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Lisa Knowles-Smith Earns First Grammy Nods After 50 Years

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Lisa Knowles-Smith and The Brown Singers have earned their first-ever Grammy nominations, after five decades of singing traditional gospel"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Lisa Knowles-Smith and The Brown Singers have earned their first-ever Grammy nominations, after five decades of singing traditional gospel. The Memphis-based quartet was named on 16 November 2026 among the nominees for the 69th Annual Grammy Awards, with two nominations: Best Gospel Album for their project Revival: Live in Dallas, and Best Gospel Performance/Song for their recording "Promises 2.0."

The Recording Academy's own artist page confirms both nominations, and confirms that these are the group's first. Fifty years is a long time to wait for a phone call like that. Most artists who get their first Grammy nomination are young, with a debut album and a record label pushing them hard.

Lisa Knowles-Smith is not young, and she did not arrive overnight. She has led The Brown Singers since 1996, and the group began as a family ministry in Memphis, singing the old songs in the old way, in churches where the sound of a quartet still means something.

The nomination did not change who they are. It simply meant the rest of the world finally caught up. The song at the heart of it all is "Promises," which Knowles-Smith wrote under her given name, Alescia Knowles-Smith.

Earlier this year it reached the top of the Billboard Gospel Airplay chart, the group's first chart-topper, and it also topped the Mediabase gospel charts in February 2026. It is a song about God keeping His word, and for a group that has kept singing for fifty years, the title fits like it was written for this exact moment.

The nominations arrive during an extraordinary year of career-defining achievements for the quartet. At the 41st Annual Stellar Gospel Music Awards in Charlotte, North Carolina, on 15 August 2026, Lisa Knowles-Smith and The Brown Singers emerged as the evening's leading winners, taking home five awards, including Song of the Year for "Promises," Quartet of the Year, and Duo/Chorus Group of the Year.

Knowles-Smith also received the Albertina Walker Female Artist of the Year honor, and shared the Producer of the Year award with Frederick Perry. The group also earned two nominations at the 2026 GMA Dove Awards and took home the award for Traditional Gospel Album of the Year for Revival: Live in Dallas.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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