

URBAN/URBAN AC/GOSPEL



New and familiar names triumph at Industry Achievement Awards

Top Honors

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The winners of the 2007 urban, urban AC and gospel R&R Industry Achievement Awards are a mix of familiar and new recipients. For the second time, CBS Radio's powerhouse WVEE (V-103)/Atlanta broke the streak of Clear Channel's WGCI/Chicago, nabbing station of the year (markets 1-25) in the urban category. WVEE, which last won in 2002, is the only outlet other than WGCI to capture the award.

Clear Channel's WHRK (K-97)/Memphis emerged victorious as urban station of the year (markets 26-100), "It's great to be honored by your peers more than anyone," PD Devin Steel says. "Everyone, no matter what company they work for, is working so much harder with more responsibility." Steel went on to thank his staff, the other PDs in his cluster, Clear Channel senior VP of urban programming Doc Wynter and director of urban programming for New Orleans Nate Bell.

Urban WPRW and urban AC WKSP triumphed as station of the year (markets 101+) in their respective formats. "This is like winning a Grammy for radio, and it's an honor as a programmer to accept not one, but two awards of this stature," says Clear Channel/Augusta, Ga., director of urban programming Minnesota Fatz, who oversees both outlets. "It takes a great effort from top to bottom, and I could not be more proud of our entire team." (WPRW tied with KMJJ/Shreveport, La., for top honors.)

Clear Channel's WUSL (Power 97)/Philadelphia swept the urban programming categories. In a pair of firsts, OM Thea Michem took the PD/OM award while APD/MD Kashon Powell nabbed the MD prize.

Prevailing as the top urban promotion executive for the second consecutive year, Columbia senior VP of urban and rhythm promotion CeCe McClendon thanked "everyone at radio that voted for me. Most of all my team at Columbia, fighting the battle every day and doing their best to win."

In another coup, Island Def Jam captured its fourth consecutive platinum urban label win while Koch Records grabbed the gold. "It's been a long time coming—six years since we started Koch Records," VP of urban promotion Shadow Stokes says. "We couldn't do it without a team. [VP of crossover] Dee Sonaram, Maurice White and I want to thank radio for giving us a shot."

Urban AC

Following Inner City WBLS/New York's first win as urban AC station of the year (markets 1-25), PD Vinny Brown says, "This is a very prestigious award that we're very thankful for. Even though we feed about 75 stations between Steve [Harvey] and Wendy [Williams] from our studios Monday through Friday, we work very hard to service our local community in New York."

Cox's WJMZ/Greenville, S.C. (markets 26-100) and Clear Channel's WKSP/Augusta, Ga. (markets 101+) picked up their first wins as station of the year. WJMZ OM Steve Crumbley says, "I have to thank my God because that's my spiritual backing, and thank you to an incredible staff—and that includes everyone in the building."

Radio One/Philadelphia OM Elroy Smith won PD of the year for his work at Clear Channel's WVAZ/Chicago. "V103 Chicago was and still is a very special station in my heart. I want to first of all give God the credit, as well as... Armando Rivera, assistant PD/MD of V103. I accept this award in his



Following the "Radio Needs This" session at the R&R Convention in Charlotte, panelists and R&R staffers posed for a photo. From left are R&R senior chart manager Raphael George, WPRW (100.3) the Best/Philadelphia PD Cathy Cobb, WPRW (Power 103.1)/New York PD Helen Little, Clear Channel senior VP of urban programming Doc Wynter, R&R urban/rhythm/gospel editor Darnella Dunham, session moderator and WMXD (92.5)/Detroit PD Jamillah Muhammad, WHUR/Washington PD Dave Dickson, WBAY (V103) and WPEB (Power 98)/Charlotte OM Terri Avery and WBLS and WLJL-AM/New York OM Vinny Brown.

honor, because he is one of the best in the business." Smith also thanked the V103 staff, Wynter, consultant Steve Smith and veteran broadcaster Marv Dyon.

After multiple nominations, Rivera finally took the APD/MD of the year crown. Rivera thanked his "entire Clear Channel family at V103," colleagues that voted for him, Smith, Wynter and veteran urban broadcaster Lee Michaels.

Gospel

The history of the gospel category isn't long, but a pattern of repeat winners is starting to form. Radio One's WPZE (Praise 97.5)/Atlanta has claimed the top station award every year since the category launched in 2005. Clear Channel/WHAL (Hallelujah 95.7)/Memphis' Eileen Collier won PD of the year for the second time.

Zomba Gospel senior director of promotion Ebony Funderburk-Grimes took home promotion

Urban Winners

- Station of the year (markets 1-25): WVEE/Atlanta
- Station of the year (markets 26-100): WHRK/Memphis
- Station of the year (markets 101+): WPRW/Augusta, Ga., and KMJJ/Shreveport, La. (tie)
- PD: Thea Michem, WUSL/Philadelphia
- MD: Kashon Powell, WUSL/Philadelphia
- Personality/show: Crazy Howard McGee, formerly of WGCI/Chicago
- Promotion executive: CeCe McClendon, Columbia
- Label (platinum): Island Def Jam Music Group
- Label (gold): Koch

Urban AC Winners

- Station of the year (markets 1-25): WBLS/New York
- Station of the year (markets 26-100): WJMZ/Greenville, S.C.
- Station of the year (markets 101+): WKSP/Augusta, Ga.
- PD: Elroy Smith, formerly of WVAZ/Chicago
- MD: Armando Rivera, WVAZ/Chicago
- Personality/show: Wendy Williams, WBLS/New York
- Promotion executive: Stephanie Lopez, RCA Music Group
- Label (platinum): Island Def Jam Music Group
- Label (gold): Concord

Gospel Winners

- Station of the year: WPZE/Atlanta
- PD: Eileen Collier, WHAL/Memphis
- Promotion executive: Ebony Funderburk-Grimes, formerly of EMI Gospel
- Label: EMI Gospel

executive of the year for her efforts at EMI Gospel. "I was honored just to be counted among the company of such distinguished individuals, all of whom work hard and are equally as deserving of this award," Funderburk-Grimes says. "And to be chosen as its recipient, I am equally honored, and floored. What I do has become more than just about 'doing a job' for me, it's also about the great relationships that I've come to develop with many of you that will last a lifetime. And it's about being a part of a format that is more than just music, but that is changing the lives of the people it touches daily."

EMI Gospel reclaimed the label of the year title that it first won in 2005. "The EMI family is very excited to be recognized and honored with such a prestigious award," VP/GM Larry Blackwell says. "God has indeed blessed us with an incredible year. On behalf of our leadership Bill Hearn and Ken Penell, we would also like to say thanks to... everyone who participated in the voting process and especially our honored roster of artists and producers." **AR**