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Helping Their Heroes: Worship Students Volunteer at Dove Awards

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Moving from on stage to behind the curtain, 16 Cedarville [worship majors](#) will volunteer at the 52nd annual Dove Awards on October 19.

For the past four years, Cedarville University's [worship department](#) has volunteered at the Gospel Music Association's Annual Dove awards held in Nashville, Tennessee, honoring achievements in Christian music. Students participating in the worship major at Cedarville are given the opportunity to volunteer for the trip led by associate professor of worship [Dr Roger O'Neel](#).

"The relationship between Cedarville University and the Gospel Music Association has been a mutually beneficial one," said O'Neel. "Our students are respectful and professional and conscientious servants. They are given the chance to experience a massive event behind the scenes, to see dress rehearsals and understand how a large event like the Dove Awards functions."

Students are often assigned to meet artists and performers on the red carpet and escort them around the event, from dressing rooms to press conferences.

"We had a student in the past assigned to assist Chris Tomlin. After he won an award, they took him to the press room. Unbeknownst to them, he was up for another award, so they had to interrupt the interview and run him to the stage so he could accept his award," O'Neel remembered. "This opportunity is stressful but also so much fun."

Alexis Williams, a senior [worship major](#) from Dallas, Texas, attended the 2019 Dove Awards her freshman year and is returning this year to work in the press room.

"I remember passing the Gaither Vocal Band and my jaw was on the floor. Bethel Music was there, and Hillsong, and all of these artists that had been huge influences for me," said Williams. "We are there to serve so you have to try to be professional, but it is a crazy experience to pass your heroes in the hallway."

During the 2019 Dove Awards, Williams was assigned to Brown Bannister, director of the school of music at Lipscomb university and a Christian music producer with 25 Dove Awards and 14 Grammy Awards.

"He was relaxed and sweet and genuine," said Williams. "Some of the artists have managers or assistants, but he gave me his personal phone number and told me to call if I ever needed anything!"

The opportunity for students to serve alongside big-names in contemporary Christian music is an invaluable one.

“As worship majors, performing is your ministry,” said Williams. “We are able to serve these performers in their ministry on a national scale while also seeing the event in a different light, from behind the scenes. This is truly a service opportunity.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the [department of music and worship](#), strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Halle Johnson