

Written by Kathy

Friday, 07 September 2012 15:39



By Kathy Wray Coleman, Associate Publisher, Editor, Cleveland Urban News. Com and The Kathy Wray Coleman Online News Blog.Com, and Cleveland Urban News.Com Marketing Director and Copy Editor Marc Churchill

CLEVELAND, Ohio- Cleveland Urban News.Com nabbed an interview with actor, songwriter and nine-time Grammy award winning pop and R and B singer John Legend (pictured), a native of Springfield, Oh. who was campaigning in his home state for the upcoming November 6 presidential election for President Barack Obama (pictured), America's first Black president. (Editor's note: Read the one-on-one interview below this brief synopsis).

Legend, 33, talks music, politics, Republican pushed voter suppression state laws in Ohio and elsewhere, gay marriage, reproductive rights, the necessity of the Black vote, and his upcoming marriage to model Chrissy Teigen.

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And he talked just a little on Kanye West, and yes, the beautiful Kim Kardashian, Kayne's new girlfriend.

The Grammy award winning pianist and keyboardist got his start singing back-up vocals for Alicia Keys and Lauryn Hill, and sang with other famous musicians including West, and other rappers like Jay-Z and Andre 3000. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a bachelor's degree in English.

Legend won 3 of his Grammy awards in 2011, including best R and B album for 'Wake Up,' a project he did with the group The Roots, and best R and B song for 'Shine,' a popular cut on the album. He has an estimated net worth of \$15 million, and has made acting appearances on popular television shows such as Sesame Street and Dancing With The Stars.

Interview

Cleveland Urban News.Com Associate Publisher and Editor Kathy Wray Coleman:

I'm Kathy Wray Coleman of Cleveland Urban News.Com.

John Legend:

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It's a pleasure.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

It's a pleasure to talk to you too. And I have with me our copy editor Marc R. Churchill, and he will be asking you some questions also.

John Legend:

Okay

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Are you ready to go?

John Legend:

Ready when you are.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Let me first thank you for this interview.

John Legend:

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My pleasure.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

You will be 34 -years- old this year, I understand.

John Legend:

Yes, in December.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

You're still a young man. Did you graduate from

Springfield High School?

John Legend:

I went there-Springfield North High School.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

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So you're an Ohioan?

John Legend:

Absolutely, born and raised...

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

So Springfield is 30 miles east of Dayton?

John Legend:

Yes, it's about 25 to 30 miles east of Dayton.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

You attended college at the University of Pennsylvania?

John Legend:

Yes, I graduated from there back in 1999.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

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What degree did you earn?

John Legend:

I majored in English, with a concentration in African-American literature and culture.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Why are you supporting President Barack Obama?

John Legend:

I have supported him for two elections now. I believe in his vision for the country. I agree with his polices on just about every major issue. I believe that he has done the right things when it comes to trying to extend the opportunity for health care and education to more and more Americans, no matter where they come from.

I believe that given the choice between what the president envisions for the country and what the Romney-Ryan ticket envisions for the country, that there is really no competition. The president deserves my support, and I'll continue to fight for him to get re-elected. (Editor's note: Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney is the Republican Party nominee for president and Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan is Romney's vice presidential running mate. Obama is the nominee for the Democratic Party and is seeking another four year term along with Vice President Joe Biden).

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

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So you support the president's policies? How do you feel about his personal view on supporting gay marriage?

John Legend:

I support it wholeheartedly. I was glad that President Obama publicly showed his support. I have very good friends who want to get married. They have every right to get married as far as I'm concerned. If you believe in equal rights, then you can't choose which people you like enough to give equal rights to.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Is there anything you like about Mitt Romney?

John Legend:

I like Massachusetts Mitt Romney. He seemed like a decent guy. He extended health care to an entire state in a plan that was a model for Obamacare, and I think that was a good idea. Unfortunately, the Massachusetts Mitt Romney decided he wanted to kill himself (chuckles). Thus, a new Mitt Romney emerged.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Would you say that Mr. Romney's choice of Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan as a [vice presidential] running mate is a suggestion that he is insensitive to diversity and is taking our country back to the 1960s when White men ruled?

