

Louisville, KY - The SGMG (Southern Gospel Music Guild) recognized Bill and Gloria Gaither with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at a special VIP reception held during the 2008 National Quartet Convention. Newly elected SGMG President, Judy Nelon presented the honor where a group of industry friends and colleagues gathered to share in the special occasion. The afternoon celebration included congratulations and numerous stories from Les Beasley, NQC Executive Vice-President Clarke Beasley, ASCAPs Dan Keen, Ken and Lisa Abraham, Ben Speer and Sue Dodge. The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual who exhibits and upholds the SGMG Mission Statement which states, With Jesus Christ as our cornerstone, to create a cooperative environment designed to encourage excellence, education, awareness and growth, while preserving the essence of Southern Gospel Music over a lifetime. Bill and Gloria concluded the event with separate speeches of appreciation to the southern gospel industry and the SGMG. The celebratory afternoon of recognition was sponsored by the National Quartet Convention.

Judy Nelon, SGMG president and organizer of the lifetime honor stated, "Having the opportunity to pay tribute and recognize Bill and Gloria Gaither for their significant contributions in southern gospel music is one of my greatest honors. It is impossible to separate one from the other as both Bill and Gloria have been successful in their collaborations together as well as individuals: by composing over 700 songs, performing with The Gaither Trio, Gaither Vocal Band and for over ten years now with the phenomenon recognized around the world as the Gaither Video and Television series. More than 40 years ago, they founded Gaither Music which includes publishing, copyright management, record labels, recording studios and concert tour management. Gloria has created The Gaither Family Resources; a model store for their visitors in their hometown, Alexandria, Indiana. No one on earth has done more for music than Bill and Gloria Gaither."

Gloria ended her appreciation speech by explaining she came into southern gospel music through Bill's love of the music. This Southern Gospel Music Guild honor made her feel like she is at last one of us. It was apparent that everyone agreed as they all responded with a standing ovation of appreciation and applause especially for Gloria.

Bill added, "Gloria and I are highly honored to receive this award. The Southern Gospel Music Guild has been very kind to us and we don't ever take these awards for granted. Thank you very much."

When two young teachers met in the hallways of Alexandria Monroe High School in Alexandria, Indiana more than 40 years ago, little did they dream that they would one day be named Christian Songwriters of the Century by ASCAP, a prestigious national performing rights society.

As she writes in her book, *Because He Lives*, Gloria points out that When Bill Gaither finally got the courage to play me a couple of gospel songs hed written, we were already planning to be married. By then, too, I had gotten up the nerve to show him some of my poetry. Neither of us would have believed it then if someone had told us wed spend the rest of our lives writing songs together. We both knew, though, that wherever life took us, we had each found a soul mate who could understand our passions for great ideas and eternal truths that could change lives and shape destinies.

Bill had already been traveling the country with his brother, Danny, and sister, Mary Ann, as the Bill Gaither Trio, and it was to this smooth trio harmony that Gloria brought the new dimension of her deeply moving narratives. Before long Bill began seeking Glorias critique of his latest song lyric, and she gradually began writing the lyrics to the music Bill was creating. Then their songs such as *Because He Lives*, *He Touched Me*, *The King Is Coming*, and *Something About That Name*, began to find their way into church hymnals, and they are generally credited as revolutionizing church music in the 60s.

Since they first joined their destinies in 1963, the First Couple of Gospel Music has written more than 700 songs and forever changed the landscape of contemporary inspirational music. Yet to know the Gaithers is to know humility, an abiding faith in God, a commitment to family and a love of all people. They still live on the 15 acres in Alexandria they bought for \$3,800 in 1964, and in between Bills 150 Homecoming dates and video shoots around the world and Glorias ever-increasing demand as an author and motivational speaker, they still find time to spend with their three children, Suzanne, Amy and Benjy and their six grandchildren. After all this time, theyre still headed in the same direction with the same set of values

For more information on the SGMG, log on to www.sgmq.org .