

THE GREATEST NIGHT IN GOSPEL MUSIC

41ST ANNUAL

Stellar Awards[®]

AUG. 12.26 - AUG. 15.26
CHARLOTTE, NC

PRESS KIT



www.stellarawards.com

STELLAR AWARDS HISTORY

Founded in 1985 by visionary Don Jackson, the Stellar Gospel Music Awards were created to celebrate and elevate the artistry, ministry, and cultural impact of Gospel music. Inspired by encouragement from the late Rev. James Cleveland and supported by the Gospel Music Workshop of America, the first ceremony was held at the Arie Crown Theater in Chicago and hosted by Tramaine Hawkins. From the beginning, the Stellers set out to provide a national platform dedicated solely to honoring Gospel music and its influential voices. Over the past four decades, the Stellar Awards have grown into the longest-running African American Gospel music awards show on television and the premier Gospel music event in the United States.



Beyond its annual ceremony, the Stellar Awards has evolved into a multi-day celebration of Stellar Plus events, featuring showcases, masterclasses, and networking opportunities. As the Stellar Awards celebrates 41 years of Gospel excellence, it continues to honor the music, ministry, and message that inspire faith, hope, and unity around the world.

WE'RE HEADED TO


CHARLOTTE

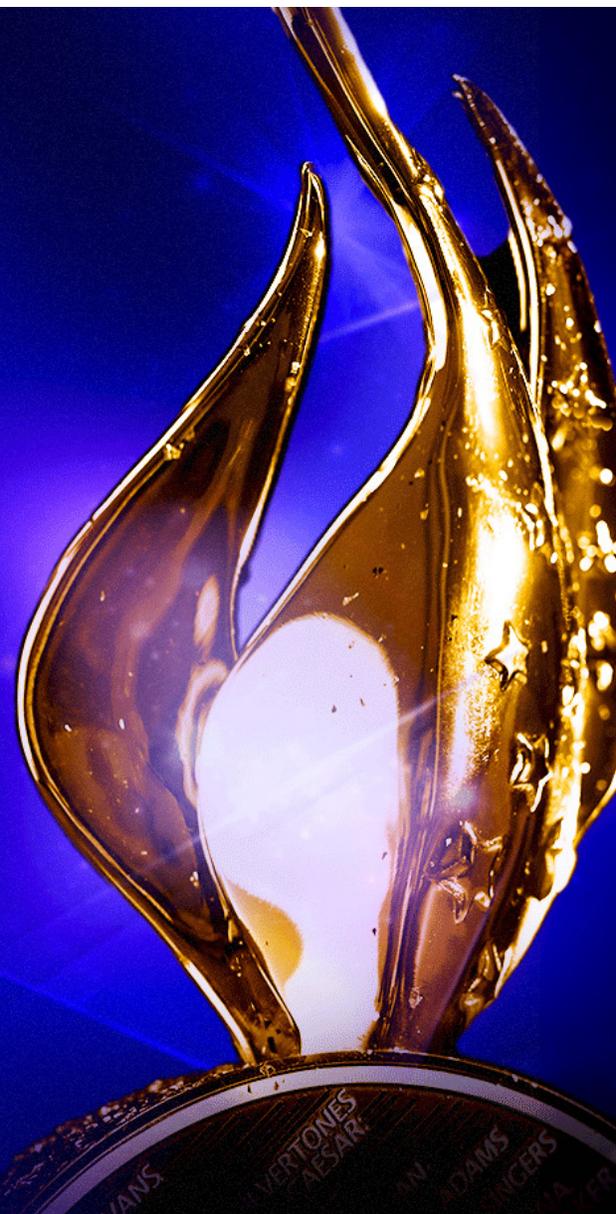
SAVE THESE DATES

Stellar Plus Events

August 12, 2026 - August 14, 2026

41st Annual Stellar Awards Taping:

Saturday, August 15, 2026



ABOUT CENTRAL CITY PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Chicago-based Central City Productions, Inc. (CCP) is a leading national broadcast television producer, programmer, and syndicator specializing in original programming for African American audiences. For more than 55 years, CCP has been dedicated to creating uplifting, culturally relevant, and entertaining content that celebrates Black excellence and highlights positive stories from across the community.

