

**Shelley Stewart**  
**Founder and President, Mattie C. Stewart Foundation**  
**Founder, o2ideas**  
**Birmingham, Alabama**

Shelley Stewart of Birmingham, Alabama overcame poverty and family tragedies as a child to eventually become one of Birmingham's best-known radio personalities and one of America's most prominent African American businessmen and philanthropists.

His broadcasting career began in 1949 as a local radio personality. He was a key communicator during Birmingham's human rights struggles of the 1960s for young people involved in street protests there. He then owned a radio station and continued his prolific 55-year journey in broadcasting. He is recognized by the Smithsonian Institution for his radio career. In September 2019, Shelley was inducted into the National Black Radio Hall of Fame, the same evening receiving a Proclamation from the Atlanta City Council commending him for his role in the success of Black radio in that city. In 2008 he was the first African American inducted into the Alabama Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame.

Stewart's "parallel career" in advertising also began in the 1960s. In 1967 he co-founded o2ideas, a marketing, advertising and public relations firm based in Birmingham. o2ideas serves clients with global brands. He has received countless national and regional business and humanitarian honors. He received the Faithful Servant Award in 1992 from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference alongside other honorees including Maya Angelou, Harry Belafonte, Rosa Parks and Alex Haley. He was recognized as a Living Legend by Warner Brothers, Reprise Records and the Urban Network alongside other honorees including Chaka Khan and Quincy Jones. He has been nominated into the National Advertising Hall of Fame.

He has been honored locally as well, receiving The Vulcan Hero Award in 2014 as well as being included in Positive Maturity's Top 50 Over 50. In 2015 he was a featured Ted Talk presenter at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In 2017 he was recognized by the American Marketing Association with its inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the marketing profession. In 2018, in his honor Samford University established the Shelley Stewart Endowed Scholarship supporting African American students in the School of Health Professions. He holds an *alumnus honoris causa* degree as an honorary member of the Samford University Class of 2013, and also holds an honorary doctorate from Miles College. He is frequently consulted for media interviews on social movements and cultural topics.

He is also President and Founder of the Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, a national non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the dropout rate. He established the MCSF in honor of his late mother, Mattie C. Stewart. To date, the Foundation's tools are estimated to have reached 19 million children, educators, community leaders and parents across 49 U.S. states.

Shelley's lifetime odyssey is chronicled in *Mattie C's Boy: The Shelley Stewart Story*, a book by NewSouth Publishing.