

# Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated ® Alpha Chi Omega Chapter - Tulsa, Oklahoma Alberta G. Jones 2022 – Target IV - Honoree



## Charles “Chuck” Cissel

Chuck was the original CEO of the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, located in Tulsa, Oklahoma for 11 years (2000-2011). He is a producer, director, writer, vocalist, recording artist, songwriter, choreographer, music programmer, visionary and executive produced special concerts and special events at the Jazz Hall featuring Dave Brubeck, Freddy Cole, Stanley Jordan, Ramsey Lewis, Wynton Marsalis, Oleta Adams, Take 6, Freddie Jackson, Will Downing, Gerald Albright, Marilyn Maye, Dr. Billy Taylor, Eddie Palmieri, Taj Mahal, Wayman Tisdale, Pat Moore and other jazz/blues greats. He also created concerts showcasing the works of Ellington, Cole Porter, Gershwin Brothers, Billie Holiday, and Nat King Cole using local talent. Cissel's vision for an international arts institution, designed to bring musicians and performers from around the world to enrich the lives of Oklahomans, happened at the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, when he was the CEO. As part of the Vision 2025 Project in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Cissel spearheaded the \$5million dollar campaign to move the Jazz Hall of Fame into their new location in the historic landmark, Tulsa’s Union Depot Building, in downtown Tulsa, Ok. Cissel worked closely with the architects to design and renovate the new Jazz Hall location. The move took place June 19, 2007 (Juneteenth). "We look to the future with great promise for our music arts education programs for the youth, and our quality arts programming for the community of Tulsa and throughout the state of Oklahoma," says Cissel. The Jazz Hall mission is to inspire creativity and improve the quality of life for all Oklahomans through the preservation, education and performance of jazz, our uniquely American art form. Cissel has received numerous awards, accolades, and was inducted into the Booker T. Washington Distinguished Hall of Fame in 2010. Cissel is the only recipient of the Oklahoma Arts Council Executive Director’s Award for Excellence in Arts’ Leadership. In

addition, Chuck received the Governor's Arts Award for Community Service.  
Chuck retired in March 2011.

Prior to coming back to Tulsa in 2000 to head up the Jazz Hall of Fame, Chuck was a staple on the Broadway stage in New York City, performing in such hits as Hello Dolly, Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope, Purlie, Lost in the Stars, and the original cast of A Chorus Line and others. Cissel also performed with his own band, New Concept all over the tri-state area in NYC. He first recorded a single "Swept Away" while in the cast of A Chorus Line, produced by director/choreographer Michael Bennett. Chuck was soon signed to Arista records by Clive Davis and Larkin Arnold. Chuck's first Arista album was titled Just For You and featured the hard-hitting international dance hit, Cisselin' Hot, written by Cissel. The second album was titled "If I Had the Chance" and was produced by Clive Davis and featured the hit single, "Love's Grown Deep." He has also toured with Diana Ross and recorded with Elton John. Cissel was Arista label mate to Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick and the late Phyllis Hyman. Chuck also performed in a number of national television commercials for Pepsi, Coca Cola, Double Mint Chewing Gum and many others. In NYC, Chuck was also the owner of The Legacy Art Collection, featuring works of art by African American artists

Chuck is a Tulsa native and Booker T. Washington graduate ('66). Undergrad years at The University of Oklahoma (Fine Arts Major – '70). Cissel won Best Actor and Best Minor Actor Awards his senior year and was the first African American to do so. For four years he was a soloist in the OU Men's Glee Club. Cissel was the first African American selected as a varsity cheerleader at OU – male or female. Cissel was also voted Big Man on Campus (BMOC) and received Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities Honors in 1970.

In addition, in April 2021, Cissel produced, directed, created and performed in his production of All That Jazz and Blues on Greenwood for the Greenwood Arts Project – honoring the Centennial of the 1921 Race Massacre, utilizing local jazz and blues musicians and vocalists.