



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jane Jelks Jones

[jjones@itc.edu](mailto:jjones@itc.edu)

404.527.7718

[www.itc.edu](http://www.itc.edu)

Monica L. Peterson

[mlpeterson@itc.edu](mailto:mlpeterson@itc.edu)

404.614.6391

### **51<sup>st</sup> Charter Day and 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Costen Awards Gala** **The ITC honors Grammy Award Winner** **Pastor Donnie McClurkin for his outstanding contribution to the** **world of gospel music with the Arts and Entertainment Award**



Atlanta, GA (February 25, 2009) Donnie McClurkin is one of the greatest gospel singers of our times whose hit “We Fall Down” speaks to the hearts of those who have fallen into a myriad of life’s difficulties — drugs, alcohol and homelessness— but he reminds us that we can get back up again with the help of God. McClurkin’s poignant lyrics encourage the listener that “it’s not too late, for a saint is just a sinner who fell down and got back up again.” Join the Interdenominational Theological Center(ITC) as the seminary pays tribute to one of gospel music’s dynamic vocalists with the *Arts and Entertainment Award at the 51<sup>st</sup> Charter Day and 12<sup>th</sup> Annual James H. Costen Awards “Tribute to Excellence” Gala*, Friday, April 24, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

At an early age, McClurkin began to play piano and sing with his church youth choir and by the time he was a teenager had the singing group, the McClurkin Singers and later formed another group, the New York Restoration Choir. In 1989, McClurkin was hired as an associate minister by Rev. Marvin Winans, pastor of The Perfecting Church, in Detroit, MI. In 1996, his first album titled *Donnie McClurkin* was released containing the internationally acclaimed song “Stand” which topped the charts with gold status.

As with most of McClurkin’s songs his lyrics are messages of encouragement and endurance—“when there is nothing left to do, you just stand and watch the Lord bring you through”.

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McClurkin also won a Grammy Award for his 2005 release of “Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs.”

Donnie McClurkin, born and raised in Amityville, New York, suffered many setbacks in his young life, but through it all his trust and faithfulness to God helped him to endure and overcome, making his story a profound testimony of encouragement to others.

In 2000 after his famous “Live in London” release, McClurkin felt God calling him to pastor a church. After several months of successful weekly bible studies, Pastor Donnie McClurkin held the first church service on a Sunday evening at a Best Western in Hempstead, Long Island and 600 showed up. It was clear that God wanted to do a new work and desired to use Pastor McClurkin to shepherd a flock.

Currently, Donnie McClurkin is the Pastor of Perfecting Faith Church in Freeport, New York. He also hosts a radio show called the Donnie McClurkin Radio Show and will be releasing a new album in March, 2009 titled, “We All Are One (Live In Detroit).

The public is invited to join Pastor McClurkin and others at the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Charter Day and 12<sup>th</sup> James H. Costen “Tribute to Excellence” Awards. Other 2009 honorees include: Judge Glenda Hatchett (Civic and Community Affairs), Mrs. Pearl Hollis (*Travelin’ Shoes*), Rev. Aaron L. Parker, Ph.D. (Religion), Senator Kasim Reed (Government), Judge Penny Brown Reynolds, (Emerging Leader) Mrs. Laura Turner Seydel (*TheoEcology* “Green”), Rev. A.C.D. Vaughn (President’s Award), and Mr. Willie Watkins (Business).

Every year the ITC celebrates the founding of the institution with Charter Day, the day that created one of the most unique ecumenical theological institutions in the world, bringing six different denominational seminaries together in one collaborative academic enterprise. The ITC in Atlanta, Georgia has been training men and women for Christian leadership and service in the church and global community for a half-century.

The 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Charter Day and 12<sup>th</sup> Annual James H. Costen Awards “Tribute to Excellence” Gala begins with a Silent Auction and Reception at 6 p.m., followed by the awards dinner at 7 p.m., Friday, April 24, 2009, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 265 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA. For additional information, contact the ITC Office of External Affairs at 404-527-7718.

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