

Music With Attitude

A SPECIAL FEATURE FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Steve Mays
Milwaukee, WI

A Lifetime of Music

For those who know him, most would describe Steve Mays as having a “big personality!” He is known for his great sense of humor and his love of music that permeates everything he does. Steve has loved music from a very young age. “My mother would always sing around the house,” Steve shared. “Even if she was having a bad day, she would sing. She encouraged my love of music and it has always been a big part of my life. My siblings and I grew up playing instruments and we were always in the church choir. It was just a part of our lives.”



Steve, like more than 120,000 Wisconsinites, is living with dementia. Music is a powerful tool for many on this journey, and studies show that music enriches the lives of individuals and fosters self-expression and engagement.

Music with Attitude

“I listen to music every day and I’m interested in all types of music,” Steve said. “Music doesn’t have a color or see race. I listen to classical, soul, jazz, middle eastern – that’s what makes it so fun. There are so many new styles and types. Curiosity is a big reason I love music, and understanding why different people like different types of music. Music has an attitude about it and I want to know how it works!”

Steve has shared his love of music with his children. “My daughter and I would always clap to the beat in the car,” Steve shared. “As an adult, she’s now doing belly dancing, which is middle eastern music. It has a different kind of timing and I enjoy listening to it.”

Amazing Grace Chorus

Steve is a member of the Amazing Grace Chorus,[®] a Milwaukee-based, diverse chorus made up of people living with dementia and their caregivers. The goal of the chorus is to increase social engagement for those living with dementia and improve quality of life. At the time he joined, his mother and her husband, now deceased, were members of the choir, along with Steve’s sister and it was a family affair. Steve now sings in their honor.

Steve lives in Milwaukee with his wife Heidi. They are very active in social engagement opportunities – especially if music is involved. Currently, Steve is in a drumming class to hone his skills on a new instrument. During Black History Month we salute Steve and his passion for music!