

# **BET Recognizes Six Exceptional Individuals That are Legendary in Music, the Arts, Service and Education in the Fourth Annual BET HONORS**

**On Saturday, January 15, BET Networks Honors the Achievements of Cicely Tyson, Jamie Foxx, Iman, Herbie Hancock, Linda Johnson Rice and Lonnie Bunch**

**BET HONORS Premieres on Monday, February 21, at 9:00 p.m.\***

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In its fourth consecutive year, BET Networks presents [BET HONORS](#), an unforgettable night honoring the achievements of six extraordinary legends in music, the arts, service and education. Hosted by actress **Gabrielle Union** for the third year and taped at the historic Warner Theater in Washington, DC, [BET HONORS](#) recognizes lifetime contributions and exceptional service of certain individuals to African-American culture in music, media, film, service and education. The special will premiere during Black History Month on **Monday, February 21 at 9:00 p.m.\***

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The 2011 honorees include legendary actress **Cicely Tyson** (Theatrical Arts), Oscar award-winning actor/musician and comedian **Jamie Foxx** (Entertainer), supermodel/entrepreneur **Iman** (Service), publishing mogul **Linda Johnson Rice** (Media), world renowned musician/composer **Herbie Hancock** and accomplished historian/educator **Lonnie G. Bunch** (Education).

Last year's monumental show honored Whitney Houston, Queen Latifah, Sean "Diddy" Combs, Ruth Simmons and Keith Black with once-in-a-lifetime performances by Jennifer Hudson, Mary J. Blige, India.Arie, Patti LaBelle, Stevie Wonder, among others.

Stephen Hill, President of Music Programming and Specials, BET Networks, and Lynne Harris Taylor, Vice President of Specials, BET Networks are executive producers, along with John Cossette of John Cossette Productions.

Proceeds from this year's [BET HONORS](#) private ticket sales will be given to the Washington, D.C. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc. Additionally, BET Networks will encourage audience members, viewers at home and online visitors to donate to the Project.

For more information on [THE BET HONORS](#), visit [www.bet.com/bethonors](http://www.bet.com/bethonors).

**\*All times EST**

## **About the 2011 BET Honorees**

**CICELY TYSON** - Her storied career as both pioneer and numerous award-winning actress have made her a national treasure. In 1962, Cicely became the first black actress to co-star in a television drama series, *East Side / West Side*. Cicely is probably best known on the television side for her Emmy-Award winning performance in *The Oldest Confederate Widow Tells All* and her double-Emmy-Award winning performance in *The Autobiography Of Miss Jane Pittman*. In 2009, Cicely was nominated for an Emmy for her work Hallmark's TV movie *Relative Strangers*. On the feature side, Cicely is easily recognizable for her Academy Award-nominated performance in *Souder*. 2009 marked an important moment for Cicely as well as the art community of Orange, New Jersey with the unveiling of the Cicely L. Tyson Community School of Performing and Fine Arts on October 24, 2009. Ms. Tyson was recently honored by the NAACP when she became the 95th recipient of the Spingarn Medal.

**JAMIE FOXX** - A true renaissance man, Jamie Foxx has firmly established himself as a legitimate multi-threat, garnering endless accolades and praise in the worlds of film & television, music, comedy, and radio. An Oscar, Grammy, Golden Globe, and SAG winner; Foxx first broke onto the scene in the early '90s as a cast member of the groundbreaking sketch comedy series *In Living Color*. From there, Foxx expanded onto the big screen with his first dramatic role, going toe-to-toe with legend, Al Pacino, in Oliver Stone's stylized football flick *Any Given Sunday*. He went on to star alongside some of Hollywood's biggest names, including Tom Cruise, Will Smith, Colin Farrell, and Robert Downey Jr., but no role was bigger and better received than his career-altering, Oscar-winning turn as Ray Charles in *Ray*. Foxx continues to stretch his talents in such hit films as *Valentine's Day* (starring Julia Roberts, George Lopez, and Jessica Biel), *Due Date* (starring Robert Downey Jr. and Zack Galifianakis), and the upcoming *Horrible Bosses* (starring Jennifer Aniston, Jason Bateman, and Kevin Spacey), all the while blazing the music scene with platinum albums *Unpredictable* and *Intuition*. His highly anticipated next album, *Best Night of My Life*, drops December 2010.

**IMAN** - Iman began her career in 1975 as a model and has challenged the prevailing notions of beauty ever since. The daughter of an African diplomat, Iman was born in Somalia and grew up speaking five languages. She studied political science at Nairobi University where she was discovered by legendary photographer Peter Beard. Her first modeling assignment was for *Vogue* in 1976. Iman was an instant success in the fashion world, and a muse for fashion designers including Yves. St. Laurent, Versace, Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. During her 14 years as a model, she worked with top photographers Helmut Newton, Richard Avedon, Irving Penn and Annie Liebovitz. Iman is Founder and CEO of IMAN Cosmetics, Skincare and Fragrances, a beauty company that created the first cosmetics and skincare collection designed for all women with skin of color. Iman's HSN Global Chic line is one of the four top sellers among more than 200 fashion and jewelry brands on HSN. Additionally, Iman was recently honored by the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) with the Fashion Icon Award and currently co-hosts Bravo's *The Fashion Show*. In addition to running a global beauty company, Iman is actively involved in several charities, including The Children's Defense Fund and Action Against Hunger. In 2006 Iman became the Global Ambassador for KEEP A CHILD ALIVE.

