

Sports, Entertainment, Arts & Media News

Over \$1.7 million invested in the arts in Mississippi through 322 MAC grants

JACKSON, MS – Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) is investing over \$1.7 million in the arts through grants to organizations, schools, and individual artists across Mississippi for Fiscal Year 2027. With funding from the Mississippi Legislature and continued support from the National Endowment for the Arts, MAC is awarding 322 grants to individuals and organizations throughout Mississippi. In addition, for the first time in its 33-year history, the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program increased its award amount from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

"MAC is proud to support outstanding artists, arts organizations, and arts programs across Mississippi," said David Lewis, executive director of MAC. "We are grateful to Governor Reeves and the Mississippi Legislature for continuing to support the arts in Mississippi. With the crucial funding MAC receives from the Mississippi Legislature and support through the National En-

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- The awards include:
- General Operating Support for 62 arts organizations.
 - Project support for 81 arts and community-based organizations to foster the continuation of the state's folk and traditional art forms, support performances and arts programming, and strengthen education in and

- through the arts
- Project support for 17 artists or arts programs to support innovation, propel artists' careers, and encourage collaboration between artists and communities.
- Artist Fellowship awards to 38 individual artists across artistic disciplines who demonstrate the ability to create exemplary work in their chosen field.
- Mini-Grants to 101 individual artists to support their professional development and 19 arts and community-based organizations to support arts programming and institutional strategic development.

Also included is **Mississippi Whole Schools**, a MAC program that provides Pre-K-12 educators with intensive professional development to integrate the arts as a vehicle for promoting high-quality instruction and learning across all disciplines. This year, Mississippi Whole Schools accepted four new schools into its Arts in the Classroom program, with a total of 24 schools participating.

In addition, MAC approved 24 artists and performing groups for inclusion in its Artist Roster and three to the Teaching Artist Roster, which features many of the best artists and arts educators in the state. **The Artist Roster and Teaching Artist Roster** feature artists who create and work at a professional level within their art disciplines and are available for hire. Organizations that receive Mini-Grants are encouraged, but not required, to hire artists from the Artist Roster. MAC also received funding for

the Building Fund for the Arts grant. These funds are allocated separately, and the announcement will be made at a later date. To view a list of recipients, visit <https://arts.ms.gov/grant-recipients/>

To see the complete list of grantees, information about MAC's grant programs, Artist Roster, and other services, visit the agency's website at arts.ms.gov.

The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) is a state agency serving more than two million people through grants and special initiatives that enhance communities, assist artists and arts organizations, promote arts education and celebrate Mississippi's cultural heritage. MAC is funded by the Mississippi Legislature, the National Endowment for the Arts, and other private sources.

For more information, visit www.arts.ms.gov.

Lifetime and Microhouse Films to debut original Taye Diggs-produced series

LOS ANGELES, CA - July 1, 2026- Microhouse Films and Lifetime today announced the launch date of Tuesday, July 7 for *Tides of Temptation*, a new original vertical series debuting on the soon-to-be launched Microhouse Films platform. Alongside the announcement, Microhouse Films and Lifetime are unveiling the first-look trailer and key art for the suspenseful drama from executive producer and Microhouse Films co-founder Taye Diggs.

The July 7 debut marked a major milestone for Microhouse Films as the company officially launches its platform and unveils its inaugural slate of creators and projects available for viewing and purchase. Serving as a tentpole title, *Tides of Temptation* is one of seven original projects debuting on launch day. Designed to empower creators to produce, distribute, and monetize their work within a single ecosystem, Microhouse Films offers a creator-first platform dedicated to premium, mobile-first storytelling.

Starring Q Stenline, aka Swag-BoyQ, *Tides of Temptation* marks the first collaboration between Lifetime and Microhouse Films and serves as a foundational title in Lifetime's expanding vertical content strategy. The partnership between the two companies will include four additional vertical series currently in development.

"The next generation of entertainment is being shaped by mobile-first audiences, and Microhouse was created to help lead that evolution," said Taye Diggs, co-founder of Microhouse Films and executive producer of *Tides of Temptation*. "We're building a home for creators and premium storytelling in this space, and *Tides of Temptation* represents exactly the type of project we want to champion as we launch the platform and begin this partnership with Lifetime."

"Vertical storytelling represents an exciting new opportunity for Lifetime," said Elaine Frontain Bryant, Executive Vice President and Head of Programming, A&E, Lifetime and LMN. "*Tides of Temptation* is one of the pillars of our vertical

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The NFL Foundation awards grants to over 350 NFL players, legends, and coaches to host free youth football camps nationwide this summer

NEW YORK – June 11, 2026 – The NFL Foundation announced it is awarding grants to more than 350 NFL players, legends and coaches to help them host free youth football camps in communities across the country this summer.

