

Gary Hines '74 selected as 2016 commencement speaker

Gary D. Hines '74 has been chosen as this year's commencement speaker for the Class of 2016's graduation on Saturday, May 14. He is a three-time Grammy winning music director and producer of Sounds of Blackness, the 40-person choir and ten-piece orchestra group.

"Since he founded the Sounds of Blackness at Macalester over 40 years ago, Gary Hines has been responsible for making the kind of music that both lifts people up and brings them together," President Brian Rosenberg said in a statement.

Hines's musical expertise spans genres, including pop, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, jazz, Latin, rock, blues, reggae, ragtime, classical and gospel.

Among Hines's many awards for his music are an International Time For Peace Award and the Minnesota Music Academy Award. Hines has also received the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame Award, the Golden Scroll for the Promise of Greatness Award, the Macalester Distinguished Citizen Award and an Honorary Doctor of



Atomic K Records & Productions

Gary D. Hines '74 founded Sounds of Blackness, a 40-person choir and ten-piece orchestra ensemble, during his time at Macalester. Hines has since won three Grammys for his work as a musical director and producer. He was recently selected as the speaker for the Class of 2016 commencement ceremony. Photo courtesy of Sounds of Blackness.

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Humane Letters also from Macalester.

Sounds of Blackness's most recent album, "The Sounds of Blackness," won a 2012 NAACP Image Award.

Last year, Turck Formal Lounge was renamed the "Sounds of Blackness Lounge" in the group's honor.

At the renaming ceremony of the lounge, Hines recalled practicing music in the lounge at times when the practice studios were full during his years at Macalester.

Additionally, this year's Funkathon winners, Kingdom Roots, were able to perform their song "Still Standing" to open for Hines and Sounds of Blackness last week on March 1 at the Mall of America.

Since graduating, Hines has traveled around the world. He has written for and toured with many high-profile artists including Quincy Jones, Jimmy "Jam" Harris & Terry Lewis, Prince, Usher, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Luther Vandross, Aretha Franklin, Elton John, Johnny Gill, Patti LaBelle, Sting, Dolly Parton, Danny Glover and Jordin Sparks.

Along with Hines, Sounds of Blackness has performed in every major city in the U.S. and abroad in Africa, England, Holland, Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, Bermuda, Jamaica, Martinique and The Bahamas.

Throughout the world the group has performed for everyone from homeless people, prison inmates and orphans, to kings, queens, presidents, ambassadors, diplomats and heads of state, according to their website.

Adding to his professional repertoire, Hines has conducted music workshops, seminars, lecture-demonstrations and master classes across the United States and internationally about the history, impact and evolution of African American music and culture.

"We are very proud of his many accomplishments and look forward to having him as our commencement speaker," Rosenberg said in a statement.