



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 23, 2013

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Release No. 13-075



Postal Service Inducts Ray Charles into Music Icons Stamp Series *Two Performance Ceremonies: Ashanti in Atlanta, Chaka Khan in LA*

A high-resolution image of the stamp is available for media use only by emailing mark.r.saunders@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON — On what would have been his 83rd birthday, the “father of soul,” Ray Charles, returns to two “stamping ovations” today as the latest inductee into the Postal Service’s Music Icons Forever Stamp Series. Chaka Khan will perform at the Los Angeles first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony and Ashanti will highlight the Atlanta event.

The ceremonies will take place at the [Ray Charles Performing Arts Center](#) at [Morehouse College](#) in Atlanta at 11 a.m. EDT, and [The GRAMMY Museum at L.A. LIVE](#) in Los Angeles at 1 p.m. PDT today. Both events are free and open to the public.

Available today in sheets of 16, customers may purchase the stamps at usps.com/stamps, at 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) or at Post Offices nationwide.

In Atlanta, GRAMMY® award-winning singer/songwriter, actor and actress Ashanti will perform and pay tribute to Charles (1930 – 2004) and perform a medley of his songs and the Morehouse College Glee Club will sing his hit which is also the official state song — “Georgia on My Mind.” At the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles, where Charles has been recognized with 17 GRAMMY Awards, Ten-time GRAMMY award winner, singer, songwriter, actor and activist Chaka Khan will sing, “I’ll Be Good to You.” Musicians from the GRAMMY Museum’s educational program *Summer Sessions* also will perform. In 1989, Charles and Khan re-recorded the 1976 hit written by the Brothers Johnson. With the remake of “I’ll Be Good to You,” produced by Quincy Jones, the song became another number one R&B hit on the *Billboard* charts and was Charles’ first number one R&B hit in 24 years. In 1991, Charles and Khan won a GRAMMY Award for “I’ll Be Good to You” for the Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals.

“Frank Sinatra, himself a stamp honoree, once characterized Ray Charles as ‘the only true genius in show business,’ and certainly, if anyone was a musical genius, it was Ray Charles,” said U.S. Postal Service Judicial Officer William Campbell who will be dedicating the stamp at the Atlanta ceremony. “Despite being blind and having a young life marked by tragedy, hardship and tremendous challenges, Ray Charles went on to have a remarkable 58-year career playing music that blurred the lines of jazz, gospel, blues and, in later years, country. In doing so, he became the personification of the American Dream.”

“It is with great pleasure that we honor a man who not only had an incalculable impact on the face of contemporary soul, R&B, gospel and rock, but also touched people individually,” said U.S. Postal Service Sales Vice President Cliff Rucker who will dedicate the stamp at the Los Angeles event. “The third in our new Music Icons series, Ray Charles’ stamp, another tribute to his legacy, will join those of distinguished performers Lydia Mendoza and Johnny Cash, which were dedicated earlier this year. And how fitting that Ray Charles and Johnny Cash, who in life were such great friends and recorded two duets together, will be reunited in the form of postage stamps.”

“Ray Charles taught us the value of hard work and determination, how to overcome challenges and how to tap the genius inherent in each person,” said Valerie Ervin, President of The Ray Charles Foundation, who will speak at the Los Angeles event. “We are extremely grateful that the Postal Service is celebrating this legacy with the release of a stamp in Ray Charles’ honor.”

The limited-edition Ray Charles Forever Stamp as well as Ray Charles Forever, a deluxe CD collection featuring the unreleased recording of “They Can’t Take That Away From Me” and the [exclusive](#) bonus track, “I Didn’t Know What Time it Was,” will be available at major Post Office locations across the country, as well as online at usps.com/stamps and ebay.com/stamps.

The Stamp Image

The Ray Charles Forever Stamp features an image of Charles taken later in his career by photographer Yves Carrère. The photograph belongs to Mephisto Jazz, represented worldwide by the Dalle agency. The stamp sheet was designed to evoke the appearance of a 45 rpm single peeking out of a record sleeve above the stamps themselves. On the reverse side, the sheet includes a larger version of the photograph featured on the stamp as well as the logo for the Music Icons series. Art director Ethel Kessler worked on the stamp pane with designer Neal Ashby.

Genius has a stamp of its own: Ray Charles

Born Sept. 23, 1930, in Albany, GA, Ray Charles Robinson was raised in the small town of Greenville, FL, where a local boogie-woogie pianist gave him his first piano lessons. At the age of five, Charles began to go blind. His right eye was surgically removed. He learned to read Braille and was given lessons in classical piano and clarinet. He also taught himself to play saxophone while continuing to listen to a mix of jazz, blues and country music.

