

Willis H. Crosby

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Willis H. Crosby and his twin brother West were born in Anderson County on September 18, 1917 and were the sons of William Crosby and Rebecca Dean Crosby. Willis H. Crosby and the Silver Bell Quintet stepped to the microphone on September 16, 1947, at WAIM studios - and a radio career which continued at WANS and lasted until February 1997 at WRIX was born. Over the course of fifty years on radio, Mr. Crosby became the first black disk jockey (DJ) in Upstate South Carolina.

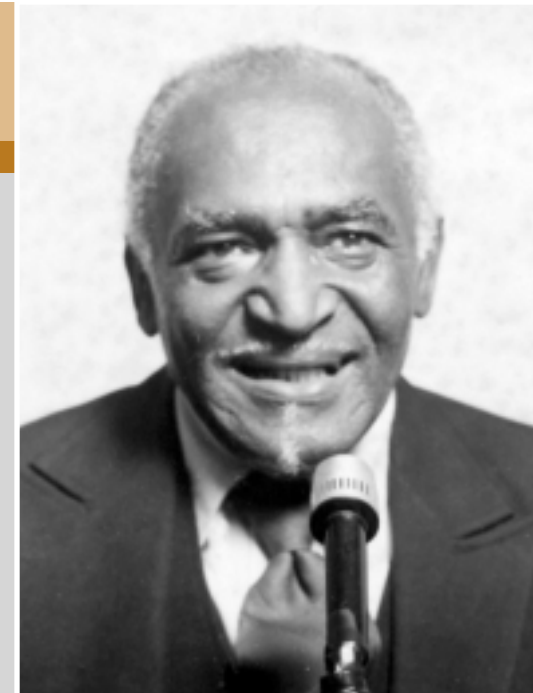
Crosby, during his years as a promoter, brought national gospel and rhythm and blues artists like the Williams Brothers, the Swanee Quintet, the Five Blind Boys, Sam Cooke and the Soul Steerers, Percy Sledge, Dee Clark and Joe Simon to Anderson. Proceeds from concerts promoted by Mr. Crosby were used in part to sponsor scholarships for deserving students who could not afford financially to attend college. He also raised money to provide food, toys, and clothing for needy families. He was what many considered a legend in black radio around the state of South Carolina.

This honoree used his show and influence to sponsor numerous causes. He took busloads of children to Atlanta for professional baseball games and acquainted many young people with radio through his "DJ for a Day" program. He did custodial work at WANS as well as handling all of his show's advertising and production duties. His philosophy was, anything that was legal was good work. Moreover, he worked hard enough to bring home a paycheck second only to the station's general manager.

Mr. Crosby's production of the Westside High School's RAMS weekly football games and basketball championship playoff games made this type of visibility among the first for an all black high school in the late 1950s and 1960s. When the public schools were desegregated in the 1970s, he facilitated appearances in the area schools to advance positive human relations. He also promoted local talent and professional concerts to raise money for food and clothing as well as scholarships for the economically disadvantaged. Crosby raised funds to supply a room at the Anderson Memorial Hospital.

Because of his noteworthy generosity over the years, the name Willis H. Crosby became one of the first called on by churches, schools, the March of Dimes, and other organizations when there was a need. Business people, politicians, and others desiring to get their words out to the black community could always depend on the credibility and impact of Willis H. or "Radio Deacon." He also acquired many white listeners and radio fans over the years. His hard work earned him a lion's share of awards from the South Carolina General Assembly to local religious, educational, civic, and charitable organizations.

Mr. Crosby died on December 16, 1997. He was married to Mrs. Alwillie Hardy Crosby, a devoted wife and mother for 54 years. To this union two children were born, Dr. Willis H. Crosby, Jr. and Mrs. Della Cox.



MAY



2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Howard University in Washington, D.C., opened in 1867.
2 Elijah McCoy, inventor and holder of over fifty patents was born in 1844.	3 Sugar Ray Robinson, middleweight boxing champion was born in 1920.	4 Freedom Rides began in 1961. Plessy vs. Ferguson upheld "Separate But Equal" doctrine in 1896.	5 Gwendolyn Brooks became the first Black person awarded a Pulitzer Prize, for "Annie Allen," in 1950.	6 Civil Rights Act signed by President Eisenhower in 1960.	7 J.R. Winters patented the fire escape, 1878.	8 Rev. Henry McNeal Turner died in 1915.
Mother's Day 9 Slaves in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina were freed, 1862.	10 P.B.S. Pinchback, first Black state governor, born, 1837.	11 Dancer Martha Graham was born in 1854.	12 Robert Smalls seized Confederate warship in 1862.	13 Joe Louis was born in 1914.	14 In 1804 a slave known only as York accompanied Lewis and Clark on their expedition.	15 Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, founded at Indiana University, was incorporated in 1911.
16 Sammy Davis, Jr., died in 1990.	17 Brown vs. Board of Education made "Separate But Equal" in public schools unconstitutional in 1954.	18 Reggie Jackson, baseball player, was born in 1946.	19 Malcolm X was born in 1925.	Ascension Day 20 Robert N. C. Nix was elected to United States Congress in 1958.	21 Lowell W. Perry was confirmed as chairman of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 1975.	22 Claude McKay, poet, died in 1948.
23 Bob Marley, reggae legend, dies in 1981.	24 Hal McRae was named manager of the Kansas City Royals in 1991. Patti LaBelle was born in 1944.	25 Madame C. J. Walker, entrepreneur, died in 1919. Miles Davis, jazz musician, born in 1926.	26 Althea Gibson won the French Open, becoming the first Black tennis player to win a major tennis title, 1956	27 Louis Gossett, Jr, actor, born in 1936.	28 Eliza Ann Gardner, underground railroad conductor, born, 1831.	29 Thomas Bradley was elected mayor of Los Angeles in 1973.
30 Countee Cullen, poet, was born in 1903.	Memorial Day 31 NAACP held first conference (as the National Negro Committee), in 1909.					