

Walter Latham

Often referred to as "*The King of Comedy*," Walter Latham is grateful for the humble upbringing and everyday challenges that shaped his early life, and instilled in him a fierce passion that led to his success as a business mogul and humanitarian.

Born to a single mother in East New York, Brooklyn, Latham soon found himself in a similar situation, becoming a father at the young age of 18, and struggling to get by with odd jobs and a brief stint in the United States Air Force. At 20, he caught a break with a permanent position at the American Express Call Center in Greensboro, NC and was thrilled to finally provide healthcare for his son, even though he knew he was bound for something greater.

Inspiration soon struck Latham, after attending a performance by his childhood friend, MC Lyte, when he realized his calling was to produce concerts. He borrowed money from his mother and produced his first concert in a nightclub. The headline act didn't show and Latham had to refund the patrons their money but what he learned from this unfortunate experience would change his path forever.

Latham decided to produce more concerts but mitigate his losses by soliciting sponsorships. He wrote and mailed 50 letters to various corporations about promoting a southeast tour with the hottest comedians. When Coors Brewing Company expressed interest, Latham soon found himself, at age 21, standing in a boardroom of top executives pitching his comedy idea.

His first comedy tour featured Chris Tucker and Bill Bellamy and Coors was so impressed they asked Latham to do another. Meanwhile, Chris Tucker, who was filming the movie "*Friday*" with Ice Cube, asked Latham to produce and promote his national tour surrounding the film release. That tour gave Latham credibility as a serious player and led to his success as the main tour promoter for Bernie Mac, Cedric The Entertainer, Sommore, Chris Rock, DL Hughley and many others. All of this, a prelude to what was about to become the biggest game changer in the business of comedy.

After a few years of promoting comedy all over the country, Latham decided to take urban comedy into bigger arenas and stadiums, and the "*Kings of Comedy Tour*" was born. Starring Steve Harvey, Cedric "The Entertainer," D.L. Hughley and the late, Bernie Mac, Latham's "*Kings of Comedy*" Tour sold out in all major arenas throughout the United States. It also out-sold all of the Pop and R&B concerts during the same time, and was one of the largest grossing tours in US history.

As a follow up to his huge success, Latham created and produced "The Queens of Comedy," starring Academy-Award winner, Mo'Nique, and "The Original Latin Kings of Comedy," starring George Lopez. He also produced the award-winning "*The Original Kings of Comedy*" movie along with MTV Films, directed by Spike Lee, and distributed by Paramount Pictures. It became the first urban comedy tour film to top box offices throughout the U.S., and remains second to this day behind Eddie Murphy's "*Raw*." The movie grossed over \$38 million and is considered a comedic classic, while the accompanying soundtrack was released on Universal Records and received a *Grammy* nomination for "*Best Spoken Comedy Album*." Following the success of "*The Original Kings of Comedy*" film, Paramount Pictures signed Latham to a five year, First Look Deal.

Walter Latham Entertainment created and produced the "Crown Royal Comedy Soul Festival," a 20-city tour, which for the first time, combined comedy and *Grammy-winning*, chart-topping musical acts, including Earth, Wind and Fire, The Isley Brothers, and comedians Rickey Smiley, Adele Givens and Earthquake. Latham also Executive Produced two seasons of HBO's hit comedy series "P. Diddy Presents the Bad Boys of Comedy," and produced FOX's "Shaken Not Stirred," five one-hour highly rated "toasts" of some of the biggest names in pop culture. To date, Latham Entertainment productions have grossed over \$250 million worldwide.

In 2012, Latham signed another three year, First Look Deal with Paramount Home Media for digital and television projects. In 2012, he partnered with YouTube on a comedy channel that delivers urban comedy programming 24/7, a historic milestone for urban comedy. The channel features content from Latham's past productions

including Bernie Mac, Tyler Perry, Mo’Nique and others as well as new content from Michael Blackson and Tara “Miss P” Powell. Latham has also created original programs for his channel including “*Comedy After Dark*,” a standup special hosted by hip-hop Queen Trina, models Rosa Acosta and Carolina Catalino, and adult film legend Jenna Jameson.

Latham continues to ink deals with distributors such as Hulu, Daily Motion, Vessel, Audible and many others further elevating Walter Latham Entertainment into an even more effective business in the ever-evolving entertainment space. At 45 years old, Walter Latham continues to be a trendsetter. Having almost single-handedly changed the face of urban comedy, Latham has made an indelible imprint in the evolution, creation and impact of urban comedy throughout the world, and he’s not done yet.

A devoted volunteer in his community, Latham remembers where he came from, and takes great pride in giving back. Latham is Founder and Chairman of *The Walter Latham Foundation*, which provides scholarships to underserved children and sponsors youth-oriented events annually. “The work we do means more to me than any of my business accomplishments,” says Latham.

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