

Watch Grammy GOAT Beyoncé Thank Her Gay Uncle Lost to AIDS

She also thanked the queer community for inventing the dance genre. Plus, here's the story of Beyoncé's beloved uncle Johnny.

February 6, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

At last night's Grammy Awards ceremony, "Break My Soul" singer Beyoncé broke the record for most Grammy wins, with 32. Not only did she become the [GOAT at last night's event](#), but she once again proved to be an ally to the [LGBTQ](#) and [HIV](#) communities.

While accepting the Grammy for Best Dance/Electronic Music Album, for Renaissance, Beyoncé thanked her [family](#) and fans and gave a heartfelt shout-out to "the queer community for your love and for inventing this genre" and to her deceased uncle Johnny, whom she said was there in spirit.

Members of the Hive—as Beyoncé's fans call themselves—and readers of POZ already know why her uncle was particularly relevant to this award. He was [gay](#), and the album Renaissance is a historical homage to the dance music genre so embraced by LGBTQ people.

In 2019, Beyoncé and husband Jay-Z were the Vanguard honorees at the annual media awards ceremony by [GLAAD](#), a national LGBTQ advocacy organization. During that speech, she elaborated on her love of the queer community and her uncle Johnny:

"Well, first of all, I'm overwhelmed. We were not expecting those incredible presenters. I'm just super honored and overwhelmed. I've already cried, put a run in my stocking from Shangela. I would say that one of the most beautiful memories of my tour was looking out from the stage every night and seeing the hardest gangster trapping out right next to the most fabulous queen—full out—respecting and celebrating each other. [Responding to audience member: That's how we do!]

"That's the beauty of a great partnership—connecting people who at first glance seem to be worlds apart. Whether it's our fans or our family, the LGBTQIA community has always supported us and lifted us up and we thank you guys. We're here to promote love for every human being, and change starts with supporting the people closest to you. So let's tell them they are loved. Let's remind them they are beautiful. Let's speak out and protect them, and parents, let's love our kids in their truest form. We'd like to request that we continue to shift

the stigmas in this community—especially the stigmas in Black families towards accepting queer Black and brown men and women around the world.

“I want to dedicate this award to my uncle Johnny—the most fabulous gay man I’ve ever met who helped raise me and my sister. He lived his truth. He was brave and unapologetic during a time when this country wasn’t as accepting. Witnessing his battle with HIV was one of the most painful experiences I’ve ever lived. I’m hopeful that his struggle served to open pathways for other young people to live more freely.

“LGBTQIA rights are human rights. To choose who you love is your human right. How you identify and see yourself is your human right. Who you make love to and take that ass to Red Lobster is your human right.”

To watch that full speech and learn about Jay-Z’s connection with the LGBTQ community, check out the POZ blog “[Beyoncé Gets Emotional as She Honors a Gay Uncle Who Had HIV \[VIDEO\]](#).”

The 2019 GLAAD speech is also below:

Beyoncé’s mother, Tina Knowles-Lawson, has also spoken publicly about Johnny and advocated for HIV and LGBTQ issues. In 2020, as part of the Black AIDS Institute’s “Black Voices Matter” series, Knowles-Lawson spoke at length about her family’s intimate connection with HIV. She recalls losing Johnny, whom she referred to as her best friend, in the ’90s to the virus. She jokingly called him her wife at the time because he helped raise her kids and made costumes and dresses for her daughters. For more on that, see “[Watch Beyoncé’s Mom Discuss Her Close History With HIV and COVID-19](#).”

Watch the “Black Voices Matter” debut below:

Last May, Knowles-Lawson joined other cultural influencers for an HIV prevention and treatment campaign and public service announcement called “Me in You, You in Me.” For details and to watch the PSAs, see “[Watch Beyoncé’s Mom, an OnlyFans Star and a Sports Analyst Tackle HIV](#).”