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Last Updated: 05/23/2023



American Gospel Arts Day, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Gospel music is a uniquely American art form, a fusion of the music and culture of Africa and Europe. The rich sound and vibrant rhythms of Gospel music have influenced the directions of popular music in America and indeed around the world. Born in black American church communities across our country, Gospel music has long been a popular influence, bringing joy to countless people, symbolizing a source of peaceful social change, and affirming the place of black American culture in our Nation's artistic heritage.

Today in churches, Gospel music enlivens and enriches the spirit of worship, a moving and expressive example of spontaneous celebration through song and prayer. The performance of Gospel music is a heritage well worth preserving for future generations, so they can know and share in one of our most beloved musical traditions.

In recognition of the importance of Gospel music to the history of American music, and of the traditional observance of June 19 as a special day of appreciation of the black American cultural heritage with which Gospel music is so strongly identified, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 106, has designated June 19, 1987, as "American Gospel Arts Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 19, 1987, as American Gospel Arts Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan