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GOSPEL MUSIC LEGENDS, BILL & GLORIA GAITHER, BRING AN OKLAHOMA HOMECOMING TO TULSA'S MABEE CENTER FOR 2-DAY CONCERT VIDEOTAPING



Anderson, IN - On August 19 & 20, Gospel Music legends Bill & Gloria Gaither will present the Oklahoma Homecoming at the Mabee Center in Tulsa. Over the course of two days, more than a dozen Homecoming friends will gather for the first live concert video-taping in more than a decade. Tickets for this exciting event are on sale now!

After decades of unprecedented musical success, in 1992 two former school teachers turned songwriters were on the verge of retirement. An avid fan of Gospel quartets throughout his childhood, Bill Gaither founded his first group, The Bill Gaither Trio in 1956 while in college. A few years later he would meet his future wife, Gloria Sickal. The two would marry in 1962 and go on to become arguably the most successful Gospel songwriting team in history, collectively penning more than 700 songs and becoming ASCAP Songwriters of the Century.

Before retiring, Gaither gathered his multi-talented quartet, The Gaither Vocal Band, and a few of his long-time heroes like Jake Hess, Hovie Lister, Eva Mae LeFevre, Howard and Vestal Goodman, James Blackwood, Glen Payne, George Younce and JD Sumner to record the classic song, *Where Could I Go*. “The plan was to go in that morning, record the song, eat some fried chicken and go home,” Gaither remembers. “We had a camera guy in the room video taping, really just for my own personal pleasure, and we decided to take a picture before everyone left. After we took the picture, Eva Mae was sitting at

the piano and someone said, 'Hey Eva Mae, play this'...then everyone started singing. About four hours later, we were still sitting around, singing, sharing stories, laughing and crying, and no one wanted to leave. We had lost all track of time."

When Gaither got the video footage home, he showed it to his wife, Gloria, and the two decided it was something that needed to be shared with the world. Now, 30 years later the Homecoming music collection has become a phenomenon that has captured the hearts of millions worldwide. The series gave birth to the Gaither Homecoming concert tour, which has taken place in cities worldwide with collective attendance figures exceeding more than 1.1 million, while nearly every volume in the the DVD & CD series has certified gold or platinum.

Excitement permeates as Gaither talks about creating another Homecoming event and his return to the Mabee Center for this two-day summer music spectacular. "We definitely want all our friends to mark their calendar and be a part of this event. We love going to the Mabee Center. It's one of our favorite places. It can get hot in August, so we can all come in from the heat into a wonderful, air-conditioned, recently renovated facility and enjoy a great weekend of music."

"For almost 45 years, the Gaithers have entertained Tulsa audiences with their incredible style of Southern Gospel," Tony Winters, Mabee Center General Manager shares. "The Gaithers have performed at the Mabee Center more times than any other artist in our history and we are extremely excited to have them back for this wonderful Homecoming event."

One of the reasons the connection between the Gaither organization and the Mabee Center has worked so well for nearly five decades, is the phenomenal staff at the Center, as well as the ideal location of the city of Tulsa. "Tulsa is a short drive for our friends throughout Oklahoma, as well as states like Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas and even Louisiana," Gaither states.

The Oklahoma Homecoming brings together more than 20 artists on one stage for a weekend that has the promise of being quite historical. "When we started talking about doing this event, many people asked if this was going to be my last Homecoming," Gaither says with a chuckle. "I must confess, I don't know. It could be my last, to be honest, who knows, but I do know that while I still have the opportunity I certainly don't want to miss out on the privilege of bringing many of my Homecoming friends back together for a weekend that I know will be something really special."

Joining Gaither for this special weekend will be Gaither's own Vocal Band, consisting of Wes Hampton, Reggie Smith, Adam Crabb and Todd Suttles, as well as Gaither alum Mark Lowry, Grammy-winner Jason Crabb, Grand Ole Opry members The Isaacs, Gospel Music Hall of Fame members The Nelons, as well as popular multi-award winning recording artists like The Hoppers, Lynda Randle, Angie Primm, Jeff and Sheri Easter, numerous others, and maybe even a few special surprises which Gaither always seems to bring to events.

Make plans now to be a part of this historic, two-concert, two-day Oklahoma Homecoming videotaping in Tulsa at the Mabee Center August 19 & 20. Visit www.gaither.com for complete concert information.

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Special note - Any artists' interviews, as well as high-res art may be obtained by submitting request to deanasurleswarren@mac.com.

ABOUT GAITHER MUSIC GROUP

One of the largest independent Christian music companies in the world and a household name for millions of fans, Gaither Music Group, in partnership with Primary Wave Music Publishing, is known worldwide for its award-winning and top-selling recordings, including the Gaither Gospel Series, of which 133 products have been certified gold, platinum or multi-platinum. These recordings, which encompass more than 177 video copyrights, showcase gospel music pioneers; many of the finest performers in the gospel and country genres; up-and-coming acts; and country artists including The Oak Ridge Boys, Jimmy Fortune, Joey+Rory, Alabama, Alan Jackson, The Statler Brothers, George Jones, Vince Gill, Josh Turner, Tennessee Ernie Ford, The Isaacs and others. The brand has partnered with Sandi Patty, Gloria Gaynor, Steven Curtis Chapman and a host of acclaimed talents from various fields of music. Gaither Music Group has garnered sales of more than 40 million DVDs and CDs, including such PBS stalwarts as Billy Graham: God's Ambassador, the only authorized video autobiography of Reverend Billy Graham; The Gospel Music of Johnny Cash; and three Elvis Presley projects, including He Touched Me and The Gospel Music of Elvis Presley, in conjunction with the Elvis Presley Estate. The company developed a partnership with Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® in 2008; and its alliances with Capitol Christian Music Group, Universal Music Group and Time Life Music remain bedrocks for the company.