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GMA ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF SPECIAL AWARDS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – April 23, 2007 – The Gospel Music Association (GMA) announced the recipients of its prestigious GMA Special Awards, according to John W. Styll, president and CEO of the GMA. The recipients were honored at the annual Monday Morning Live membership meeting today, which kicked off GMA Music Week 2007.

“We congratulate each of the deserving recipients and are grateful for the role they each play in furthering GMA’s mission of exposing, promoting and celebrating the Gospel through music,” said John W. Styll, president and CEO of the GMA. The recipients of the four award categories are:

Impact Award

The Impact Award is presented to a non-artist individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to the gospel music industry. The 2007 Impact Award went to **Apple’s iTunes**. iTunes, which was first introduced in 2001, is a revolutionary software application which organizes and plays digital music, music videos, television shows, games, podcasts and feature length films on its popular iPod digital media player. The virtual iTunes Store, which sells 1.25 million songs every day, has prominently featured Christian and gospel music since the beginning, often positioning Christian and gospel artists on its front page or on featured playlists alongside top artists from a variety of genres. iTunes’ embrace of Christian and gospel music was evident in 2006 when it partnered with the GMA and the Christian and gospel music community to offer exclusive music downloads of performances from the 2006 GMA Dove Awards. Additionally, iTunes

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Attention Songwriters!

featured all the 2006 Dove Award winners on a special Dove Awards page.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to an entity rather than an individual to recognize major contributions to the gospel music community for 20 or more years. This year, the award goes to the incomparable classic hymn "**Amazing Grace.**" For more than two hundred years, churches around the world have sung the familiar words, "*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.*" It has been sung by Elvis Presley, Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Pavarotti, Rod Stewart, Mary J. Blige, Ray Charles, and Bono. Earlier this year it was the subject of a box office hit movie, "Amazing Grace" which also featured a new version of "Amazing Grace" by Chris Tomlin, last year's recipient of the Dove Award for Artist of the Year. This now universal song, first published in 1779, was written between 1760 and 1770 by GMA Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee, John Newton, captain of a slave ship for many years until his radical religious conversion in 1748. As with other hymns of this period, Newton's lyrics for "Amazing Grace" were sung to a number of tunes before becoming linked to the now familiar melody that appeared in American hymnbooks in the 1830s.

Outstanding Mainstream Contribution Award

The Outstanding Mainstream Contribution to Gospel Music Award is given to the person or entity outside of the gospel music industry that has helped bring gospel music to a wider audience. This year's honoree is one of today's hottest filmmakers **Tyler Perry**. Two of Perry's wildly successful feature films, "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," and "Madea's Family Reunion," prompted widespread discussion among industry watchers about whether middle-class African Americans and the faith community were not being addressed by mainstream Hollywood movies. To date, Perry's work has grossed over 75 million dollars and has earned several BET and MTV awards. Of his success at the box office, Perry has said, "Hollywood is finally waking up to the fact that people who go to church also go to the movies. I'm not sure what took them so long to see that or how long they'll keep it up."

Grady Nutt Humor Award

Grady Nutt, who starred on TV's "Hee Haw" for many years, was a beloved friend of Christian music. After he was killed in a tragic plane crash in 1982, the Grady Nutt Humor Award was created in his honor. This year's recipient is **Big Idea**. In 1993, Phil Vischer decided to prove that media could have a positive impact on the lives of children and founded Big Idea Productions, Inc. Together with longtime friend Mike Nawrocki and one employee, Big Idea produced its first show, "Where's God When I'm S-Scared?" and sold 500 copies by mail. Since then, with the help of a tomato named Bob and a cucumber named Larry, Big Idea and its groundbreaking VeggieTales has become a best seller at Target, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Amazon.com, and Christian retailers all over the world. Big Idea's award-winning VeggieTales animated series has sold more than 47 million videos and over seven million albums of chart-topping audio. Big Idea released its first feature film; "Jonah-A VeggieTales Movie," which grossed over \$25 million theatrically. It will be followed up in early 2008 by the new CG-animated family film "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything-A VeggieTales Movie," which will be released in theaters by Universal Pictures.

Scott Campbell Radio Award

The Scott Campbell Radio Award honors outstanding efforts and contributions in broadcasting. This year's honoree is EMP Broadcasting's **Alan Mason**. Mason has been an active contributor to the Christian music industry since his career began nearly forty years ago. From his humble beginnings at a small daytime radio station in Vancouver, Wash., that featured religious talk and underground rock, to his current role as Director of Research at EMP Broadcasting, Mason has been impacting the world of Christian broadcasting nationwide. Mason's impact on Christian radio includes top rated KCMS in Seattle, a station that has achieved top tier

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rankings in one of the most unchurched areas of the country. His involvement in the initial research project for WAY-FM was a catalyst for the company's growth to more than 400,000 listeners and nine owned and operated radio stations. Mason's expertise was instrumental in helping WGTS in Washington, D.C. to grow to one of the most listened to Christian stations in America, strategically positioned in the nation's capital to help influence the entire globe. Now with his current work as Director of Research for EMF, Alan is in a key position to monitor trends, develop strategies, and influence a company that is a major player in the industry.

Rob Gregory Award

The Rob Gregory Award is given for major contributions made to the community through the medium of radio. This year's honoree is **Allen Henderson of HIS Radio**. Henderson began his career in broadcasting 35 years ago. Obtaining a degree in theology and as an ordained minister, Henderson fulfills his life-long passion for ministry through broadcasting. He also is involved in local church ministry leading worship and speaking. Henderson has been with HIS Radio since the beginning 24 years ago, and became General Manager in 1990. During his tenure, HIS Radio has expanded to over 30 frequencies across the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama. A major goal of Henderson's has always been to reach out to local communities and make a difference for Christ by serving on various boards and advisory councils. Allen encourages the next generation of Christian broadcasters by serving as an Adjunct Professor in the Communications Department of North Greenville University.

ABOUT THE GMA

Founded in 1964, the Gospel Music Association serves the Christian/gospel music community and is dedicated to exposing, promoting and celebrating the gospel through music of all styles including pop, rock, praise & worship, black gospel, R&B, hip hop, southern gospel, country, and more. On behalf of its 4,000 members which include agents, artists, church leaders, managers, promoters, radio personnel, record company executives, retailers and songwriters, the GMA produces the GMA Dove Awards, which recognizes achievement in all genres of gospel music and is the premiere television awards show for Christian/gospel music. Other programs presented by the GMA are GMA Music Week, GMA Music in the Rockies and the GMA Academy. GMA is also actively engaged in advocacy efforts with members of Congress and other governmental agencies on issues like copyright protections, digital rights and music piracy. For more information, visit www.gospelmusic.org and www.doveawards.com.

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