



In 1998 Gladys Knight celebrated her 50th anniversary of sharing with the world her gifts of voice and spirit.

Georgia born, she began performing gospel music at age four in her church and as a special guest soloist with the Morris Brown College Choir. At age seven, she won Ted Mack's Amateur Hour (the 50's TV version of today's Star Search) and its \$2,000 grand prize. At age eight - following encouragement by parents - she, brother Bubba, sister Brenda, and cousins William and Elenor Guest formed a little group called The Pips - Pips coming from their manager, cousin James Pip Woods.

In 1959, Brenda and Elenor left the group, replaced by cousin Edward Patten and friend, Langston George and the group became Gladys Knight The Pips. Following Langston's departure in 1962, Gladys Knight The Pips remained a quartet until 1989 when they decided to pursue different career paths.

Gladys talks enthusiastically about each of her songs as she describes the people and landscape in great detail, including the subtlest motivations that animate the characters. When I write, says Gladys, I try to paint a picture in my mind rather than come up with words that rhyme. I could never do a song that I didn't believe in.

I'm aware of the fact that my music touches people's lives on a personal basis. So I have to be careful what I tell people, how I relate to them. Every song has to touch me emotionally and spiritually in some way. I couldn't do a song that I was cold about. Even if it was a hit, it just wouldn't be a hit for me.

In the community, Gladys lends her hand to philanthropic efforts including the American Cancer Society, Minority AIDS Project, programs for Battered Women and Abused Children, AMFAR, Homelessness, Hunger Prevention, and Cris...

Gladys Knight

Speech Topics

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