

# Focus

## Soul Veteran, 50 Cent Win Music Awards

**Ailing Luther Vandross unable to attend ceremony**

(AP) — Ailing soul veteran Luther Vandross and street-tough rap newcomer 50 Cent led winners at the American Music Awards with two honors each.

Vandross, who is recovering from a debilitating stroke that threatened to end not only his career but his life, was honored as best male R&B performer and favorite soul-R&B album for his most recent CD, "Dance with My Father," which was completed shortly before he became ill in April.

The 52-year-old singer can speak and walk with assistance, but representatives recently said he remains far from fully recovered. His mother, Mary Vandross, accepted both awards on his be-



Luther Vandross



50 Cent

half.

"I'm so very sorry that Luther cannot be here tonight in person," she told the crowd, after a brief moment of tearful speechlessness. "I'm here to represent him and say thanks to all of you who made this possible."

"The Shield" star Michael Chiklis walked into the audience to present the second award to the elderly woman, who had difficulty climbing the stage steps the first time.

50 Cent, who did not attend the ceremony, also won two awards - best male rap artist and best rap-hop album for "Get Rich or Die Tryin,'" a gritty CD about his many brushes with death on the street.

Britney Spears launched the show by being lowered onstage in a purple corset, black hot pants and thigh-high boots to start the telecast with a pyrotechnic-filled performance of her new song "Me Against the Music."

She was followed by Kid Rock's

pounding cover of Bad Company's 1975 anthem "Feel Like Makin' Love," which he screeched under the towering flashing letters L-O-V-E. He claimed the award for favorite male pop-rock artist at the end of the show.

"I'm a rapper, when it comes down to it. That's what I started out as, that's what I'll always be," he said backstage. "I'm just cheating on my girlfriend over there with rock 'n' roll and country and whatnot."

The late soul songstress Aaliyah was honored as best female R&B artist, her third American Music Award since she died in a plane crash in 2001.

Missy Elliott was late picking up her trophy for female rap-hop artist. "Somebody stole my limo, but I'm here now," she said, taking the stage to collect her prize later in the show. Backstage she told reporters: "Somebody is riding around drinking my drinks and partying on their way to the clubs. There's going to be a reward for y'all."



Augusta will erect a statue in honor of James Brown.

## Hometown Honors the Godfather of Soul

(AP) — The city of Augusta, Ga. feels so good about James Brown that it plans to construct a statue of the Godfather of Soul downtown and rename a music festival in his honor.

Brown, 70, grew up in Augusta and has had offices and a radio station in the city. "I'll do anything I can to help Augusta," Brown said.

"That's where it all started, you see."

Brown said that lending his name to the spring Garden City Music Festival has been something he's been begging the city to do for 15 years.

"I want people ... to take advantage of me while I'm still here. Utilize this face. It's not that pretty, but everyone knows it," he said.

## Berry Says She's Recovering From Split

(AP) — Halle Berry says she's over the broken arm she suffered while filming "Gothika" and is recovering from the pain of recently separating from husband Eric Benet.

"I'm getting used to it," the Oscar-winner said of her split from her second husband.

Berry, 37, said she remains positive about the possibility of future romance.

"I've made some bad choices in that area," she said with a laugh. "I used to say that if there was a loser in town, I'd find him. But I don't say that anymore. ... I'm going to find the right man."

Berry broke her arm in May while filming



Halle Berry in front of a billboard promoting her new movie 'Gothika.'

"Gothika," in which she plays a psychiatrist who winds up in her own asylum, accused of a murder she can't remember. She was working on a scene in which she fights a man trying to sedate her.

"No stunt coordi-

nator was there," she said. "It wasn't anything that we thought would be that strenuous." The accident shut down filming for six weeks.

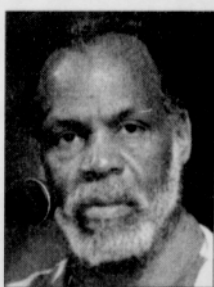
## Glover Honored for Human Rights

(AP) — Actor Danny Glover said he was honored "beyond any expression of words" by a humanitarian award from the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

The Fred L. Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award is named for the 81-year-old Baptist minister and civil rights activist who was the award's first recipient last year. Glover left a West Coast movie set to make the evening event in Birmingham.

"My being here, my presence is a reflection ... a testimony to what I think is important," he said.

Glover, 56, was chosen for his work with the United Nations on poverty, disease and economic underdevelopment in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. He dismissed a reporter's reference that he was a "great humanitarian," however, calling himself a "citizen of the world."



Danny Glover

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