

Marvin Sapp on How He Has Survived

Written by Foward Times Staff
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Gospel star and Grand Rapids, Michigan pastor Marvin Sapp shared his feelings behind “I Win,” his latest album and a tribute to his late wife, in a studio interview that aired on NPR’s “All Things Considered,” says MLive.com.

NPR called Sapp “the biggest name in gospel today” as they discussed the changes in his life since his wife, MaLinda, died of cancer in 2010.

The past two years have been “very challenging,” Sapp told NPR’s Guy Raz. “Trying to learn new normals and trying to figure out who I am as a 45-year-old man versus when I married her at 23.”

Sapp attributed the popularity of his biggest hit, “Never Would Have Made It,” to its universal message. “All of us have gone through ‘never would have made it’ moments,” Sapp said.

Sapp described some of the pivotal moments of his life in Grand Rapids. Sapp met MaLinda in third grade. They began dating at age 23 and married at 25.

“The best way to honor someone who has passed is to live,” Sapp said.

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It's a lesson he says he learned from his youngest daughter the morning after her mother's death when, at 11 years old, she got up at 6:30 a.m. and went to school because MaLinda often told the kids to "keep on moving." It's a sentiment Sapp has cherished and even wrote a song about on his latest album.

Raz asked Sapp why he would name the album, "I Win" in the face of such devastating loss.

"What I won was having a stronger faith in God. I didn't lose my mind. My faith remained intact. And now I understand what my assignment is. My assignment is to help others who feel hopeless and helpless because of loss," Sapp said.

"I've come through this, and now I'm going to use it to help others."

Sapp also discussed the very beginning of his singing career in Grand Rapids.

"I've been singing since the age of 4 in my church, True Light Missionary Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, where my father was a singer. So it just kind of happened one Sunday while my dad was singing, I walked out and stood next to him and started singing the song that he was leading -- in perfect pitch."

"By the age of 10 I was traveling all over the Midwest doing music."

Sapp said, by the time he was 12, his mother gave him a choice between singing in church and singing secular music.

"So," he said, "I chose gospel."