

**Cicely Tyson**  
**Actress, Humanitarian, Activist, Lecturer**

Cicely Tyson has blazed trails as an actress by challenging universal stereotypes and as an activist by using the world stage to raise consciousness of our common humanity.

On the cinematic stage, she is best known for her portrayals of strong black women who defy stereotypes, including: “Jane” in “East Side – West Side,” where she became the first black actress to co-star in a television drama series; “Rebecca” in the feature film *Sounder*; and in the title role of the film “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” for which she won an unprecedented two Emmys for her performance.

Tyson also received an Emmy for her performance as “Castalia” in “The Oldest Confederate Widow Tells All” and an Ace Award for her role in “Heatwave,” a television docudrama on Watts. Among her other awarded films are “A Woman Called Moses,” “The Marva Collins Story,” “The Women of Brewster Place,” “Blessed Assurance,” “Fried Green Tomatoes,” “King,” “Mama Flora’s Family” and “A Lesson Before Dying.” In 1994, she co-starred in the TV drama series “Sweet Justice” and received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on August 21, 1997.

More recently, in 2006, Tyson starred in two films that debuted in the same week: “Diary of a Mad Black Woman,” which debuted in first place, and “Because of Winn-Dixie,” which debuted third place. Her latest work, “Relative Stranger” for the Hallmark Channel, aired in March 2009.

On the world stage, her performance as a humanitarian has been equally transformational. As World Ambassador for UNICEF and a volunteer for Save the Children, she has directed attention to the plight of children throughout the world. She also is currently involved with the Market Women’s Project with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and FuturePac, an organization dedicated to raising funds to support women with political aspirations. She is a founding member of Coalition for a Healthy and Active America and a spokesperson for the American Legacy Foundation, an anti-smoking organization.

A true Renaissance woman, Tyson’s passions radiate into the arena of the arts and the halls of academia. She co-founded The Dance Theater of Harlem along with Arthur Mitchell, its artistic director, and actor Brock Peters. She also co-chaired the first and second National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta with Harry Belafonte. And for a month each year, Tyson lectures to young people on college campuses, in churches and other organizations nationwide. One of the most meaningful accolades of her life, she says, is when the Cicely Tyson School of Performing and Fine Arts in East Orange, N.J., was named in her honor on November 3, 1996.

She continues to earn honors and recognitions for her remarkable career and social activism from organizations such as The National Council of Negro Women, PUSH, SOLO, CORE, The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Change and the NAACP, which has awarded her a record thirteen Image Awards.