



**Mississippi  
Arts+  
Entertainment  
Experience**<sup>SM</sup>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Laura Hester, Director of Communications and Programs  
601-581-1550 x. 35 | [laura@msarts.org](mailto:laura@msarts.org)

**The MAX Reveals New Hall of Fame Members on Tuesday at State Capitol**  
*Five legendary Mississippians honored as 2022 inductees*

JACKSON, Miss. (January 18, 2022) – In the grand Rotunda of the Mississippi State Capitol on Tuesday, January 18, The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience unveiled the five newest members of its Hall of Fame. Three musicians and two writers are among the museum’s new class of honorees.

State dignitaries and political representatives were in attendance for the unveiling of the Hall of Fame members, which will bring the total of legendary art figures in the attraction to 33. Accompanying the state leaders were Camryn Gray and Jaimonta McCurty, two of The MAX Success Program students.

The ornate Rotunda made the perfect setting for The MAX (as the museum is usually called) to announce its Hall of Fame Class of 2022. Beloved Jackson-based writer Eudora Welty, a current Hall of Fame member, recalled roller-skating through The Rotunda on the way between her home and the public library when she was a girl.

The Hall of Fame Class of 2022 is comprised of five deserving Mississippians: Sam Cooke, musician from Clarksdale; W.C. Handy, musician from Clarksdale; Marty Stuart, musician from Philadelphia; Alice Walker, writer from Jackson; and Ida B. Wells, writer from Holly Springs.

Sam Cooke was a trailblazing recording artist who helped shape the soul and pop scene with a diverse repertoire that attracted audiences of all backgrounds. He died in 1964, leaving behind a tremendous musical legacy. W.C. Handy was a composer and leader in popularizing blues music in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Often referred to as the “Father of the Blues,” his legacy lives on through Alabama’s annual W.C. Handy Music Festival. Marty Stuart is a Grammy Award-winning country music artist who got his start performing with Johnny Cash before launching his successful solo career. Stuart was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2021. Alice Walker is a novelist, essayist, poet, and activist, most widely recognized for her novel, *The Color Purple*. Walker’s commitment to important causes, along with her talent as a gifted writer, has created a lasting legacy. Ida B. Wells was a journalist, abolitionist, and feminist who served as a catalyst for the modern-day civil rights movement. She left behind a legacy of social and political heroism.

The MAX began inducting Hall of Fame members in 2017, a year before the museum building opened on Front Street in historic downtown Meridian. The five new members will join such stars as Welty, Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Sela Ward, and Jim Henson, as well as less publicized but no less accomplished creative geniuses such as Margaret Walker, William Eggleston, Richard Wright, and George Ohr.

The MAX, created by an act of the Legislature, honors a diverse mix of creative legends from across the state. Chances are that no matter where in Mississippi you’re from, at least one of the Hall of Fame

honorees has ties to your area. The museum serves as a valuable resource for educators and gives special attention to engaging young people.

The formal induction ceremony for the new Hall of Fame members will take place at The MSU Riley Center in Meridian on December 15. For details about that event as they become available, and for other information about The MAX, please visit the website at [msarts.org](http://msarts.org).

### **About The MAX**

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience explores the state's creative legacies in one immersive attraction, inspiring the next generation of artists. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world's arts and entertainment icons.

###