



# NEWS

**For Immediate Release**

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## **B.B. King funeral plans announced**

Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant and the board of the B.B. King Museum have announced final arrangements for the funeral services for B.B. King.

On Saturday, May 23, a memorial service will be held in Las Vegas. The following Wednesday, May 27, his remains will be flown to Memphis; from the airport, at around noon, a procession will move to Beale Street's Handy Park for a tribute. King's nickname came from his time in this city when he started being called "Blues Boy," which was later shortened to B.B.

On Friday, May 29, a public viewing will be held at the B.B. King Museum in Indianola from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The funeral services will be held at the Bell Grove M.B. Church in Indianola on Saturday, May 30, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. At approximately 4 p.m., a procession will be led from the church to the Museum, and there will be a private graveside service for family and friends at 5 p.m.

"There are any number of reasons we are glad B.B. is being brought back to Mississippi," said Gov. Bryant. "First and foremost, he's one of our state's most beloved native sons," he said.

Born into abject poverty in 1925, Riley B. King, the son of sharecroppers Albert and Nora Ella King of Berclair, MS, went on to win the highest honors of his country and secured a place for Blues in American music and popular culture that will endure for centuries. King was raised by his mother and grandmother in the tiny town of Kilmichael, MS. After their deaths he was alone at age 14, farming one acre of cotton. He later moved to Indianola as a teenager to work in both cotton fields and a gin – one of which now houses part of the museum that bears his name and holds treasured memorabilia from his life and extraordinary career.

According to long-time friend and former Museum board member Carver Randle, B.B. maintained strong personal ties in Indianola and always considered it home, even though he kept a residence in Las Vegas for the relatively few nights a year he wasn't on the road.

Dion Brown, executive director of the B.B. King Museum, said "From a practical standpoint, we feel comfortable knowing his final resting place will receive perpetual care at the Museum. Also, he had requested that his funeral be held at the Bell Grove M.B. Church in Indianola, and that the Rev. David Matthews conduct the service. Sadly, Rev. Matthews passed away just over a month ago, so that part wasn't possible. Everyone involved is trying their hardest to fulfill the remainder of his wishes."

Governor Bryant said "I, along with fans that number in the millions from all over the world, feel a

connection to this gentleman who left the earth a better place with his kindness. On a personal level, my mother was born in Berclair one year after B.B., and I grew up in Moorhead just down the road. I can't help but feel a certain kinship over our shared geographical roots in the Delta soil."

King will leave an indelible legacy with over 60 albums and the memories of fans who saw and heard him live in over 18,000 performances spread over six decades.

"Mississippi couldn't have asked for a better ambassador for our state. When everyone from every corner of the globe knows an individual by two initials and knows the state they're from, that's pretty impressive," said Gov. Bryant, "and we're humbled that it's our state."

In lieu of flowers a gift can be made to the B.B. King Museum.

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