes, November 30, 1943, Detroit, Michigan) is an American R&B singer.

He first recorded in 1960. His early releases including “Just One More Time” and “Please Let Me In”, on the record labels Mickay and Ric-Tic, had relatively little success, but were subsequently picked up as Northern soul favorites. He also covered The Beatles’ “Day Tripper”, before moving for a short period to Motown.

His biggest hit single came in 1967 with “Baby Please Come Back Home”, which, like many of his records, he co-wrote. The song reached

#9 on the US Billboard R&B chart. However, subsequent singles on a variety of labels, including covers of “Black Ivory” at Today/Perception Records, failed to repeat the success.

On the recommendation of his friend, Edwin Starr, Barnes moved to England in the 1970s becoming very popular. Starr had arranged for Barnes to appear on a series of shows which led to him signing a deal with Contempo. He became a favorite artist of the UK Northern soul scene, and performed frequently in the UK. Early recordings from Barnes, such as “Please Let Me In” and “Real Humdinger”, were re-released in the UK on the Tamla Motown label to cater for the buyers of Northern soul records. In the 1970s Contempo records released seven singles and an album, *Sara Smile*, from Barnes, all without chart success. In the 1980s he released five more records including a version of the Northern soul favorite by Frank Wilson, “Do I Love You (Indeed I Do)”.

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The Undisputed Truth



The Undisputed Truth, along with Rose Royce and Willie Hutch, followed Whitfield during his exodus from Motown to set up Whitfield Records in

The Undisputed Truth was a 1970s Motown recording act, assembled by record producer Norman Whitfield as a means for being able to experiment with his psychedelic soul production techniques. Joe Harris served as main lead singer, with Billie Rae Calvin and Brenda Joyce Evans, formerly of The Delicates, on additional leads and background vocals.

The group's music and unusual costuming (large Afros and white makeup) typified the then-popular trend of "psychedelic soul" which producer Norman Whitfield had inaugurated. A number of their singles became minor hits, and many of them were also songs for Whitfield's main act, The Temptations, among them "You Make Your Own Heaven and Hell Right Here on Earth" and "Papa Was A Rollin' Stone." Their single Top 40 hit in the United States was the ominous "Smiling Faces Sometimes," originally recorded by The Temptations, which hit #3 on the US pop charts in 1971.

1975. At this time, Calvin and Joyce left the group, and Harris was joined by new members Virginia "V" McDonald, Tyrone "Big Ty" Douglas, Tyrone "Lil Ty" Barkley, and Calvin "Dhaak" Stephenson. The group's costuming and style changed as well, becoming even more unusual and Funkadelic-influenced. Former member Calvin later wrote songs for Whitfield's other group Rose Royce, including the hit single "Wishing on a Star".

However, the group had little success at the new label, and faded into obscurity after two more albums, although they charted in the UK Singles Chart in January 1977 (#43) with the disco single "You + Me = Love" from the album *Method to the Madness*.^[1] The lead singer on the single "You + Me = Love" was Taka Boom, who is Chaka Khan's younger sister.



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RJ Watkins



RJ Watkins is the CEO/Founder of the Highland Park/Detroit based media outlet WHPR Radio 88.1 FM and UHF TV 33. He is a devoted husband and proud father and role model to eleven children. RJ was born on June 22, 1953 in Macon, Georgia. At the age of two, his family moved to Detroit and as a young boy, he always dreamed of being a singer and successful businessman. However, because RJ did not have the golden voice that would bring him fame, he could at least interview those in the singing profession. He apparently inherited the drive for independent entrepreneurship from his father, the late Willie Watkins, who owned a gas station and a party store.

In 1973, RJ was awarded his first opportunity as an independent contractor at WGPR Ra-

dio and Television. He honed his skills as an assistant, producer, and ultimately, a director, working with Nat Morris on the popular dance show known as “The Scene”.

Despite urges from his mother to “get a real job”, he secured a contract from WGPR, channel 62, to produce “Late Night Entertainment”, a talk show that featured entertainers such as Smokey Robinson, Isaac Hayes, Patti Labelle, and a host of others which gained tremendous popularity in the Detroit area and as a result, he received the key to the City of Detroit from the late Mayor Coleman A. Young. RJ has also received a Certificate of Tribute from Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

RJ Watkins acquired his own TV production facility with the vision of an entertainment complex in partnership with Mr. Brady Keys, Jr., one of the first African-Americans to obtain a franchise with two major fast food chains (Burger King & Kentucky Fried Chicken). As fate would have it, RJ buried his beloved father, Willie Watkins, and received his license for his first media holding, WHPR Radio 88.1 FM, on the same day.

The New Dance Show, Late Night Entertainment, WHPR Radio 88.1 FM and UHF TV 33, all represent jewels in the crown of a true icon in this Detroit Metropolitan community. Collectively, RJ’s media enterprises reach over one million households. RJ has positioned the station to be a voice for the community and has afforded the opportunity for many to pursue their dreams of working in communications.

Henry Tyler



Henry Tyler, affectionately called “H.T.,” is the Vice President of Operations at UHF TV 33 and WHPR 88.1 FM Radio. He launched his career in broadcasting after being graduated from the Electronic Institute of Technology and he accepted an internship at WGPR 107.5 FM.

He became a master production specialist and began producing shows for RJ Watkins, a professional relationship that has spanned more than twenty years. He is the unsung genius who performs production miracles and gives technical direction that creates professional standards daily.

H.T. supervises the broadcasting activities and special projects, does editing, voiceovers and hosts his own radio and television shows, “H.T.’s Classic oldies” and “H.T.’s Video Memories”. He is also the co-host of “Late Night Entertainment” with RJ Watkins. Henry Tyler is the “behind-the-scenes” guy and a consummate professional who loves a challenge. If there is a song you can hum the tune to, but just cannot remember the title or artist, this is your man.

The 20 Grand



The 20 Grand was one of Detroit, Michigan’s most famous night clubs. It was located at the intersection of 14th Street and Warren Avenue. It opened by Bill Kabbus and Marty Eisner in 1953. It was destroyed by fire in 1958, at which point it was transformed into a multiplex facility for Black audiences.

The 20 Grand was a place where people could go to dance, and see live performances on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There was also a club night for youths.

On the first floor of The 20 Grand there was a bowling alley and a fireside lounge that was used as a jazz room. On the upper floor there was a room called the Gold Room, which consist of a large banquet and a cabaret hall which could seat up to 1,200 people.

There was a studio inside The 20 Grand built for Ernie Durham, a famous Detroit radio personality. There was also the Driftwood Lounge which was located next to the Golden Room, which was where most of the performances and shows took place. The Supremes, Chuck Jackson, Parliament-Funkadelic, and Stevie Wonder performed there. Mick Jagger first saw B.B King perform here in 1964.

There was a motel located next door where couples would check in after a long night out at the club. The name of the motel was Twenty Grand Motel but it was not owned by the owner of The 20 Grand; it was owned by a man named Ed Wingate.



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