The company has built an extensive portfolio of award-winning television specials and series, among its signature programs are: the Stellar Awards, Black Music Honors, Black College Quiz, America's Black Forum, Black History Honors, and the Mentoring Kings and Queens. These programs reflect CCP's longstanding commitment to education, empowerment, and cultural celebration.



DON JACKSON

Chairman and CEO

Central City Productions, Inc. | Stellar Network

Don Jackson is one of the nation's most accomplished television and media entrepreneurs and the founder of Chicago-based Central City Productions (CCP). Since launching the company in 1970, Jackson has built CCP into a leading producer and distributor of television programming created for African American audiences. For more than five decades, the company has specialized in television production, marketing, syndication, and digital media, with a mission to present positive and uplifting images of Black communities around the world.

Under Jackson's leadership, Central City Productions has developed numerous successful national television programs that have become staples of African American media. In 2023, Jackson expanded his vision further with the launch of the Stellar Network, a 24/7 family-friendly entertainment network available through cable, broadcast syndication, and streaming platforms.

MEET THE TEAM



JENNIFER J. JACKSON

President & COO

Central City Productions, Inc. | Stellar Network



B. RAY SAMS

Director of Marketing and Sales

Central City Productions, Inc. | Stellar Network



RHONDA SAMS

Events and Distribution Lead

Central City Productions, Inc. | Stellar Network



MICHAEL A. JOHNSON

Producer and Director



ERIN JOHNSON

Talent Producer

41ST ANNUAL STELLAR AWARDS PRESS CONFERENCE PERFORMERS



PASTOR JOHN P. KEE

Pastor John P. Kee has been singing professionally since his teens when he first played in the R&B band Cameo. As a teenager, he sold drugs and became a born-again Christian after a friend was murdered in a botched drug deal. The self-taught pianist later switched to gospel music where he formed the New Life Community Choir and New Life church from his homebase in Charlotte, NC. From the 1980s forward, Kee helped shape the sound of contemporary urban choir music with hits such as “Jesus is Real,” “Show Up,” “Standing in the Need” and the RIAA-certified gold album, Not Guilty. Over the course of his career, he’s amassed over 300 million digital streams. Twenty-two of his albums have hit the Billboard Top Gospel Album sales chart – three of them hitting the top spot. He’s also earned 18 Billboard Gospel Airplay chart singles. Kee has won 22 Stellar Awards and earned eight Grammy® Award nominations. In 2025, BMI honored Kee as a Trailblazer of Gospel Music at their annual Trailblazers of Gospel Awards ceremony. He’s currently enjoying new chart success with his Top 20 single “Church Medley” from his new album, Throwback: An Evening with John P. Kee Vol. 1 which he has promoted with a SiriusXM in-studio concert and an NPR Tiny Desk performance that’s earned over 2 million views.



JEKALYN CARR

Jekalyn Carr is an award-winning gospel artist, preacher, and entrepreneur recognized as one of the most influential young voices in gospel music. She began singing at an early age, traveling with her mother’s group before launching her solo career at just six years old.

Her breakthrough came at age 15 with the hit single “Greater Is Coming,” whose powerful message propelled her into national prominence. Remaining an independent artist throughout her career, she has built remarkable success with the guidance of her father and manager, Allen Carr.

Carr has since become one of the most respected artists of her generation, earning 10 Stellar Awards, multiple Dove Awards, and a GRAMMY®.

Beyond music and ministry, Carr is a published author, actress, radio personality, and entrepreneur, with ventures spanning conferences, fashion, and fragrance.

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