

Arts &
ENTERTAINMENT

Third Time Charm for Candice Glover

R&B vocalist wins American Idol title

(AP) — The third time's the charm for Candice Glover on "American Idol."

The booming 23-year-old R&B vocalist from St. Helena Island, S.C., won the Fox singing competition after auditioning a trio of times and making it to the finals this year. Glover looked stunned when "Idol" host Ryan Seacrest announced she bested soulful 22-year-old country singer Kree Harrison from Woodville, Texas.

Glover said backstage after winning she learned to "have fun, live in the moment and be confident."

"Because in previous years I wasn't, so that's definitely the key if you want to audition for the show or have a career," she said.

After her crowning, an emotional Glover sobbed her way through her new single "I Am Beautiful."

Glover's win marks the first time a female and a nonwhite singer has won the competition since Jordin Sparks dominated the sixth season in 2007. The previous five winners — Phillip Phillips, Scotty McCreery, Lee DeWyze, Kris Allen and David Cook — were all Caucasian guitar players, known to "Idol" fans as WGWs, or white guys with guitars.

The lack of a female champion for the past five years was mocked in a finale bit featuring the female finalists, in cahoots with Sparks, jokingly sabotaging this season's five



Candice Glover, a 23-year-old R&B singer from South Carolina, performs during the 12th season of American Idol.

male contestants.

"The good news is 'Idol' leftovers have been doing really well on 'The Voice,'" Sparks teased.

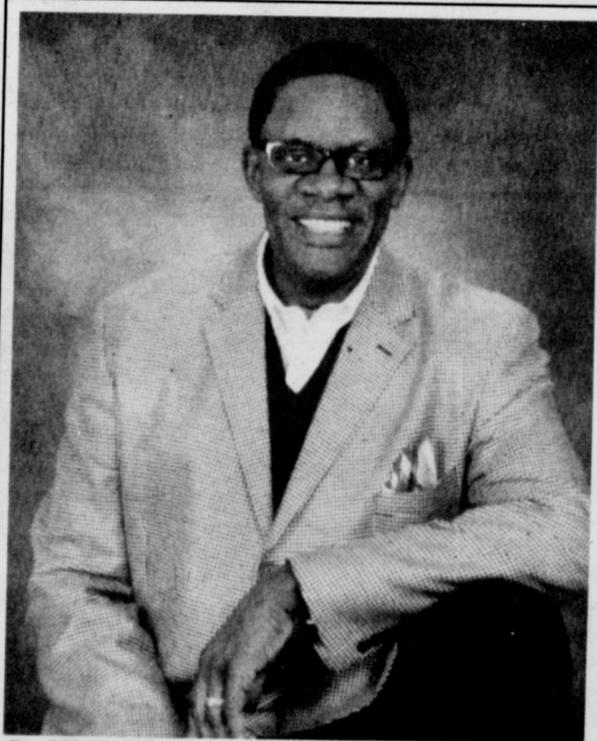
Besides the coronation of Glover, Thursday's finale also served as a farewell for Randy Jackson, the show's last remaining original judge who announced last week that he's leaving "Idol" to focus on his record label and other business opportunities. Jackson served as a judge on all 12 seasons of "Idol." He first appeared on the panel alongside Simon Cowell and Paula Abdul when the competition debuted in 2002, becoming famous for his easygoing "yo, dawg" rapport with contestants.

"I love everybody that walked on this show," Jackson said. He added, "Hopefully, I touched their lives a little bit. They certainly touched mine."

Grammy- and Oscar-winning former "Idol" finalist Jennifer Hudson returned for Thursday's finale to duet with Glover on Natalie Cole's "Inseparable."

"I look up to her and, honestly, she is so successful after this show, and I really admire her," said Glover backstage. "I finally got a chance to not only meet her but sing with her."

Hudson was among the guest stars who helped fill out the two-hour finale show, including Psy, Frankie Valli, Emeli Sande, Jessie J, Aretha Franklin and former "Idol" judge Jennifer Lopez. Current "Idol" judges Keith Urban and Mariah Carey — along with Jackson on bass — also performed.



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