

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Benny Turner

PERSON

Turner, Benny

**Alternative Names:** Benny Turner;

**Life Dates:** October 27, 1939-

**Place of Birth:** Gilmer, Texas, USA

**Residence:** New Orleans, LA

**Work:** Lancaster, PA

**Occupations:** Musician

## Biographical Note

Musician Benny Turner was born on October 27, 1939 in Gilmer, Texas to Ella Mae King and Ben Turner. He attended Lake Providence School, Bruce Junior High School, and Richard T. Crane Medical Preparatory High School.

Turner joined The Kindly Shepherds gospel music group and also played in his brother's band, The Freddie King Band. During this period, he met Dee Clark and was invited to tour with his rhythm and blues band. Turner then became the bass player for the American gospel music group, The Soul Stirrers. He later rejoined The Freddie King Band and toured regularly with the group, performing with musicians like Eric Clapton, John Fogerty and Grand Funk Railroad. At The Montreux Jazz Festival in 1973, Turner played bass on the live recording of Memphis Slim's Very Much Alive and in Montreux. After his brother's death in 1976, Turner joined the band, Mighty Joe Young; and, in 1981, Turner appeared in the film Thief, while performing at the Wise Fools Pub in Chicago. In 1986, Turner moved to New Orleans, Louisiana and became the bandleader for Marva Wright. He also sang vocals and played bass on several of Otis Clay's albums including, The Blues Is... in 1991, The Gospel Truth in 1993, and When the Gate Swings Open in 1994. Marva Wright later released, Born with the Blues in 1996, featuring Turner on bass. The following year, Mighty Joe Young released Mighty Man, featuring Turner on guitar. In 1999, Turner played bass on Marva Wright's album, Bluesiana Mama, followed by Do Right Woman: The Soul of New Orleans in 2006, and After the Levees Broke in 2007, where Turner served as the producer, arranger, guitar player and background vocals on the album. Throughout his career, Turner was also featured on a number of his brother's albums including, Gives You A Bonanza of Instrumentals, Larger Than Life, Freddie King (1934-1976), Takin' Care of

Business, Live in Antibes, 1974, Let the Good Times Roll.

In 2011, Turner released his solo album, A Tribute to My Brother Freddie King. In 2014, Turner released an original solo album entitled, Journey. Two years later, he released, When She's Gone dedicated to his mother. In 2017, Turner published his autobiography, Survivor: The Benny Turner Story. That same year, he released the album, My Brother's Blues. In 2019, he released, Going Back Home.

Turner has also received a number of awards, including the 2017 Best Blues Song Award at the fifteenth annual Independent Music Awards and the Little Milton Lifetime Bluesman award from Jus' Blues Awards. Turner was inducted into the Chicago Blues Hall of Fame in 2017 and October 27th was proclaimed Benny Turner Day in Turner's hometown of Gilmer, Texas. In 2018, he was voted Most Outstanding Musician (Bass) by Living Blues magazine, and received the Silver Medal at the Global Music Awards and the Bronze Medal by the Reader's Favorite Book Awards.

Benny Turner was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 27, 2019.

## Related Entries

**Richard T. Crane Medical Preparatory High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Lake Providence School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Bruce Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Marva Wright** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1986 to 2006]

**Band Leader**

**Mighty Joe Young** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1978 to 1986]

**Bass Player**

[EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Kindly Shepards** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Guitar**

**Freddie King** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Bass Player and Band Lead**

**Soul Stirrers** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Bass Player**

[EMPLOYEE**O**F]

[from 2010 to ?]

**Solo Artist**