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Acclaimed Historian and Filmmaker Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. to Receive Lifelong Learning Award at WHYY President's Dinner, May 3

PHILADELPHIA, April 17, 2018 — WHYY will honor acclaimed scholar and filmmaker Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. with its Lifelong Learning Award at the 17th annual WHYY President's Dinner on Thursday, May 3, 2018. The event will take place at WHYY's Dorrance H. Hamilton Public Media Commons and feature an on-stage interview of Dr. Gates by Terry Gross, host of WHYY's *Fresh Air*, the Peabody Award-winning radio program dedicated to the arts and to the in-depth exploration of national and international issues. The interview will be broadcast on WHYY-TV.

"Through books, documentaries like *Africa's Great Civilizations*, and his groundbreaking genealogy series *Finding Your Roots*, Dr. Gates has helped shape audience's understanding of African and African American history and culture like never before," said William J. Marrazzo, President & CEO of WHYY, Inc. "His work goes beyond the textbook, providing a richness of imagery, context and commentary that solidifies the importance of this history to all people regardless of race."

The WHYY President's Dinner is held each year at WHYY's studios on Independence Mall in Philadelphia and features a reception and dinner for hundreds of the area's leading civic, corporate, and major public media supporters. Previous recipients have included former U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden, former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, news anchors Jim Lehrer and Robert MacNeil, broadcaster Cokie Roberts, Philadelphia's legendary Kenny Gamble, and Jack Bogle, founder of The Vanguard Group.

"It's an honor to recognize a man who has, without a doubt, elevated the national conversation on race, history, and culture, helping us discover the value in acknowledging, understanding, and presenting accurate information in an compelling way," said Fred Sutherland, Chairman of WHYY's Board of Directors.

An Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, journalist, cultural critic, and institution builder, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has authored or co-authored twenty-two books and created eighteen documentary films, including *Wonders of the African World*, *African American Lives*, *Faces of America*, *Black in Latin America*, and *Black America since MLK: And Still I Rise*. His six-part PBS documentary series, *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*, which he wrote, executive produced, and hosted, earned the Emmy Award for Outstanding Historical Program—Long Form, as well as the Peabody Award, Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, and NAACP Image Award.



Having written for such leading publications as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *Time*, Dr. Gates serves as chairman of TheRoot.com, a daily online magazine he co-founded in 2008, and chair of the Creative Board of FUSION TV. Dr. Gates is also the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University, and he oversees the Oxford African American Studies Center, the first comprehensive scholarly online resource in the field.

The recipient of 55 honorary degrees and numerous prizes, Professor Gates was a member of the first class awarded “genius grants” by the MacArthur Foundation in 1981, and in 1998, he became the first African American scholar to be awarded the National Humanities Medal. He was named to *Time*’s 25 Most Influential Americans list in 1997, to *Ebony*’s Power 150 list in 2009, and to *Ebony*’s Power 100 list in 2010 and 2012. In 2017, the Organization of American States named Gates a Goodwill Ambassador for the Rights of People of African Descent in the Americas.

“Public media has allowed me to bring lesser known stories of the African and African American experience to the masses and given me a forum to clear up old myths and beliefs, replacing them with the fascinating and multifaceted history of a culture,” said Dr. Gates. “It’s my privilege to be presented with this tribute from a vital organization that connects citizens to thought-provoking ideas and information through storytelling, education, and civic dialogue”

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For more information and to reserve tickets to the WHYY President’s Dinner, contact Roseann Oley, WHYY Vice President of Institutional Advancement, at 215-351-1223 or roleyn@whyy.org

