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## THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION HONORS JIM FREE WITH 2023 J. WILLIAM DENNY AWARD

### *Additional Industry Members Recognized During CMA's Board of Directors Reception*

NASHVILLE—The [Country Music Association](#) presented its 2023 J. William Denny Award to industry veteran **Jim Free** at a reception held during CMA's Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 29 in Nashville. The J. William Denny Award is presented in recognition and appreciation of a lifetime of dedication, distinguished service and meritorious contributions to the CMA Board of Directors.

As an influential advocate and key voice in policy for the music and entertainment industry for more than three decades, Free has selflessly served the CMA Board of Directors since the late 1980s. Throughout his time on the CMA Board, Free has made lasting and impactful contributions to the overall success and expansion of Country Music worldwide. Free was responsible for introducing Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan to the CMA Board, where they laid out their plans for their documentary film series that helped promote Country Music to a new audience and garner recognition in American culture.

"It is extremely unusual in any of our businesses to find a place where everybody who competes against each other comes together and works for a product," said Free. "And it's Country Music. This place is it. I've been honored to be a part of this."

Also during the reception, **Mike Dungan**, former Chairman and CEO of Universal Music Group Nashville and long-serving CMA Board member, was presented with the CMA Chairman's Award by CMA Board Chairman and Global Head of Programming at Apple Music, **Charlie Morgan**. While not an annual award, the CMA Chairman's Award is given when the incumbent Chairman feels an individual or individuals, through outstanding service to CMA, merits the recognition.

Additionally, in recognition of their service to the CMA Board of Directors, CMA Chief Executive Officer **Sarah Trahern** presented mementos to outgoing CMA Chairman Morgan and current President, incoming 2024 CMA Chairman and Farris, Self & Moore LLC Partner, **Kella Farris**.



Jim Free received the 2023 J. William Denny Award at the November Board of Directors Dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 29 in Nashville, TN.

Photo Credit: Jamie Schramm/CMAA

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Mike Dungan received the 2023 Chairman's Award at the November Board of Directors Dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 29 in Nashville, TN.

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Mike Dungan, Charlie Morgan and Jim Free at the November Board of Directors Dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 29 in Nashville, TN.

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For more information about CMA and the Association's awards and initiatives, visit [CMAworld.com](http://CMAworld.com).

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