

Bobby Jones: Gospel Music Legend Reveals Painful Past

For more than three decades, Bobby Jones has helped to revolutionize gospel music.

Every Sunday morning for the last 33 years, the soul-stirring sound of spiritual music from *Bobby Jones Gospel* has filled millions of homes across America.

While it takes a small army to produce the program, the show's success hinges squarely on the man whose program bears his name.

"I just say, 'Lord, what a privilege it is to be able to work for You,'" Jones told CBN News. "'What a privilege it is that You use me to be a vehicle to bring so many people closer to You and to bring joy, love, peace and happiness.'"

Jones' show got its start from humble beginnings. His first venture on television in the late 1970s was a 30-minute program on a single station in Nashville, Tenn.

Musical Trailblazer

Today, *Bobby Jones Gospel* is the flagship gospel music show on a network broadcast ministering to millions around the world.

"Little did I ever think it was the first show produced for BET—my show," Jones said. "And we built this organization [on] gospel music!"

Jones, who began his career in elementary education, is now considered a musical trailblazer.

He has earned numerous honors, including a Dove Award, several Stellar Awards, and a Grammy with country music star Barbara Mandrell.

In 2001, he was recognized in a proclamation by President George W. Bush for “revolutionizing the gospel music industry” and “exposing numerous gospel music artists to the world.”

Jones describes that White House visit as one of his “high points.”

Childhood Abuse

However, buried deep beneath the fame and his signature flashy suits lie some of his lowest points.

For the very first time, Jones publicly revealed his painful past during an interview with CBN News.

He told CBN’s John Jessup he survived growing up in an abusive home with an alcoholic dad.

“I began at a very early age protecting myself from the abuse: verbal [and] physical,” Jones recounted.

He admits that he developed a great deal of bitterness toward his father as he watched his dad mistreat his mom and siblings.

But he believes God’s grace helped him to eventually forgive his father, and now he wants his testimony to encourage others.

“I went ahead to do the things that I thought I could do to overcome that situation,” he explained. “And a lot of people who may be in a position now that I was in then, they’ll just have to leave it and find a way to get around it and that’s a part of life.”

His music and positive personality have earned him loyal fans, like Judith Bundy, who drove with her daughter from Malaga, N.J., to the BET studio in Washington, D.C., to attend a taping of his 33rd season.

“I’m here ... because I’m a fan of his,” she said. “It was just

my opportunity to come out, and I took it.”

Still Going Strong

Bobby Jones Gospel has been a prominent part of BET’s programming lineup since the network premiered in 1980.

Now, three decades later, it’s still going strong. It has contributed to the success of the network and launched the careers of hundreds of gospel music recording artists, like pastor and singer Marvin Sapp.

“Dr. Jones’ show has been the outlet for every major artist over the last almost 30 years,” Sapp explained.

“When I started in the group Commissioned in 1990, my first national performance from a television standpoint, was *Bobby Jones Gospel*.”

Grammy Award winner Erica Campbell of the singing duo Mary Mary told CBN News that as a child she always dreamed about sharing the stage with the gospel legend.

“When I think of Dr. Jones I think of being a little girl sitting in front of the TV on Sundays waiting for an opportunity to just be on his show,” Campbell recalled.

Now she calls him a friend and appreciates his openness to showcase different musical styles, like gospel jazz or rap.

“Most times you don’t get that,” she explained. “If it’s one show, you get one type of music. You get what the host likes and that’s about it. But he’s not that way.”

Jones’ Legacy

Singer James Fortune, who describes himself as a product of Jones’ legacy, says *Bobby Jones Gospel* is more than a show; it’s Jones’s ministry.

“He’s selfless; it’s not all about him,” Fortune told CBN News. “He’s not just concerned about Dr. Bobby Jones making

it, but he understands there are kingdom principles—that we're all doing this together for the kingdom of God."

Jones, who celebrated his 75th birthday in September, says he has no plans of slowing down any time soon.

"Well, you know I do this for Jesus," he explained. "So why stop? I will when I have to, but if I don't have to, as long as it's the Lord's will here I go."

Jones shared more on how he healed from his childhood wounds below: