

'The Soul Kitchen' on WFIU-FM What's It All About, Bro. William?

"The idea is that music comes from the soul," says *The Soul Kitchen* host William R. Morris Jr. Photo by Shannon Zahne

by Rodney Margison

William R. Morris Jr., a.k.a. "Brother William," views *The Soul Kitchen*, his radio show on WFIU-FM, as a place where listeners of all backgrounds can put aside their social and political differences and find common ground around music.

"I see these opportunities where people can be friends and let your hair down for a minute, even if you don't do it forever," Morris says. "It doesn't follow you into the voting booth. That's what *The Soul Kitchen* is all about."

Morris, 68, says his interest in music began at age 8 after watching the 1965 film *Your Cheating Heart*, about country crooner Hank Williams. "I left there, I wanted to get the album—and my dad bought me the album. I never stopped loving Hank Williams."

Then, he says, at around age 9, his father took him to his first concert. "He took me to see James Brown. I don't know that I've ever been more excited about anything in my whole life."

That combination of distinctly different musical styles led to Morris' appreciation of all genres of music, and the way in which he picks music for *The Soul Kitchen*'s 3–5 p.m. episodes on Fridays. "I go in and I've got a backpack of CDs, and it's all about the spontaneity. 'We made it to another Friday,'" he says. "I don't even know what I'm gonna play. There's something about the energy that comes from that."

Conversely, the Saturday program, from 7–9 p.m., features a specific theme each week.

The blend of music on *The Soul Kitchen*, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in January 2025, is both eclectic and natural. "The idea is that music comes from the soul," Morris says. "I play bluegrass, you'll hear Bob Marley and Van Morrison, Sinead O'Connor or Dolly Parton. I'm always interested in how music crosses racial and cultural lines.

"I was always hopeful that cultures could get along," he continues. "And races can get along, and people of different backgrounds can find ways to get along. And I think that's what people like about [*The Soul Kitchen*]. And that all is deeply meaningful to me." ✨



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