**LINDA JOHNSON RICE** - Linda Johnson Rice is chairman of Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., home of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines and Fashion Fair Cosmetics. Under her leadership, the company remains the No. 1 African-American owned-and-operated publishing company in the world. She continued in her role as chairman as of August 10, 2010, after being named chairman and CEO of the corporation in 2008. Rice was appointed to chief executive officer in 2002 and became president and chief operating officer in 1987. As head of the organization, Rice has implemented several innovative initiatives throughout Johnson Publishing Company, which is headquartered in Chicago and has offices in New York and London. Her leadership has delivered consistent growth for the company as she championed the revitalization of layout and design for *EBONY* and *JET*, in addition to the new advertising, packaging and product launches for Fashion Fair Cosmetics. These initiatives have resulted in increased productivity for both the publishing and cosmetics sectors of the business. Rice demonstrates a strong belief in enhancing the future of today's youth by supporting several education initiatives and corporate internship programs as well as the John H. Johnson School of Communications at Howard University. Through *Ebony Fashion Fair*, Johnson Publishing Company has donated more than \$55 million to charitable causes, many related to education.

**HERBIE HANCOCK** - Herbie Hancock is a true icon of modern music. Throughout his explorations, he has transcended limitations and genres while maintaining his unmistakable voice. With an illustrious career spanning five decades and 12 Grammy® Awards, he continues to amaze audiences. There are few artists in the music industry who have had more influence on acoustic and electronic jazz and R&B than Herbie Hancock. As the immortal Miles Davis said in his autobiography, "Herbie was the step after Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, and I haven't heard anybody yet who has come after him." Herbie Hancock won an Oscar in 1986 for scoring the film *Round Midnight*, in which he also appeared as an actor. He also maintains a thriving career outside the performing stage and recording studio. Recently named by the Los Angeles Philharmonic as Creative Chair For Jazz, he currently also serves as Institute Chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, the foremost international organization devoted to the development of jazz performance and education worldwide. Hancock is also a founder of The International Committee of Artists for Peace. Now in the fifth decade of his professional life, Herbie Hancock remains where he has always been: in the forefront of world culture, technology, business and music. Though one can't track exactly where he will go next, he is sure to leave his inimitable imprint wherever he lands.

**LONNIE G. BUNCH** - Historian, author, curator and educator, Lonnie G. Bunch, III is the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. In this position he is working to set the museum's mission, coordinate its fundraising and membership campaigns, develop its collections, establish cultural partnerships and oversees the design and construction of the museum's building. As a public historian, a scholar who brings history to the people, Bunch has spent nearly 30 years in the museum field where he is regarded as one of the nation's leading figures in the historical and museum community. In service to the historical and cultural community, Bunch has served on the advisory boards of the American Association of Museums and the American Association of State and Local History. Among his many awards, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to the Commission for the Preservation of the White House in 2002. In 2005, Bunch was named one of the 100 most influential museum professionals in the 20th century by the American Association of Museums and in 2009; *Ebony Magazine* named him one of its 150 most influential African Americans. Born in the Newark, N.J. area, Bunch has held numerous teaching positions across the country including The American University in Washington, D.C. (1978-1979); the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (1979-1981); and The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. (1989-2000). He received undergraduate and graduate degrees from The American University in Washington, D.C. in African American and American history.

### **About the Host**

**GABRIELLE UNION** - Gabrielle Union is an award-winning actress, successful model and has been praised by Oprah Winfrey for being a noted activist on violence against women. She landed her first major role opposite Kirsten Dunst in the teen hit *Bring It On* in 2001. Since then, she has catapulted her career to the next level: starring in blockbuster films *Bad Boys II*, opposite Will Smith and Martin Lawrence, *Deliver Us From Eva* in 2003, opposite LL Cool J, the Tyler Perry film *Daddy's Girls* and the Christmas film *The Perfect Holiday* to name a few. Union has appeared in countless TV shows including a recent role in ABC's hit series, *FlashForward*.

## **About BET Networks**

BET Networks, a division of Viacom Inc. (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), is the nation's leading provider of quality entertainment, music, news and public affairs television programming for the African-American audience. The primary BET channel reaches more than 90 million households and can be seen in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom and sub-Saharan Africa. BET is the dominant African-American consumer brand with a diverse group of business extensions: BET.com, a leading Internet destination for Black entertainment, music, culture, and news; CENTRIC, a 24-hour entertainment network targeting the 25- to 54-year-old African-American audience; BET Digital Networks - BET Gospel and BET Hip Hop, attractive alternatives for cutting-edge entertainment tastes; BET Home Entertainment, a collection of BET-branded offerings for the home environment including DVDs and video-on-demand; BET Event Productions, a full-scale event management and production company with festivals and live events spanning the globe; BET Mobile, which provides video, entertainment, news, ringtones and more to wireless devices; and BET International, which operates BET in the United Kingdom and oversees the extension of BET network programming for global distribution.

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