John Legend:

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I don't think he is insensitive to diversity, but he is insensitive to the needs of the poor and the working class. I think that his policies are following the theory of trickle down economics, when trickle down economics has been proven not to work. It's the idea that if you give rich people as much of a tax cut as you can, then the money will magically trickle down to the rest of the country.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Is it a better vision for the music and entertainment industry?

John Legend:

I don't really think about it in those terms. I'll be fine regardless. I think it will impact so many people, if you think about health care for instance. Right now, under Obamacare, as the law rolls out, so many more poor people will have access to affordable health care than have been able to in the past decade. But if Mitt Romney becomes president, he has promised to repeal that. The Romney-Ryan team and their policies on women's reproductive rights are vastly different than the president. They want to get into your bedroom and decide if you have access to birth control. Their economic policy is vastly different from the Obama policies.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Do you support a woman's right to choose abortion?

John Legend:

Absolutely!

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Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Ohio is so very pivotal in the upcoming election. Are you going to throw any free concerts for the president?

John Legend:

I am going to do as much as I can. I'm fully aware of the importance of Ohio and how much we need to get the Black vote.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Why do you think Mitt Romney has raised \$186 million in comparison to President Obama's \$126 million? Thirty-three millionaires have given him over \$250 thousand a piece, while data show further that the president has only gotten some \$250 thousand from three millionaires. Why do you think this election is so close?

John Legend:

They are donating based on what fulfills their interests. They know that if Mitt Romney is elected, he is going to cut their taxes even further. So it's a good investment because the average millionaire will get a \$250 thousand tax cut.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

They'll get their money back?

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John Legend:

Correct.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

As you know the Republican dominated state legislatures across the country have passed or are attempting to pass state laws that suppress the Black vote. How do you feel about it?

John Legend:

Well, I think it's a tragedy. Lately, the Republicans have been admitting that they just want to suppress certain votes to win the elections for their side. In Pennsylvania, you saw that one of the state politicians there stated that the state's voter identification laws would help Mitt Romney win. In Ohio, the state official stated that he didn't want to extend voting hours in the Democratic communities because he didn't want to do anything to help Black people vote. It's a clear violation of equal rights.

Thank you Mr. Legend, I will now turn it over to Marc Churchill [**Then Cleveland Urban News.Com Marketing Director and Copy Editor takes over from Kathy Wray Coleman, the associate publisher and editor**]

Cleveland Urban News.Com Marketing Director and Copy Editor Marc Churchill:

I want to congratulate you on your three Grammy awards for your album 'Wake Up' because it seems that a lot of that album's message still pertains today. Are you still voicing the anthology that comes from that album?

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John Legend:

I certainly do believe in the spirit of that album. I'm fighting to help end poverty and all these things. I care about these issues. Though I write a bunch of love songs and a lot of songs about relationships, some of my music is about our place in society.

[Churchill then turned the interview back over to Cleveland Urban News.Com Associate Publisher and Editor Kathy Wray Coleman]

Cleveland Urban News.Com Associate Publisher and Editor Kathy Wray Coleman:

Both you and Kanye [West] are dating non-Black women. Is that a reflection that we've become more tolerant? As a Black man do you think that the country has become more tolerant on interracial relationships? Are you married yet?

John Legend:

I'm engaged actually.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

You're engaged? Congratulations!

John Legend:

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I am getting married early next year. I think generally that people that are my age or younger are starting to breakdown a lot of those barriers and don't see that as a major issue on how we interact with each other. Now we just fall in love.

Cleveland Urban News.com:

Do you attribute your success at all to Kanye West?

John Legend:

Absolutely! He has been very helpful to my career. He has been an adviser, a mentor, and a collaborator. And we are working together on my new album.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Have you been out to dinner with Kanye and Kim Kardashian?

John Legend:

Alright, we're done now. Thank you very much Ms. Coleman.

Cleveland Urban News.Com:

Okay (laughs), and thank you.

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John Legend:

Bye-bye.

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