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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Mark D. Weinstein  
Executive Director of Public Relations  
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)  
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)  
[Mweinstein@cedarville.edu](mailto:Mweinstein@cedarville.edu)  
@cedarvillenews

## **Big Stage, Big Serve: Return to the Dove Awards**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Dr. Roger O'Neel, assistant chair and associate professor of worship, and 10 worship students will return to Nashville, Tennessee, on October 15 to volunteer at the 49th Annual Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards. The program will be held at Lipscomb University's Allen Arena.

The GMA Dove Awards started in 1970 to honor the very best of Christian music. The show celebrates musical diversity, presenting awards to artists representing modern rock, rap, hip-hop, pop, worship, southern gospel, urban, bluegrass and country.

"I think it will be encouraging to be involved in such a high-profile event," said Daniel Wilson, senior worship major from Springfield, Ohio. "The experience will teach me lessons about production, and I'll get to interact with some of the biggest names in the Christian music industry. I'm hoping to see the hearts of the musicians whose music I lead others in singing on Sunday mornings."

After helping with the [GMA Academy](#) launch last year, O'Neel was asked to volunteer at the Dove Awards. Last October, nine students traveled to Nashville to help with setup and to escort artists to different locations during the awards show.

"I can't wait to keep building relationships with my peers and those I worked with last year," said Brandon Slifer, junior triple-major in worship, youth ministry and Christian education from Tipp City, Ohio. "I feel that I can better serve this year having overcome the initial shock of working closely with so many well-known artists. I now have more confidence in the artists I met after seeing their genuine heart and character. I hope to observe even more about how things are done at a professional level, both in the production and the musician side of things."

O'Neel is anticipating a similar experience to last year. Students will aid with setup the night before the event and will act as hosts both at pre-events and at the awards show to ensure that performers know where to be and when. They will get a sneak preview of the worship business at a large-scale event with major songwriters and publishers present.

"This opportunity is helpful on so many different levels to our worship majors," said O'Neel. "Logistics for the Dove Awards are much more complicated than an average Sunday service, but the principles of preparation and organization for any type of event, whether it is a Sunday morning service, a Christmas pageant, or a special night of worship, are the same."

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