

Sports & Entertainment

The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) announces six stellar 2025 Governor’s Arts Awards recipients

JACKSON, MS – The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 Governor’s Arts Awards. This year, MAC is thrilled to honor two incredible storytellers, two musical acts, a landscape architect, and an exceptional arts supporter.

The 2025 recipients and awards are as follows:

Walt Grayson Lifetime Achievement

Tate Taylor Excellence in Motion Picture

Rising Stars Fife and Drum Band Excellence in Traditional Arts

Robert Poore Excellence in Visual Arts and Landscape Architecture

Eddie Cotton Jr. Excellence in Music

Jane C. Hiatt Stephen C. Edds Patron of the Arts

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David Lewis. “It is an honor to celebrate these six outstanding recipients who have made an impact on the arts on a state, regional, national, and international level.”

For 37 years, the Mississippi Arts Commission has partnered with the Governor’s Office to host the Governor’s Arts Awards, the state’s most prestigious award for living artists. Governor’s Arts Awards are given to individuals and organizations to recognize outstanding work in the artistic disciplines, arts-based community development, and/or arts patronage in Mississippi. MAC is pleased to partner with Governor Reeves’ office again to honor those who have shown excellence in the arts. The 2025 recipients will be recognized at the 37th Governor’s Arts Awards ceremony at the Two Mississippi Museums in downtown Jackson on Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 6 p.m. A

public reception at 4:30 p.m. will precede the ceremony. MAC and Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) partner to record and broadcast the award ceremony. The program will air on MPB Television and MPB Think Radio later in February 2025.

About the Recipients

Walt Grayson (Brandon, MS) grew up in Greenville, Mississippi, where he started his broadcasting career at Greenville radio station WJPR while he was in high school. Walt next came to Jackson to WRBC and worked there and for several other Jackson radio stations until he moved to television in 1984. Walt has worked for WLBT, WJTV, and Mississippi Public Broadcasting. As the host of MPB’s “Mississippi Roads,” he has told countless Mississippi stories. Walt won two Emmy awards for his

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work on WJTV’s “A Mississippi Carol” Christmas special. He is a member of the AP Mississippi Broadcasters Hall of Fame, the Emmy Golden Circle, and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Mississippi Broadcasters Association.

Tate Taylor (Natchez, MS) is a Mississippi-born and bred filmmaker whose body of work demonstrates his true ability to bring stories to life. Taylor has used his Southern upbringing to inspire art for the big screen. He has worked in front of and behind the camera, but his rise to fame began with the feature film The Help, a film which gained three Oscar nominations, including Best Motion Picture of the Year. He has continued to follow his passion for creating films within his home state with his production company Wyolah Films, directing films Get on Up and Breaking News in Yuba County in Natchez, MS.

The Rising Stars Fife and Drum Band (Coldwater, MS) keeps the tradition of fife and drum musical expression alive and well in Mississippi, where the art form has its roots, and across the globe. Fife and drum are mostly associated with northern Mississippi and were popular during slavery and through the Civil War. The father of Fife and Drum, Otha Turner, carried on the tradition through the 20th century, and today, his legacy lives on through the band led by his granddaughter, Sharde Thomas Mallory. Sharde has led fife and drum bands since her grandad was alive and leading his own band, of which she was a part. In 2003, Sharde started her own band, Rising Stars, to continue her grandfather’s legacy. Chris Mallory and Sharde Thomas Mallory from Coldwater, MS, are the dynamic duo

behind the Rising Stars Fife and Drum. In recent years, the band has grown into a worldwide brand and monumental blues history sensation, playing at some of the best venues in the country, including the Lincoln Center and the Ryman Auditorium, as well as countless festivals around the globe.

Robert Poore (Flora, MS) has become Mississippi’s premier landscape architect, and his excellence was recognized in 2023 by the American Society of Landscape Architects, with his inclusion in their Council of Fellows. He is one of two Mississippians to receive this honor. Robert is an artist with a 36-year career devoted to art and design through landscape architecture and creative collaborations with other artists and cultural institutions. His designs work in harmony with nature’s processes and patterns, enhancing, promoting, and protecting special places, plants, culture, and history across Mississippi and the South. His original landscape designs are on display across the state and include the Mississippi Art Garden, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, The Mississippi Children’s Museum Literacy Garden, and the Crosby Arboretum.

