

Museum of Christian & Gospel Music Named Site on US Civil Rights Trail

The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music in Nashville has received national recognition after being officially designated as a site along the U.S. Civil Rights Trail.

The designation was announced by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and highlights the historic role that gospel music played during the Civil Rights Movement. The Jefferson Street Sound Museum was also recognized this year, bringing Tennessee's total to 17 locations on the Civil Rights Trail.

Museum leaders say the recognition affirms the deep connection between faith, music and the fight for justice.

"There are more intersections between Gospel Music and the Civil Rights Movement than you can imagine," said Museum Executive Director Steve Gilreath. "Music fueled the protesters, defined the moral structure of the effort and gave a national voice to the struggle."



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The museum, which opened in October 2025 in downtown Nashville, tells the story of how gospel music strengthened communities and inspired hope during one of the most pivotal periods in American history. Through exhibits, artifacts and storytelling, visitors discover how faith-filled songs became an anthem for perseverance and unity.

Community leaders and supporters gathered last week to celebrate the museum's new designation during a special

ceremony co-presented by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development.

The event opened with prayer from Frank Stevenson of the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and included remarks from Commissioner Mark Ezell. Gaither Homecoming artist Lynda Randle delivered a performance during the ceremony while Dr. Chris Williamson of Strong Tower Bible Church and Nashville leader Howard Gentry also shared remarks. Gospel Music Association President Jackie Patillo concluded the gathering with prayer.

The Museum of Christian & Gospel Music stands as a tribute to the enduring influence of faith-filled music. Its inclusion on the Civil Rights Trail highlights how songs of worship became a soundtrack of courage and hope during a defining chapter in American history.

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