For nearly three decades, the NFL Foundation – the league's philanthropic arm – has provided funding through the Youth Football Camp Grant program to help members of the NFL family organize and run free, non-contact youth football summer camps. Through this longstanding program, the NFL Foundation is helping expand access to safe, engaging summer programming for thousands of young people in communities nationwide. Camps supported through this program are free for participants, removing barriers to access and ensuring equitable participation for all.

"The Youth Football Camp Grant program empowers NFL players, legends and coaches to

"Hosting football camps in a small town in Mississippi means a lot to me. It's more than just teaching football, it's about giving back to the communities that helped shape me," said Jeffery Simmons, Titans three-time Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Club Winner. "It's about showing young athletes that their dreams are bigger than their circumstances and that hard work, faith, and dedication can take them anywhere. If I can inspire just one kid to believe in themselves a little more and know that they learned at least one thing while being at a Jeffery Simmons camp, then the camp has done its job."

use their platforms to make a meaningful impact in the communities that helped shape their football and life journeys," said NFL Vice President of Philanthropy and Executive Director of the NFL Foundation Alexia Gallagher. "Providing youth with safe spaces to stay active and healthy is core to the NFL Foundation's mission, and we are excited to support those efforts through more than 350 free youth football camps hosted by the NFL family this summer."

NFL players, legends and coaches play a central role in

shaping their camps, often hosting them in their hometowns or in other communities where they have a personal connection. NFL players and legends hosting free youth football camps this summer include: Carolina Panthers quarterback Bryce Young, Detroit Lions offensive lineman Penei Sewell, Houston Texans defensive lineman Will Anderson Jr., Tennessee Titans defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons, and NFL legends and Pro Football Hall of Famers Larry Fitzgerald Jr. and Ed Reed.

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Grant recipients also have the opportunity to work directly with USA Football, the National Governing Body for American Football in the U.S., to establish USA Football's First Down Clinic program – a fun, free introduction to football focused on age-appropriate instruction in basic skills such as running, jumping, passing and

catching. In 2025, NFL players hosted over 300 First Down Clinics, and USA Football held these camps at more than 10 major NFL events serving over 60,000 participants.

The NFL Foundation is dedicated to providing youth with the resources and tools needed to become the next generation of leaders. Throughout the year, NFL Foundation grants play a crucial role in funding the league's PLAY 60 initiative, which encourages youth to engage in physical activity for at least 60 minutes a day, as well as Character Playbook, the league's program designed to help kids foster healthier relationships and protect their mental health.

Through these efforts and other initiatives supporting communities across the country, the NFL Foundation has provided more than \$1 billion in total philanthropic donations over its more than 50-year history.

“Canada’s Country Gentleman” Tommy Hunter dies at 89, known for bringing the joy of country music to Canada



Beloved host of *The Tommy Hunter Show* helped bring country music into the Canadian mainstream and into millions of homes across North America

LONDON, Ontario - Tommy Hunter, one of the most beloved figures in Canadian television and country music, has died. Born Thomas James Hunter on

March 20, 1937, in London, Ontario, Hunter passed away on July 2, 2026, of natural causes. He was 89.

Known to generations of viewers as "Canada's Country Gentleman," Hunter earned the title through his warm presence, polished musicianship and decades-long commitment to whole-

some family entertainment.

"Tommy lived and worked with grace, humility, and deep respect for the audiences who welcomed him into their homes for thirty-six consecutive years," said Brian Edwards, longtime business manager for *The Tommy Hunter Show*. "He loved country music and all his loyal fans across Canada and the United States. He never once took for granted the generations of families who made him part of their lives."

Hunter's career in country music television began in 1956 when he joined CBC's *Country Hoedown* as a cast member. In 1965, he was given his own television program, *The Tommy Hunter Show*, which became one of the most enduring music programs in North American television history. The show aired weekly on CBC for 27 years, from 1965 to 1992, and was later carried in the United States by The Nashville Network, introducing Hunter and Canadian country music to mil-

lions of American viewers.

For many fans, *The Tommy Hunter Show* was more than a television program. Hunter was welcomed into living rooms each week like a trusted family friend. He was deeply proud that the show bearing his name offered quality, wholesome family

entertainment while helping elevate country music beyond the stereotypes that often surrounded the genre.

Hunter insisted that his stage would feature no barns, hay bales or corn stalks. He believed country music deserved to be pre-

sented with dignity and class. That commitment helped bring country music into the mainstream and gave Canadian audiences a television home where traditional country, contemporary artists and emerging talent could all stand on the same stage.