Eddie Cotton, Jr. (Clinton, MS) is an electric blues guitarist who had an affinity for the blues at an early age. Born in Clinton, Mississippi, Cotton grew up singing and playing gospel music in his father’s church. He began listening to the blues as a youth; it would not be long before that foot-stomping down-home music would stir in his soul, inspiring him to pick up the electric guitar and cleverly interpret the blues with an original modern flare. Cotton has represented Mississippi on the global stage and has been featured in several films about the blues. Among his awards and accolades, he has a Mississippi Blues Trail marker in his hometown of Clinton.

Jane Crater Hiatt (of Jackson, MS, currently resides in Alpha-

retta, GA) served as a leader in the Mississippi arts community for decades. She was the executive director of The Arts Alliance of Jackson & Hinds County (1985-1989) and the Mississippi Arts Commission (1989-1995). She also served as interim director of the Mississippi Museum of Art in 2001. In each of her roles, Hiatt prioritized professional artists and mentoring those around her. Now retired, she laid the groundwork for those who came after her and continues to be involved in the arts on a philanthropic level. Her influence is still felt today within the arts community in Mississippi.

Recipient Tate Taylor may add an award to his shelf before the February 2025 Governor’s Arts Awards. He is nominated for a prime-time Emmy for Outstanding Comedy Series for his role as executive producer for the Apple TV+ series Palm Royale. The 76th Emmys are set to air live from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles on Sunday, September 15, from 7-10 p.m. CT on ABC. Robert Poore provided the imagery for the ceremony this year. He is a landscape architect and has won multiple awards for his artwork. The piece is called “Armageddon 3030 A.D.”, Robert Poore, 1978. It was photographed by Mark Geil.

“I was standing in Robert’s office while we were discussing the awards and spotted one of his pieces on the wall. I asked him if he would be open to allowing us to use it for our sought-after poster this year, and he agreed,” said Lewis.

The poster will also feature the incredible sponsors of the awards. MAC could not honor these artists without the support of the businesses, couples, and individuals who contribute each year. If you are interested in sponsoring the awards this year to help honor these incredible recipients, please contact communications@arts.ms.gov or visit arts.ms.gov/gaa.

Award recipients are nominated by members of the public and selected by a committee of community arts leaders and industry peers. Recipients are not required to be Mississippi residents but must have significant ties to the state through some years of residency.

TN Titans host New York Jets from sports page 1

touchdowns by way of a blocked punt return and an interception return to complete a comeback and ultimately prevail 24-17. The Titans’ first touchdown of the contest came courtesy of running back Tony Pollard, who made his team debut after signing with Tennessee during the offseason as an unrestricted free agent. He found the end zone on a 26-yard run in the first quarter and paced the offense with 82 rushing yards and 94 total scrimmage yards. Pollard was one of 20 players who made their Titans debut in the contest after joining the organization during the offseason. That number included six newcomers who were in the

starting lineup on defense, plus five new additions who started on offense. The Titans scored their second touchdown on a 17-yard pass from second-year quarterback Will Levis to tight end Chig Okonkwo. On the defensive side of the ball, the Titans limited the Bears to 148 total yards. That was the fewest yards by a Titans opponent since the defense surrendered 127 yards to the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sept. 19, 2010. Additionally, the 64 net passing yards allowed at Chicago marked the best performance by the Titans defense since the same date against Pittsburgh, when the

Steelers threw for 21 total yards. The Bears also mustered only 11 first downs against the Titans defense and converted only 15.4 percent on third down (2-of-14). Outside linebacker Harold Landry III and defensive lineman Sebastian Joseph-Day each recorded a sack. This week the Jets will be making their second consecutive road trip to begin the season after opening at the San Francisco 49ers on Monday Night Football (Sept. 9). Quarterback Aaron Rodgers is in his second year in New York. The four-time NFL MVP ranks ninth in NFL history in career passing yards (59,055 entering 2024)

