

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donnie McClurkin

PERSON

McClurkin, Donnie

Alternative Names: Donnie McClurkin;

Life Dates: November 9, 1959-

Place of Birth: Copiague, New York, USA

Residence: Rockville Centre, NY

Work: Freeport, NY

Occupations: Pastor; Gospel Singer

Biographical Note

Gospel singer and pastor Donnie McClurkin was born on November 9, 1959 in Copiague, New York to Donald McClurkin, Sr. and Frances McClurkin. McClurkin joined the choir at Amityville Full Gospel Tabernacle. At the age of fifteen, he became a member of Benny Cummings and the King's Temple Choir. McClurkin attended Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School.

McClurkin formed the McClurkin Singers with his older sisters and a neighbor; and in 1983, the group performed with the Tri-Boro Mass Choir, led by Albert Jamison, who introduced McClurkin to gospel singer James Cleveland, who became a mentor to McClurkin. McClurkin made annual visits to Los Angeles, California to sing with Cleveland at Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church. From 1987 to 1989, McClurkin sang in the chorus for the Broadway production of Don't Get God Started, which debuted at the Longacre Theatre in New York City. In 1989, McClurkin moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he and Pastor Marvin L. Winans co-founded Perfecting Church. With the choir, McClurkin recorded the songs "Speak to My Heart" and "We Worship You." After signing with Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc., McClurkin released his first self-titled solo album in 1996, which gospel singer and mentor Andrae Crouch helped to produce. In the late 1990s, McClurkin wrote songs for the animated film The Prince of Egypt, and signed a publishing contract with The Walt Disney Company. He also appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, and performed at the Grammy and Stellar Awards. His second album, Live in London and More, was number one on the U.S. Gospel Chart for more than forty weeks after its release in 2000.

McClurkin was ordained as a pastor by Marvin L. Winans in 2001. That same year, he established Perfecting Faith Church in Freeport, New York, which started as a small bible study group. His weekly radio program, The Donnie McClurkin Show, debuted in 2006, and went on to broadcast in over seventy-five markets. From 2010 to 2015, McClurkin appeared as a judge on five seasons of BET's Sunday Best. His discography includes Again (2003), Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs (2004), We Are All One (Live in Detroit) (2008), Duets (2014), and The Journey (Live) (2016).

McClurkin released his autobiography Eternal Victim, Eternal Victor in 2001; and was the subject of the subsequent biographical documentary From Darkness to Light: The Donnie McClurkin Story in 2004. McClurkin had a cameo role in the film The Fighting Temptations, and starred alongside actors Boris Kodjoe and Idris Elba in the movie The Gospel in 2005. His weekly television program Perfecting Your Faith began airing on The Word Network in 2009. McClurkin collaborated often with gospel singers Kirk Franklin and Yolanda Adams, including on the Hopeville tour, and received numerous awards for his music, including multiple Grammy, Stellar, Dove, and NAACP Image Awards.

Donnie McClurkin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 6, 2016.

Related Entries

Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Deauville Gardens Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Copiague Middle School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Perfecting Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1989 to 1999]

Associate Minister

Various [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1996 to ?]

Solo Artist

Perfecting Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1999 to 2000]

Pastor

Perfecting Faith Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2001 to ?]

Founder and Pastor

The Gospel [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2005 to 2005]

Actor

BET [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2010 to 2015]

Judge - "Sunday Best"

"Donnie McClurkin Show" [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2015 to ?]

Radio host

New York Call [MEMBEROF]
[from 2013 to ?]

Founder