

Kirk Franklin Boycotting Dove Awards for Editing Out His Comments on Race

Prominent gospel musician Kirk Franklin says he will boycott the Christian music Dove Awards, citing frustrations with the Gospel Music Association and Trinity Broadcasting Network for editing his past acceptance speeches to remove mentions of race and police shootings.

Franklin made the announcement on Monday (Oct. 28) in a pair of videos posted to Twitter. Speaking directly into the camera, he explained that after winning a Dove Award—which is affiliated with the GMA—in 2016, he called for racial healing during his acceptance speech, noting the shooting of both police officers and black men in general.

“When we don’t say something, we’re saying something,” Franklin said during the speech, after which he received a standing ovation and led the assembly in prayer.

In his Twitter videos, Franklin said that when the speech later aired on TBN, that section of his speech was edited out of the broadcast.

“I made my disappointment and frustration known to the Dove Awards committee and to the Trinity Broadcasting Network,” he said. “I never heard from TBN, and the Dove Awards committee promised to rectify the mistake so that it wouldn’t happen again.”

Franklin won another Dove award in 2019, when he again made mention of police shootings during his acceptance speech—this time noting the death of 28-year-old Atatiana Jefferson, who was shot by a white police officer in her own home in October, according to published reports.

During the awards ceremony held Oct. 15—which marked the 50th anniversary of the Christian music awards—Franklin asked those in the audience and those watching to pray for both Jefferson’s family and the family of the police officer. Those remarks did not appear when the award show was broadcast on TBN a few days later.

“Again, that part of my speech was edited out,” he said.

Kirk Franklin explains his frustration with and decision to boycott the Dove Awards after his acceptance speech was edited to omit his portion mentioning racial injustice for the second time. (1/2) #FinalSoundcheck

(: @kirkfranklin)

– Final Soundcheck (@finalsoundcheck) October 28, 2019

Explanation continued. (2/2) #FinalSoundcheck

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Franklin said that after meeting representatives from the Dove Awards committee and TBN, he has decided to boycott the awards.

“I have made the decision after prayer, consultation with my team and my pastor Dr. Tony Evans, to not attend any events affiliated with or for the Dove Awards, Gospel Music Association or TBN until tangible plans are put in place to protect and champion diversity, especially where people of color have contributed their gifts, talents and finances to help build the viability of these institutions.”

Franklin stressed that his ultimate goal is reconciliation, but also accountability.

“Not only did they edit my speech; they edited the African American experience,” he said.

GMA President Jackie Patillo issued a statement in response, stating that “we had to significantly edit the Dove telecast to two hours” and that “many were disappointed because there were so many memorable moments and noteworthy portions of acceptance speeches absent.”

Patillo also apologized, saying the GMA “would like to publicly acknowledge that we are deeply apologetic for the missteps that happened relating to the editing of Kirk Franklin’s Dove Awards acceptance speech.”

She added: “We accept the responsibility of our error. Although completely unintentional, we understand it caused great harm and deeply wounded many in the African American and Gospel community.”

Patillo said TBN has made an unedited version of the ceremony available through Video On Demand and that GMA plans to announce new “initiatives” developed after meeting with Franklin and his team. {eo}

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