



Inaugural HBCU Honors™ Recipients Announced with Oprah Winfrey as Special Guest

Oprah Winfrey Celebrates Black Excellence at the Inaugural HBCU Honors™

The inaugural HBCU Honors™ honorees include Dr. Sheila Chamberlain, Michael S. Regan, Pinky Cole, Curtis Symonds, Aunjanue Ellis, Stephen A. Smith, Steve Pamon, and Dr. Glenda Baskin Glover.

MIAMI, Fla. – January 20, 2023 – Taped live from Miami's [Black Archives-Historic Lyric Theater](#), the inaugural HBCU Honors™ lauds eight extraordinary alumni from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) whose ground-breaking achievements have helped change the world. The televised event's world-premiere is Wednesday, February 15, 2023, on streaming platforms including [Crackle](#), [Plex](#), and [LG](#) and is presented by [AmFam Insurance](#).

Emmy® award-winning producer and actress Wendy Raquel Robinson ("The Game") hosts the star-studded black-tie affair that is unapologetically all about the greatness of HBCUs. She is a proud cum laude graduate from [Howard University](#).

The evening of inspiration and aspiration includes award presentations, tributes, musical performances, and an "In Memoriam" HBCU alumni salute. The HBCU Honors™ will feature Oprah Winfrey as its Special Guest.

"I am so proud to join you all for this inaugural HBCU Honors Celebration as a proud HBCU alum myself. I have experienced firsthand how supportive and valuable an HBCU education is... and have been honored to give back and support throughout my career," said Oprah Winfrey, talk show host, television producer, actress, author, and philanthropist. "I want to personally recognize all of the inaugural honorees, especially Dr. Glenda Glover of my alma mater TSU as our HBCU Honors Alumnus of the Year, as they have all certainly put in the important work of making sure these institutions continue to create safe spaces for excellence to flourish. I also want to thank you - Michelle Bailey and Jessica Garrett Modkins for your work in creating this special event."

From well-known trailblazers and game changers to hidden figures, the inaugural awards spotlight notable HBCU alumni who epitomize Black excellence. Having broken glass ceilings to reach the pinnacle in their respective fields, these titans are leaders in aviation, innovation, media and entertainment, entrepreneurship, business, public service, and academia.

"Our stories matter, and they need to be told through our cultural lens," said North Carolina AT&T alumna Jessica Garret Modkins, award show Executive Producer and Director. "As a fourth generation HBCU graduate, it was imperative that we produce an award show to amplify the greatness and the impact of HBCUs like never before," the CEO and Founder of [Hip Rock Star](#) continued.

Inaugural Honorees:

- Dr. Sheila Chamberlain “*Breaking Barriers Award*” ([Spelman College](#)) - the first Black female combat intelligence Pilot
- Curtis Symonds “*Vanguard Award*” ([Central State University](#)) - Cable Television pioneer, [HBCUGo.TV](#) founder and CEO
- Aunjanue Ellis “*Media & Entertainment Luminary Award*” ([Tougaloo College](#)) - Oscar-nominated actress (“King Richard”), and producer
- Steve Pamon “*Cultural Innovator Award*” ([Morehouse College](#)) - Verzuz President and Grammy award winner as executive producer of [Beyonce’s](#) Homecoming
- Pinky Cole “*Entrepreneur & Empowerment Award*” ([Clark Atlanta University](#)) - founder/CEO, the \$100 million dollar [Slutty Vegan](#) restaurant chain and [The Pinky Cole Foundation](#)
- Stephen A. Smith “*HBCU Champion Award*” ([Winston-Salem State University](#)) - ESPN commentator (“First Take” and “NBA Countdown”)
- Michael S. Regan “*Distinguished Public Service Award*” ([North Carolina A&T State University](#)) - the first Black man to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Dr. Glenda Baskin Glover “*HBCU Alumnus of the Year Award*” ([Tennessee State University](#) & [Clark Atlanta University](#)) – the first female president of Tennessee State University and Vice-Chair of [The White House Initiative on HBCUs](#)

In true “new normal” fashion, HBCU Honors™ integrates unforgettable in-person and pre-recorded elements of Black excellence throughout the tentpole. The all-star night includes tributes and award presentations from special guests including famed HBCU alumni and supporters such as [Oprah Winfrey](#), [Reverend Al Sharpton](#), and [Tyler Perry’s House of Payne](#) star Cassie Davis.

Viewers will also enjoy must see musical performances by Morehouse College alumnus and Grammy® nominated artist [Canton Jones](#), the award-winning [Bethune-Cookman Marching Wildcats](#), and the renowned 105 Voices of History National HBCU Choir, which is “the nation’s first and only national choir for HBCUs” according to Renata Roy the choir’s visionary and founder.

In partnership with the [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#) (TMCF), HBCU Honors™ is raising awareness about the greatness of HBCUs while raising needed funds (Text TMCF to 41444) to ensure students reach their HBCU graduation goal. [George F. Spencer](#), TMCF Chief Development Officer speaks on the organization’s mission and its scholars at the award show.

Spelman alumna Michelle M. Bailey, HBCU Honors™ creator and Co-Executive Producer stated, “The award show is not just about amplifying current outstanding HBCU alumni.” In HBCU pride fashion, the award show was created with a multi-focused purpose. “But, it [HBCU Honors™] is also an opportunity to support future honorees...HBCU students who are our next gen leaders,” the former [BET Networks](#) Senior Vice-President continued.

For more information about HBCU Honors™, visit www.hbcuhonors.org.