



2025 CFCU KJ James Memorial Scholarship

The New York State Blues Festival is pleased to present the KJ James Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded every year to promising young performers.

Kelly James is known as “the father of the blues scene” in Syracuse. He was responsible for creating and cultivating the thriving blues scene we enjoy today in Central New York, including starting the area’s very first blues festival on Burnet Avenue. He played with the band, Triple Shot, then formed Dr. Blue and the Kingsnakes, who toured nationally, before going solo as Dr. Blue.

Kelly James’ big heart and his spirit of generosity and support for up-and-coming blues musicians was legendary in the Central New York area and beyond.

Fellow musician, Terry Mulhauser said, “Kelly was a blues activist—whether he was putting together a show, a band or out on the road with his solo blues act. He always worked to raise the level of appreciation and respect for the music.”

Eligibility

- Applicant must be no more than 19 years of age.

Requirements

- Completion of attached application.
- Completion of (3) short essay questions.
- Submission of demo recording or video.

Awards

- First place winner will be awarded \$3,000 and a 10 hour recording session at SubCat Studios.
- Second place winner will be awarded \$2,000.
- Third place winner will be awarded \$1,000.

Scholarship Application

Name _____

Birthdate _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

School _____

Performing Groups _____

Instruments _____

Short Essays

- Please include a short biography of yourself.
- Please respond to the following questions:
 - 1) What is the importance of music to you?
 - 2) What is blues music to you?
 - 3) How would you spend the award?

Performance

- Please include a digital recording or video highlighting you performing and/or your songwriting ability. Blues or blues related material is preferred.

Please submit all KJ James Memorial Scholarship applications to scholarship@nysbluesfest.com no later than May 18, 2025.