



About FJF:

The Freedom Jazz Festival, Inc. (FJF) formed in 2001 is a non-profit community-based volunteer organization with a mission that perpetuates, promotes, and preserves Jazz through performance, education, and historical preservation. Our purpose and special focus highlights and maintains the cultural history of Jazz related to the experiences of West African Black people in America.

Our goals and objectives:

- Further the awareness and appreciation of Jazz and its Black/African American origins.
- Enhance the Twin Cities' Jazz cultures and various Jazz communities in Minnesota.
- Stimulate the interest of the youth audience in Jazz music.
- Create a regular interaction between Jazz artists and enthusiasts as a way to connect communities; and
- Promote positive community and family relations through Jazz events.

Our History:

The Freedom Jazz Festival first began as a bright idea and became a reality in 1999 with funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board. Our festival was special for very important reasons (1) The history of Africans and slavery in America created the cultural developments of Jazz, (2) Opportunities to perform at well known clubs and venues were not available to Black musicians, (3) Jazz has always been performed in smoky, late night clubs not suitable for families, and (4) Create a new generation of Jazz lovers and musicians.

Sam Favors (deceased), a founding member, and our leader, believed it was imperative to educate the community about the African and Black American cultural history, contributions, importance, innovations, and vibrancy of Jazz. Joined by other community organizations we bring together and share the talents of Jazz artists and musicians at a free outdoor concert and jazz workshops within the Minneapolis and Twin Cities parks.

At our very first festival many of the older musicians were delighted to perform for the first time with fellow musicians they had met or heard of but never had the opportunity to share the stage together. It was wonderful to see these artists, many well into their 60's, 70's, and 80's reminiscing like at an old family reunion. It was a moment in Minnesota Jazz history. It's that history of creativity and freedom that persists as children and young musicians learn about and learn to like Jazz and hopefully become a part of the New Jazz Generation!

In honor of Sam, the guy with the bright idea, a founding member, and our leader, we have created the "Samuel F. Favors Award", presented annually to a Black/African American musician that represents the creativity, dedication, energy, and spirit of Jazz in Minnesota and beyond.