

# 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award Graduate

## Dr. Roosevelt Griffin III MA '11

Dr. Roosevelt Griffin III MA '11 believes “being an educator is not a career, it is a lifestyle.” His approach to teaching is one that is intentional and full of care and love. He believes music education should be a vehicle to not only promote musical excellence but also unity and diversity.



The Owner and Operator of GI Music LLC, Griffin specializes in curriculum, program, and professional development. He is the Founder and CEO of the not-for-profit Griffin Institute of Performing Arts where the transformative abilities of the arts are used to lift the lives of students and families throughout southern Cook County and beyond. In addition, Griffin leads as band director for Harvey School District 152 – where he attended school from grades K thru 12 – and Chicago Jazz Philharmonic’s Youth ensemble. He co-directs and is a student mentor for VanderCook College of Music’s One City Program.

Griffin worked with some of the world’s greatest musicians, including Luciano Pavarotti, Diana Ross, and Jimmy Heath, before becoming a full-time teacher. He is often invited to present at conferences and workshops for music education including the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinics, National Association for Music Education, Jazz Institute of Chicago, Jazz Educators Network, Illinois Music Educators Association, Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, and others.

An award-winning educator, Griffin has been recognized multiple times for his contributions from a hometown street in Harvey, IL renamed “Roosevelt Griffin III Ave.” to a Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Golden Apple Foundation in 2014 to achieving Semi Finalist for “Best Music Educator” by the Grammy Foundation and Recording Academy in 2017.

His training approach has been highlighted in the ASCD video by Eric Jenson, “Teaching With Poverty In Mind.” He and his students have been featured in *Downbeat* and *JazzEd* magazines for obtaining an endorsement with Jody Jazz Mouthpieces. Griffin co-authored the latest addition to GIA Publication’s *Teaching Music through Performance: Beginning Jazz Ensembles* series and the Meredith Music publication *Rehearsing the Jazz Band*.

Griffin earned his BM in Music Performance (Tuba) and Illinois Teaching Certificate K-12 (Music) from Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, IL (2001). He completed his MA in School Leadership and Type 75 Certificate from Concordia-Chicago (2011) followed by an EdD in Organizational Leadership at Argosy University in Chicago, IL including a study sabbatical at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL (2015).

A Harvey native, Griffin now lives in Matteson, IL with his wife, Tasneem, and their three children.