

44th annual

GRAMMY AWARDS



THE RECORDING ACADEMY®

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Alan Freed

white mainstream, Freed was vilified and, in 1960, made a prime target at the 1960 Congressional hearings on payola. While equating payola with lobbying, he claimed that he acted only as a consultant to labels, and that he never played music in exchange for cash. The lawmakers tuned him out, criminal charges and debts mounted, and Freed finally moved to Los Angeles, where, after one last stint on the radio, he died in 1965 of a liver ailment. He was 43.

Alan Freed has since been portrayed in two films, been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and, now, is being honored with the Recording Academy's Trustees Award. He has been characterized as a man who was flawed, yes, but who was, as Kim Fowley, a rock artist who once worked for him, put it, a gentleman who "genuinely loved the music and the kids."

Rock and roll never forgets. — BEN FONG-TORRES

Ben Fong-Torres, a former Senior Editor at Rolling Stone magazine, is the author of several books, including The Hits Just Keep On Coming: The History Of Top 40 Radio (Backbeat Books, 2001), in which Alan Freed is featured.

LEGEND has it that Alan Freed coined the term "rock and roll." He was a disc jockey in Cleveland in 1951 when he began playing rhythm & blues music, and, soon, called his radio show "The Moondog Rock 'n' Roll Party." But in R&B and blues songs dating back to the '20s, "rock" and "roll" were euphemisms for sex. Later, "rock and roll," together, described the pulsing rhythms of jazz and swing music.

Freed once said that he came up with "rock and roll" because "it suggested the rolling, surging beat of the music."

Whether or not he named the music that lit up a nation in the mid-'50s, there's no denying that Alan Freed gave his heart and soul to it.

Born in 1921 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, he formed a band in high school called the Sultans of Swing, in which he played trombone. At age 21, he got his first radio job, and bounced from sportscasting to announcing classical music to playing jazz and pop records in Akron, Ohio. Soon, he graduated to Cleveland, where he hosted a music program on television. A record store owner, Leo Mintz, is credited with steering Freed toward R&B music by sponsoring a program on WJW radio and installing him as the announcer.

Freed was not the first white disc jockey to play black music, but he was one of its most passionate players. With his microphone "hot," in more ways than one, he kept time with the music by pounding on a phone book and shouting encouragement to the artists spinning on his turntables. In Cleveland and, by 1954, in New York, he broke out of the confines of an announce booth by staging and hosting R&B concerts, in the process further tearing down racial barriers by bringing black and white music fans together. He befriended and made business deals with artists, promoters and record companies, and lived large. He had his own TV show and appeared, playing himself, in a string of teen movies that hailed, hailed rock and roll.

For defending a music that adults equated with juvenile delinquency, and for blending black music into the



**Congratulations, Grandpa.
We love you!**

Hannah, Isabel, Sarah, Nettie Rose

www.alanfreed.com

THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM SALUTES

ALAN FREED

2002 Trustees Award Recipient

When Alan Freed held the first rock and roll concert in Cleveland, Ohio in 1952, he laid the foundation for today's multi-billion dollar recording industry. Today, that industry is paying tribute to the legacy of Alan Freed and the contributions that he made. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is proud to congratulate Alan Freed and the Freed Family on the receipt of this distinguished honor.



Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum • Cleveland, Ohio •
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A. Freed photo courtesy BMI Archives