Ebony brings inaugural Yard Fest in partnership with Wells Fargo and 300 Entertainment ... from sports page 1

300 Entertainment collaborated to bring emerging artists OMB Peezy, Chikoruss and WanMor to perform in the New & Next Up Artists Showcase. Gold-certified artist OMB Peezy has captivated fans with a string of hit singles garnering over 20 million global streams. Montreal R&B sensation Chikoruss opened for Bryson Tiller on tour in 2023 and is now a mainstay on Gen-Z playlists, racking up millions of streams. R&B quartet WanMor is rapidly becoming the definitive boy group of the modern era – performing alongside legends like Stevie Wonder. The group is signed to Mary J. Blige’s Beautiful Life Productions, Inc. in partnership with 300 Entertainment. New & Next Up is a new franchise from EBONY to amplify rising talent from different industries. AUC students will also have the opportunity to take the stage in the EBONY Young Gifted & Black Talent Show where 10 lucky participants will perform for a chance to win a cash prize to help kickstart their talent development. For more information on how to submit an audition video, visit: www.ebony.com/hbcuyardfest. Social media sensation and talk show host Dai Time will serve as emcee for EBONY HBCU Yard Fest, which will feature interactive games, competitions and exclusive giveaways. Morehouse students will also have the unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience related to their studies by volunteering for apprentice-

ship positions during this special event.

Additionally, EBONY will join forces with the ACLU, WestCare Georgia, and other experts to provide on-site activations covering important topics such as sex education, beauty & grooming, and health & wellness, giving students access to a variety of formative learning opportunities. “Thanks to Morehouse, Wells Fargo, 300 Entertainment, the ACLU, and WestCare Georgia’s support, we’re not only providing crucial knowledge but also amplifying the voices and talents of these remarkable students,” said Bridgeman. “We’re excited to kick off the school year by showcasing and uplifting the next generation of Black leaders.” For the latest schedule of activities and to learn more about event sponsorship opportunities, visit: www.ebony.com/hbcuyardfest.

About EBONY For more than 75 years, EBONY has served as the leading voice of the Black American experience and is one of the most influential Black-owned media company in the world. Under new ownership and leadership, EBONY has grown into a multimedia entity, covering cultural news, entertainment, and lifestyle with a commitment to Move Black Forward with EBONY, EBONY Studios, and JET.

About Wells Fargo

Wells Fargo & Company (NYSE: WFC) is a leading financial services company that has approximately \$1.9 trillion in assets. The company provides a diversified set of banking, investment and mortgage products and services, as well as consumer and commercial finance, through its four reportable operating segments: Consumer Banking and Lending, Commercial Banking, Corporate and Investment Banking, and Wealth & Investment Management.

About 300 Entertainment

A family of entrepreneurial risk-takers, rule-breaking mavericks, and renegade creators, 300 Entertainment consistently changes the course of culture as an independently minded record label, now bolstered by the global muscle of Warner Music Group. The company continues to catalyze the transformation of trendsetting talent into career superstars with a powerhouse roster, including Fetty Wap, Mary J. Blige, Young Thug, Gunna, PinkPantheress, Jordan Adetunji, Tee Grizzley, \$not, and Shy Glizzy, to name a few.

Concessions stand operations for UofM Tiger football games

•Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium will continue to offer a variety of concessions stand options, with some new additions. All concessions will remain CASHLESS.

"Happy Hour" will continue for the first hour of gates being opened (90 minutes prior to kickoff until 30 minutes prior) and

will include 16 oz. canned beers for \$6 at all grab-and-gos, bars, and portable locations.

•Pepsi is now the official soft drink provider at Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium, and will feature Gatorade, as well as newly-branded Grab & Go stations on the east side of the stadium for quickness and convenience.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

ALL IN

» Download your tickets and parking passes to your mobile wallet before you arrive at the stadium

» Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium has a clear bag policy

» Plan to arrive early to avoid delays

» Cheer hard for your Memphis Tigers!

Questions? 901.678.2331 or GoTigersGo.com/DigitalTickets