



Elvis Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom

Memphis, Tenn. – November 16, 2018 – Elvis Presley was awarded the **Presidential Medal of Freedom** today in a special ceremony at the White House. The posthumous award bestowed by the President is—along with the Congressional Gold Medal—the highest civilian award in the United States. It recognizes those people who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors." The medal was established by President Truman in 1945 to recognize notable service in the war. In 1963, President Kennedy reintroduced it as an honor for distinguished civilian service in peacetime.

According to a statement from the White House: "Elvis Presley defined American culture to billions of adoring fans around the world. Elvis fused gospel, country, and rhythm and blues to create a sound all his own, selling more than a billion records. Elvis also served nearly 6 years in the United States Army, humbly accepting the call to serve despite his fame. He later starred in 31 films, drew record-breaking audiences to his shows, sent television ratings soaring, and earned 14 GRAMMY Award nominations. He ultimately won 3 GRAMMY Awards for his gospel music. Elvis Presley remains an enduring American icon 4 decades after his death."

Jack Soden, CEO of Elvis Presley Enterprises and Graceland accepted the award. "On behalf of the Presley family, Elvis' friends and millions of fans, it will be a great honor to accept this award. Elvis loved his country, served proudly in the U.S. Army and would no doubt consider this one of the great honors of his life," stated Soden. "We look forward to displaying it proudly at Graceland so the millions of visitors from around the world will be able to see it up close."

The badge of the Presidential Medal of Freedom is in the form of a golden star with white enamel, with a red enamel pentagon behind it; the central disc bears thirteen gold stars on a blue enamel background (taken from the Great Seal of the United States) within a golden ring. Golden American bald eagles with spread wings stand between the points of the star. It is worn around the neck on a blue ribbon with white edge stripes.