



ALERT

NAACP NAMES CICELY TYSON 95TH SPINGARN MEDALIST



Civil Rights Activist and Emmy Award Winning Actress to Receive Association's Highest Honor

(Baltimore, MD) The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People National Board of Directors announced that actress Cicely Tyson will be honored with the Association's Spingarn Medal, the NAACP's highest honor. Tyson will become the 95th recipient of the award, and will be honored during the NAACP National Convention in Kansas City July 15 at the annual Spingarn Dinner.

The Spingarn Medal, instituted in 1914 by then-NAACP Chairman Joel E. Spingarn, is awarded for outstanding and noble achievement by an American of African descent during the preceding years.

"Cicely Tyson's contributions to African American arts and culture in both acting and modeling are unprecedented and inspiring. Not only was Ms. Tyson a brilliant and groundbreaking actress but she was a stalwart supporter of human and civil rights for all Americans," said NAACP Chairman Roslyn M. Brock. "Her portrayals in masterpieces such as the Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Roots, and King, among others, were simply dynamic, and the role she has played as a human rights leader and trailblazer in the arts is invaluable."

"The NAACP is proud to present our highest honor to such a deserving actress as Cicely Tyson. It is rare to find someone who uses their celebrity status with such dedication and impact to advance the causes of human and civil rights. Her contributions to the stage and screen and the civil rights movement will never be forgotten. We are honored to give her the highest award our 101 year old organization can bestow," stated NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous.

Tyson began her career as a fashion model, gracing the cover of both premier African American and general market magazines such as Vogue and Harper's Bazaar in. She later transitioned from her modeling career into acting, and was featured on several television series, most notably East Side/West Side and the long-running soap opera Guiding Light. Tyson went on to star in the popular off-Broadway musical The Blacks, which featured James Earl Jones, Roscoe Lee Browne, Louis Gossett, Jr., Godfrey Cambridge, Maya Angelou and Charles Gordone.

In 1972, Tyson received the nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in the film *Souder*. She won two Emmys for her role in the 1974 film *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. Other memorable television roles include the television mini-series *Roots*, which received 36 Emmy nominations, *King*, in which she portrayed Coretta Scott King, *The Marva Collins Story*, *When No One Would Listen* and *Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*, for which she garnered her third Emmy.

The Cicely Tyson School of Performing and Fine Arts, a magnet school in East Orange, New Jersey, was renamed in honor of Tyson. She actively supports the school, located in one of the state's most underserved communities of color.

"I have had the good fortune of being acknowledged for accomplishments throughout my career, but the fact that I am now being recognized for what has been my life's goal by the most distinguished organization within our community is moving beyond words," said Tyson. "My deepest gratitude goes out to the Award's Committee, the NAACP Board of Directors and members of the NAACP."

"The NAACP is honored to present Cicely Tyson with its 95th Spingarn Medal for achievement by an African American," said NAACP Board Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Convention Planning Committee, Leon Russell. "Ms. Tyson's stellar body of work spans several decades, and she has presented aspiring African American actors, actresses, models, and artists with an outstanding example of talent, brilliance and commitment to giving back to her community."

To date, 94 Spingarn Medals have been awarded, recognizing achievements in a range of fields. Medalists include Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), former U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, media personality Oprah Winfrey, baseball hall of famer Henry "Hank" Aaron, Vernon Jordan, U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), William H. Cosby, Jr., Maya Angelou, Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Percy E. Sutton, Gordon Parks, John Hope Franklin, the late Judge Leon Higginbotham Jr., Carl Rowan, NAACP Chairman Emeriti Julian Bond and Myrlie Evers-Williams, businessman and publisher Earl G. Graves, Sr., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., artist Jacob Lawrence, Rosa Parks, opera singer Leontyne Price, Judge Constance Baker Motley, Judge Robert L. Carter, and the late Oliver W. Hill, Sr.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP--the nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization—is celebrating its 101st anniversary this year. Its more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

Cicely Tyson Celebrates New School With Oprah

ESSENCE MAGAZINE



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Cicely Tyson is enjoying her flowers while she can smell them. The activist and actress celebrated the opening of the state of the art Cicely Tyson School of Performing and Fine Arts in East Orange this past weekend. The Hollywood legend was overwhelmed as friends and family, including Oprah Winfrey, who flew in from Chicago, Angela Bassett, Terrence Howard, Susan L. Taylor, Lynn Whitfield and more came to support to show their support.

"I cannot tell you how overwhelmed I am with this moment," she told the assembled crowd. "It was my mission to complete the cycle."

Tyson declined the offer of Principal Laura Trimmings several times, for the school to be named for her. It wasn't until she learned her father lived just blocks from the school, when he first moved to America from the West Indies, that she said yes to the school's offer. The Harlem native has been hands-on since becoming a part of the school, and introduced town halls to bring parents in to connect with the faculty and staff.

"This is the type of person I wanted to be a role model for the kids," Principal Trimmings said. "She never allowed herself to diminish her integrity or her pride for herself and her people. She turned down a lot of parts that could have brought her monetary gain. Every year she spends her birthday with the students and that speaks volumes."

What also says a lot is the people who come when you call. CNN's Soledad O'Brien was the emcee for the special occasion, as Oprah Winfrey sat front and center. Tyson was surprised early in the program when the man moving her mic stand was none other than Terrence Howard, and replied with a laugh, "You can move my mic stand anytime." Angela Bassett was compelled to say a few words and called up good friend and actress Janet Hubert to join her at the event. Howard caught the school's artistic spirit, and played the guitar. Designer B. Michael served as

auctioneer to raise more funds for the school and BeBe Winans performed a musical tribute. Legendary husband-and-wife duo Ashford and Simpson, Rhonda Ross and Jeff Majors also came out to celebrate with Tyson.

"I have been blessed with the opportunity to mold the minds of our children," Tyson said. "It is my only desire that the students step outside of these doors and know they are capable of doing anything they put their minds to. I hope I live long enough to see these students become the masters of their fate."

The \$143 million new structure for the performing arts is one New Jersey's finest schools and will now serve talented students in grades k-12. Local residents will also benefit from the structure, as the library, gym, music rooms and medical clinics are open to the community.

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http://www.essence.com/news/hot_topics_4/cicely_tyson_celebrates_new_school_with.php#ixzz0lBo39ril