

# RELIGION

## Marvin Sapp, Grace and Mercy

Marvin Sapp has one of those voices that is instantly recognizable. During his six-years with the award-winning group Commissioned, Marvin became a distinguishable vocalist with a style all his own. But Elder Sapp is really a preacher at heart, delivering a fervent message of saving grace to a world often unwilling to hear. And whether he is delivering that message on the streets of urban America or singing it in the largest concert halls, Marvin conveys it with a fervor few possess. And on his sophomore album, *Grace and Mercy*, Marvin's zeal for the message is



Marvin Sapp

evident as he sways, sways, rolls and rocks through some of the strongest music of his already estimable career.

Marvin has been a long-standing member of urban Gospel supergroup Commissioned until the explosive growth in his own Joy Ministries, based in his hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and his burgeoning career as a solo artist forced him to leave the group at the end of 1996. Marvin's debut album last year soared out of the box with No. 1 radio hits with *Calling Me* and *In His Presence*. *Grace and Mercy* promises to follow in the steps of its hit-filled predecessor,

of the album's nine songs with some of the major hit-makers in Gospel today. Marvin and Aaron Lindsay joined forces on the Gospel quartet-flavored ballad, *For the Rest of My Life*.

"This is a song about a relationship with God," says Marvin. "This is a guy sitting down thinking about his life and how God has met all his needs. And his conclusion and commitment is that for the rest of his life, he's going to live for God."

Singing in church since the tender age of four, Marvin has lived a life of music. Gospel greats from D.J. Rogers and the Winans mixed with the mainstream sounds of Stevie Wonder, Donny Hathaway and Teddy Pendergrass as the young Marvin forged his own unique vocal style.

When challenged by his mother at a young age to choose either Gospel or the music of the world, Marvin chose to sing for the Lord and has not looked back since. Marvin spent his teenage years singing with a number of Gospel groups and ensembles before accepting a call to a ministry of evangelism in 1988. Two years later, Gospel kingpin Fred Hammond was on the phone, offering Marvin a job singing with Commissioned.

even though Marvin says this time he consciously moved things in a different direction.

"This album is more for the church," he says. "There's still a strong, funky rhythm section happening -- you know I've just got to have that -- but the vocal arrangements are more choral in nature. My choir, the Joy Crusade Chorale, and I recorded this live, so there's a very different energy happening. It's also the kind of songs that local church choirs can sing on Sunday and make their own."

Seeking to break down barriers between traditional and contemporary music, Marvin co-wrote three

## A Miracle in Harlem

Shirley Caesar did not come by her crown as the "First Lady of Gospel" lightly. She earned it... every step of the way. Long recognized as one of Gospel's truly great and historic figures, Shirley is one of but a handful of artists qualified to share the legacy of such legendary talents as Mahalia Jackson and the revered forebearers of Gospel music.

With the release of her new album, *A Miracle in Harlem*, and her autobiography, *The Lady, The Melody and The Word*, set for publication in August '97, Shirley's sense of herself and her purpose has never been clearer or communicated with more authority. As she continues to bring the roots of traditional Gospel alive to contemporary audiences, it's easy to understand why *The Washington Post* called Shirley Caesar "one of the greatest signers of our time," adding, "she can twist, compress and enhance a lyric a dozen ways without abandoning her central message of affirmation." Whitney Houston, a Caesar fan since she was a little girl, says "If you want anyone to sing gospel on a record, you've got to have Shirley because she knows how to deliver. She's anointed with a power and force that runs through her."

Shirley Caesar has flourished for over four decades. And with each successive year, the accolades and accomplishments continue to pour in. A 16-time Grammy Award nominee, Shirley has compiled more nominations than any Gospel artist in Grammy history - and won more than any female Gospel artist -- winning



Shirley Caesar

her ninth Grammy Award this year for the Shirley Caesar's Outreach Convention Choir album, *Just A Word*. Shirley was also a featured artist on the Grammys in 1996, performing to an international audience of over one billion people. Bringing the auditorium immediately to its feet,

Shirley was backed by superstar proteges Whitney Houston, CeCe Winans and Hezekiah Walker, representing just a handful of countless admirers throughout both the industry and the world who acknowledge and celebrate Shirley's defining influence on modern Gospel music.

## Going Home Celebration of James R. Waldon Sr., 1919-1997

James R. Waldon Sr., the only child born to the late Mr. & Mrs. Willie Waldon of Alexandria, Louisiana, was born on December 25th 1919. After battling complications of Diabetes over the course of many years, he passed from this life on Friday, June 13th, 1997 at St. Vincent Hospital in Beaverton, Oregon.

In Louisiana he met his wife Ruby of 42 years and together they brought their first child, Faye, into the world. James moved his family from Alexandria in 1943 to work the World War II shipyards of Portland and has remained here ever since. During these first few years in Portland, their son, James R. Waldon, Jr. was born. Following his work in the shipyards, James worked hard to support his family by working as a carpet specialist until he landed with Precision Cast Parts in 1966. He stayed with Precision Cast Parts for 22 years until he retired from the position of Supervisor in 1988. It was a few years before his retirement, in 1982, that he bid farewell in this life to his beloved wife Ruby.



James worked hard throughout his life but pursued other interest with equal vigor. He enjoyed viewing and participating in all manner of sports. Many of you may recall hearing of his experience in the Negro Leagues of professional baseball and of his brief stint as a professional stock car driver. James was also very active in the Prince Hall Masons, achieving the 32nd degree. His membership in the Prince Hall Masons was one of his most prized personal accomplishments.

James leaves to cherish memory: Daughter Faye Powell of Dallas, Texas; Son, James Waldon, Jr. of Portland, Oregon; Son-in-Law Cincy Powell, Sr. of Dallas, Texas; Two Grandchildren, Kimberley Powell of Lake Forest, California and Cincy Powell, Jr. of Santa Rosa, California; Daughter-in-Law Adriane Powell of Santa Rosa, California; One Great Grandchild, Trevor Waldon Fuller of Lake Forest, California; and long time friend Phyllis Smith of Portland, Oregon.

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## Birth Announcement

**Anthony Tyrone Bradley Jr**

June 4, 1997; Male

8 lbs 9oz ; 20 1/2

Mother: Jessica I. Spencer

Father: Anthony Tyrone Bradley Sr.

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