



steven a.
williams

**the david g. berger
master class series**



about steven a. williams

Born in Cincinnati, Steven A. Williams was introduced to jazz by his cousins, parents and grandfather, many of whom worked as managers and vocalists in the R&B scene. His passion took off at age 15 when he got his first radio job. Little did he know, his career was waiting in radio, and he would soon become an industry giant. In the past five decades, his work has spanned radio waves like WEBN, WAIF, WDET, WJZZ, WAMX, WRIF, WJZE, WQCD, KSSJ, KGO, Sirius XM, WCBS, WAMU, KUOW and finally, Newark's favorite station, WBGO. His experiences took him from state to state and coast to coast, but one thing became clear: providing access to music, specifically jazz, was Williams' passion. His experience made him a leading authority for jazz programming, research, marketing, administration and production as it pertains to radio. Through his work, Williams prioritized music that caters to the Black experience in America and representing Black culture in America.

After working as WBGO's Director of Programming, he was promoted to CEO. WBGO has been described as the "best jazz station in the world." Continuing that tradition, Williams believes that his position as CEO does not represent a new era for WBGO. He plans to uphold the thriving and successful station with the principles it was founded on. The station has hundreds of thousands of listeners and reaches millions worldwide through partnerships with radio giants like NPR. Williams acknowledges that the best way to keep the magic of jazz alive is to invite younger audiences in, branch into new mediums and remember what brought him to radio in the first place; the magic of connecting people and providing an avenue for world-wide impact from the studio. During the pandemic, Williams led an initiative to install equipment in the homes of WBGO's hosts, so they could continue their impact from the comfort of their living rooms. His objective moving forward is to expand WBGO's connection with the philanthropic, government, and civic communities in Newark.

accolades

Tracking Steve Williams's career by call sign:

- **WEBN:** Rock radio station (Cincinnati, OH)
- **WAIF:** Local volunteer-based radio (Cincinnati, OH)
- **WDET:** Station with a focus on talk shows and public news (Detroit, MI)
- **WJZZ:** Station with a focus on jazz (Detroit, MI)
- **WAMX:** Station with a focus on classic rock (WV)
- **WRIF:** Station featuring active and alternative rock (Detroit, MI)
- **WJZE:** Station featuring mainstream urban music (Toledo, OH)
- **WQCD:** Station with a focus on Spanish tropical music (OH)
- **KSSJ:** Station featuring jazz (Sacramento, CA)
- **KGO:** Station covering conservative talk shows, now called KSFO (San Francisco, CA)
- **SiriusXM:** Station covering national news, music, sports and talk shows (New York, NY)
- **WCBS:** Station broadcasting classic hits (New York, NY)
- **WAMU:** Station owned by American University (Washington, DC)
- **KUOW:** NPR station (Seattle, WA)
- **WBGO:** Station with a focus on jazz programming (Newark, NJ)



Jazz has been amongst us and played and listened to for over 100 years. **Nothing stays around for 100 years that's not valid** and doesn't mean anything to the world."

— Steven A. Williams

seed questions to consider

1. How has public engagement with radio changed over the years?
2. How can radio programming respond to a target demographic?
3. What are the benefits of a career spanning so many stations, communities and states?

vocabulary

Ad-lib

To speak or perform without preparation; to improvise, especially lines or a speech

Amplitude Modulation (AM)

A signal modulation technique used in electronic communication, most commonly for transmitting messages with a radio wave. Used by AM broadcast stations and requires an AM receiver

Back Announce

When a radio presenter talks about a song that has just played

Day Parts

The different times of day when you can run an ad campaign on the radio. Two major day parts are usually between 6 – 9AM for morning shows and 4 – 7PM for evening shows

Frequency Modulation (FM)

A signal modulation technique used in electronic communication, most commonly for transmitting messages with a radio wave. Used by FM broadcast stations and requires an FM receiver

Hit the Post

An expression used by DJs to describe talking through the beginning of a song up to the point where the lyrics begin without “stepping” on the beginning of the vocals

Program Controller (PC)

Person in charge of broadcasts on a radio show

Public Service Announcement (PSA)

An ad run in the public interest, rather than for a commercial product or service

Segue

A term used to describe the transition from one track to another. Segues are often presenters introducing the next track or talking about what's to come in the show

Sweeper

A branded radio station jingle played between two tracks

resources

Websites

A Talk With Steve Williams, CEO of WBGO
jcitytimes.com/a-talk-with-steve-williams-ceo-of-wbgo

CEO Steven A. Williams Leads WBGO's 45th Anniversary of Jazz – Our Time Press
ourtimepress.com/ceo-steven-a-williams-leads-wbgos-45th-anniversary-of-jazz

Steven A. Williams's LinkedIn
[linkedin.com/in/steven-a-williams-7567221](https://www.linkedin.com/in/steven-a-williams-7567221)

WBGO | Steven A. Williams WBGO
wbgo.org/people/steve-williams

New WBGO president takes reins amid racial reckoning at historic jazz station
nj.com/entertainment/2021/01/new-wbgo-president-takes-reins-amid-racial-reckoning-at-historic-jazz-station

WBGO hires Steven Williams as CEO - Current
current.org/2020/11/wbgo-hires-steven-williams-as-ceo

WBGO President and CEO Steven A. Williams remembers his family's musical legacy
wbgo.org/podcast/art-of-the-story/2024-04-02/wbgo-president-and-ceo-steven-a-williams-remembers-his-familys-musical-legacy

WBGO Welcomes Public Media Leader Steve Williams as New President & CEO | WBGO
wbgo.org/wbgo/2020-11-02/wbgo-welcomes-public-media-leader-steve-williams-as-new-president-ceo

bring the arts to your school

In-School Residencies

NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development

Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

arts training for students

Saturday Programs

NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs

Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in our immersive programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

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Vice President, Arts Education

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Teacher Resource Guide Committee

Azriel Wallace

Teacher Resource Guide Committee

Rob Reddington

Teacher Resource Guide Committee

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For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our team at artseducation@njpac.org. Or visit njpac.org/education

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