After his mother died in 1945, Charles left school and went to work in Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa as a professional musician. In 1948, he went to Seattle, WA, and formed a group known as the McSon Trio. Charles signed with Atlantic Records in 1952, where he had his first national hit, “I’ve Got a Woman,” in 1955. Charles assembled his own band, touring along with his quartet of backup vocalists, the Cookies, later known as the “Raeletts.” In 1959, Charles scored a major hit on both the rhythm and blues and pop charts with “What’d I Say?”

But Charles could not be defined or contained by one musical style. He appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival and recorded a successful album with Milt Jackson of the Modern Jazz Quartet. In 1959, when offered financial incentives, Charles left Atlantic for ABC-Paramount. His growing audience continued to expand with two number one hits, "Georgia On My Mind" (1960) and "Hit the Road Jack" (1961). Looking back over the course of his long career, there seemed to be little Charles couldn't do. His work spanned almost the entire breadth of American music and brought him 17 GRAMMY Awards; the Kennedy Center Honors in 1986; an award for lifetime achievement in 1987; the National Medal of Arts in 1993; and, his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on Facebook at facebook.com/USPSStamps, via *Twitter* at [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or at beyondtheperf.com/2013-preview.

First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at local Post Offices, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

(For Los Angeles)

Ray Charles Stamp
Keyboard Station
Postmaster
7001 S. Central Avenue, Rm. 307
Los Angeles, CA 90052-9998

(For Atlanta)

Ray Charles Stamp
Customer Relations Coordinator
U.S. Postal Service
3900 Crown Road, Suite 2500
Atlanta, GA 30304-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, the price is 5 cents each. All orders must be postmarked by Oct. 23, 2013.

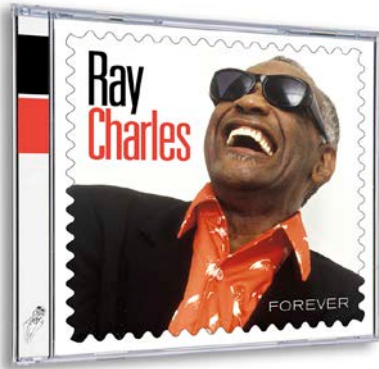
First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

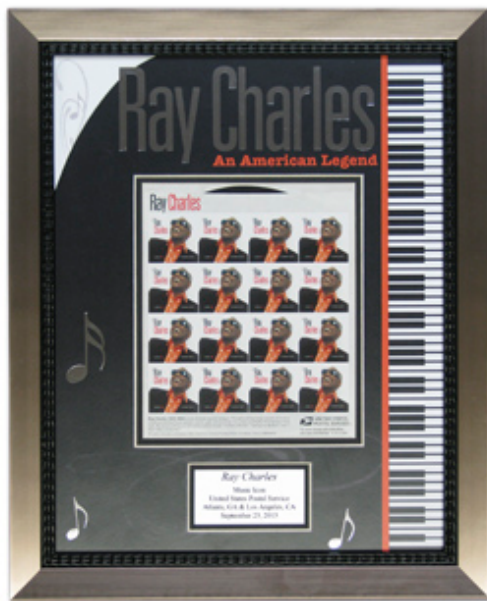
U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Related Products

There are 16 philatelic and related products available for this stamp issue:



842717, [Ray Charles Music CD](#) \$9.99



579524, [Framed Art](#), \$39.95.



579525, [Poster](#), \$14.95.



842728, [Ray Charles T-Shirt](#), \$15.95



579506, [Press Sheet with Die Cuts](#), \$66.24 (print quantity of 2,500).

579508, [Press Sheet without Die Cuts](#), \$66.24 (print quantity of 2,500).



579510, [Keepsake \(Pane & Digital Color Postmark Set\)](#), \$9.00.



579516, [First-Day Cover \(Los Angeles\)](#), \$0.90.



579517, [First-Day Cover \(Atlanta\)](#), \$0.90.



579518, [First-Day Cover \(Full Pane, Los Angeles\)](#), \$9.86.



579519, [First-Day Cancelled \(Full Pane, Los Angeles\)](#), \$9.86.



579520, [First-Day Cover \(Full Pane, Atlanta\)](#), \$9.86.



579521, [Digital Color Postmark \(Los Angeles\)](#), \$1.61.



579522, [Digital Color Postmark \(Atlanta\)](#), \$1.61.



579529, [First-Day Cancelled \(Full Pane, Atlanta\)](#), \$9.86.



579530, [Ceremony Program](#) (2 Stamps, 2 Cancellations), \$6.95.

For a great selection of stamps and related collectible products, please visit the official Postal Service Store on eBay at ebay.com/stamps.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation: 152 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With more than 31,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private-sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 42nd in the 2012 Fortune 500. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for seven years and the fourth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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