



THE BUTLER GROUP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Butler Group Announces Plans for Gospel Music Hall of Fame of Missouri in Historic “Holy Corners” of The Central West End of St. Louis, MO

Steve Smith/New + Found to provide development services.

Lawrence Group to provide design and construction.

ST. LOUIS, MO (August 12, 2021) – Film and TV Producer Monica R. Butler plans to redevelop the former Second Baptist Church property located at 500 North Kingshighway Boulevard into a 40,000-square-foot Gospel Music Hall of Fame and Cultural Arts, Entertainment and Gospel Research Center.

“Since I was a child, I have always been involved with Gospel Music, through my mother Jacqueline Butler who sang and recorded with the famous gospel group ‘The O’Neal Twins.’ I experienced it all being in the studio with them as they recorded their songs and I was actually in the documentary, ‘Say Amen Somebody,’ filmed in St. Louis, MO,” founder Monica Butler said.

“I have always wanted to share my love of gospel music and help everyone understand and appreciate these joyous songs, and celebrate people like St. Louis’ own Willie Mae Ford Smith, Zella Jackson Price, and so many others who deserve recognition in our area and across the country. Gospel Music influenced a generation of musicians from Aretha Franklin to Beyonce,” continued Butler. “Music brings people and cultures together, and you can’t listen to gospel music and not be moved. The Gospel Music Hall of Fame will focus on this celebrated aspect of Black culture along with the recognition of all forms of Gospel Music and become an anchor of the community while inspiring visitors of all races and religions through the power of song.”

Steve Smith, CEO of Lawrence Group and co-founder of New + Found, will provide development services for the project. Lawrence Group will provide design and construction for the \$22 million historic restoration. Plans for the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and Cultural Arts, Entertainment, and Gospel



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Research Center include a state of the art sound stage and film theater, hall of fame museum, education center, café, courtyard and event space.

“This is an ambitious project, and a great opportunity to preserve a part of St. Louis history and create a new cultural attraction for the city,” said Smith. “We are excited to work with Monica and The Butler Group through the process to help realize their vision.”

Built in 1907, the former Second Baptist Church is part of the Holy Corners Historic District, a group of religious and public assembly buildings near the intersection of Kingshighway and Washington Boulevards in St. Louis’ Central West End. The property is an official Landmark of the City of St. Louis and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

To support the future Gospel Music Hall of Fame of Missouri initiative, visit mogospel.com.

About Monica R. Butler

Monica R. Butler, owner of The Butler Group and founder of Archview Media, has been a part of television, theatre and film production for over 25 years. With passion and compassion, she has produced for Black Entertainment Television working with Bobby Jones Gospel, Tyler Perry stage play production and served as Producer at The Word Television Network, she has produced her own projects through The Butler Group and just completed a successful summer with her “Film Camp USA” for youth where they showcased their student-made film at the historic Chase Park Plaza Cinema.

About New + Found

Steve Smith formed New + Found as an affiliate of Lawrence Group to provide development services both for clients and in-house projects. New + Found develops buildings, communities and relationships to unlock potential in the overlooked and underestimated. Current projects include the \$232 million City Foundry STL adaptive reuse of the former Federal-Mogul foundry site into a mixed-use development with food hall, creative office space, retail and parking garage. Visit newandfound.com for more information.

About Lawrence Group

Lawrence Group is an integrated design and construction firm using the power of people with great ideas to help clients realize their dreams. Founded in 1983, the firm offers architecture, interior design, construction, master planning, landscape architecture, furniture procurement and graphic design services. For more information about Lawrence Group, visit thelawrencegroup.com or connect on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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Editor's Note

The following photos are available for download via OneDrive: [The Butler Group - Photos](#)



Monica R. Butler and Steve Smith outside the former Second Baptist Church property located at 500 North Kingshighway Boulevard in St. Louis.



Inspired Lives Foundation officer Wanda Combs, St. Louis Committeewoman Yolonda Yancie, film producer Monica R. Butler, and journalist / founder of Inspired Lives Foundation Linda "Lin" Woods.