

## Mississippi Valley Blues Festival Honored with National Award

Written by Karen McFarland

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Just in time for its 30th anniversary in 2014, the Mississippi Valley Blues Festival has been honored with a Keeping the Blues Alive Award from the international Blues Foundation of Memphis TN. The coveted award, in the U.S. Festival category, is the equivalent of lifetime achievement recognition.

The Blues Foundation notes that the Mississippi Valley Blues Festival has become “one of the longest running, most prestigious blues festivals in the world. Held on the shores of the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa, this event features music on two outdoor stages and educational presentations. Four different times, the festival has moved due to river flooding, but each time, festival organizers have been up to the task. Beginning in 1995 with Honeyboy Edwards, the festival inaugurated its RiverRoad Award to honor the true legends of the blues. Thus far, 36 men and women have been so honored.” The Festival is also the only major blues festival in the nation to be produced by a non-profit, all-volunteer organization—the Mississippi Valley Blues Society.

Each year, The Blues Foundation presents the Keeping the Blues Alive (KBA) Awards to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the Blues world.

Unlike the Blues Music Awards, which recognize the past year's best in recordings and performance voted on by thousands of The Blues Foundation's members, the KBAs are awarded to non-performers strictly on the basis of merit by a select panel of blues professionals. Affiliated organizations, past KBA recipients and members of The Blues Foundation's Board of Directors are eligible to submit nominations.

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The Mississippi Valley Blues Festival was nominated for the KBA award by musician Michael "Hawkeye" Herman, himself a 1998 KBA recipient for Education and a former member of the board of directors of the Blues Foundation. In his nomination, Hawkeye noted that "The 2014 KBA Award would be a most auspicious way of honoring this event's 30 years of hard work and dedication to 'Keeping the Blues Alive' in both spirit and action."

The Blues Foundation will present 20 individuals and organizations with KBA awards during a recognition luncheon Friday, January 24, 2014, at the Downtown Memphis Doubletree, during the International Blues Challenge weekend of events.

Congratulations to the 2014 Keeping the Blues Alive Award recipients:

1. *Affiliated Organization:* **Crossroads Blues Society of Illinois** - Rockford, Illinois
2. *Art:* **Cristen Craven Barnard** - Senatobia, Mississippi
3. *Club:* **Kingston Mines** - Chicago, Illinois
4. *Education:* **Tas Cru** - Chaumont, New York
5. *Festival (International):* **Cazorla Blues Festival** - Cazorla, Spain
6. *Festival (U.S.):* **Mississippi Valley Blues Festival** - Davenport, Iowa
7. *Film, Television and Video:* **Stefan Grossman** - Sparta, New Jersey
8. *Historical Preservation:* **George Mitchell** - Fort Myers, Florida
9. *International:* **The Royal Mail Hotel** - Goodna, Queensland, Australia
10. *Journalism:* **Gene Tomko** - Lafayette, Louisiana
11. *Literature:* **Gerard Herzhaft** - Lyon, France
12. *Manager:* **Marcia Weaver** - Jackson, Mississippi
13. *Photography:* **Dick Waterman** - Oxford, Mississippi
14. *Producer:* **Tom Hambridge** - Nashville, Tennessee
15. *Promoter:* **Myron Mu** - San Francisco, California
16. *Publicist:* **Frank Roszak** - North Hills, California
17. *Radio (Commercial):* **Jerry Schaefer** - East Islip, New York
18. *Radio (Public):* **Larry Lisk** - St. Petersburg, Florida
19. *Record Label:* **Stony Plain Records** - Edmonton, Alberta
20. *Special Committee Award:* **Blue Star Connection** - Winter Park, Colorado