

Memorial Covers

A TRIBUTE TO THOSE WE LOST IN 2023

by Don Neal

We're remembering with memorial covers some of the beloved celebrities — from iconic actors to popular musicians to legendary athletes to television pioneers to major media personalities — who sadly passed away in 2023. Some of them may be familiar to you, others not so much, but all have made a historic contribution to the Black experience.

First Black male Tony Award winner — First Black soap opera star — A veteran song-and-dance man — Cy Young Award winner

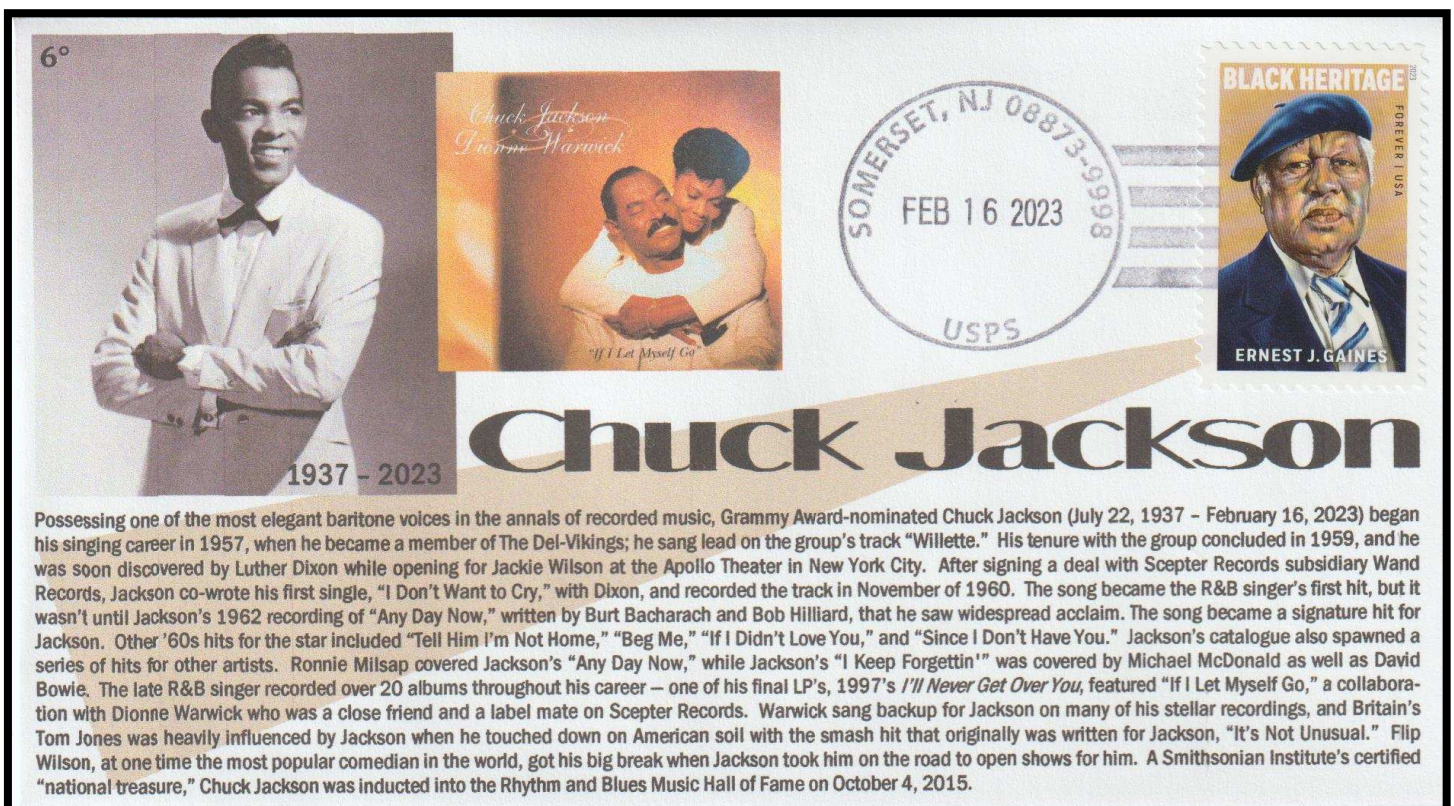
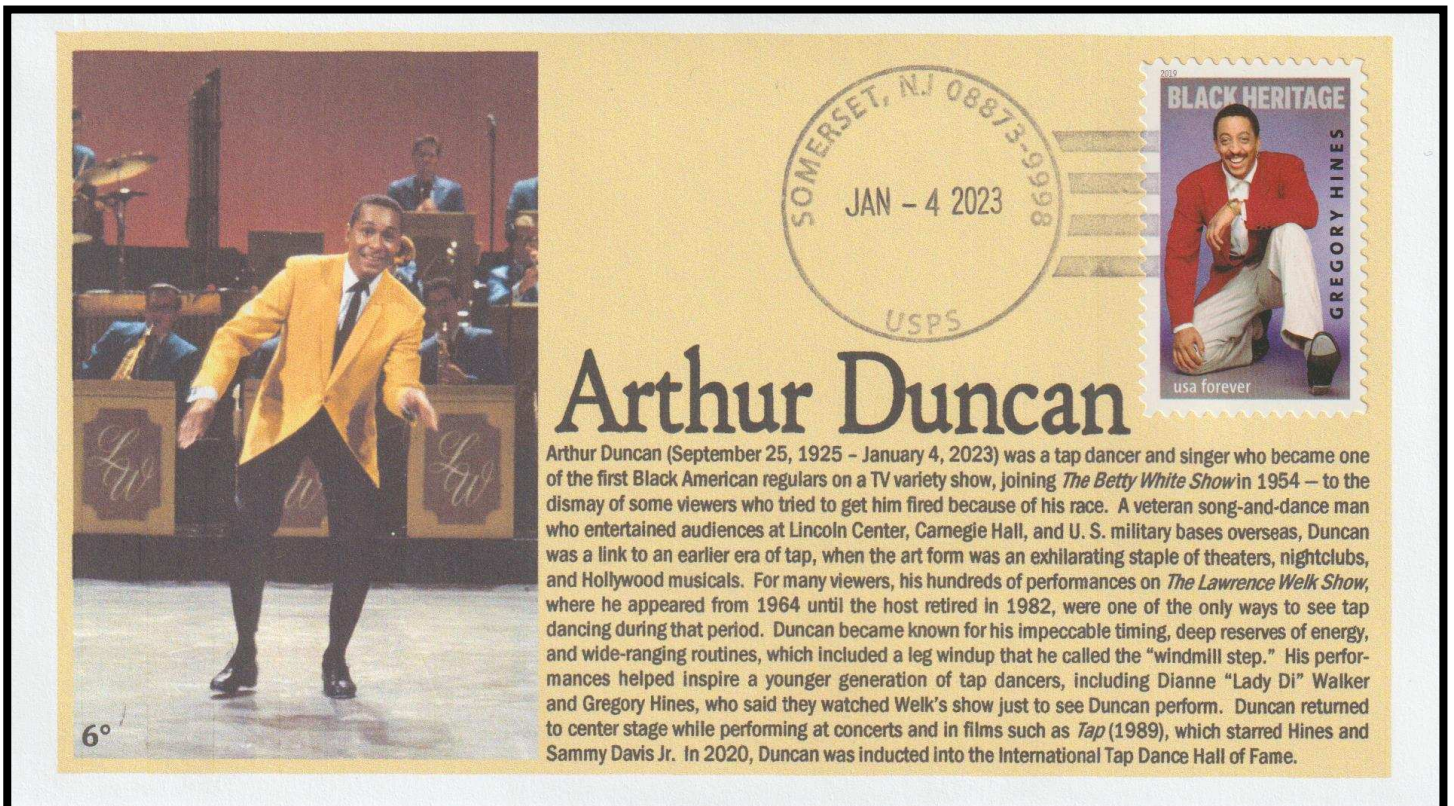
“The cat that won't cop out when there's danger all about” — The iconic “Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll” — NY Knicks Hall of Famer

The consummate actor who portrayed Det. Frank Pembleton, King Henry V, Jackie Robinson, and A. Phillip Randolph

First Black female Secret Service agent — An NFL Hall of Fame running back — First Black singer at the Metropolitan Opera

Award-winning television, film, and stage actor — A Smithsonian Institute's certified “national treasure” — NEA Jazz Master

The longest serving Black congressional staffer — Iconic producer of popular 1970s sitcoms — The “Black Godfather” power broker





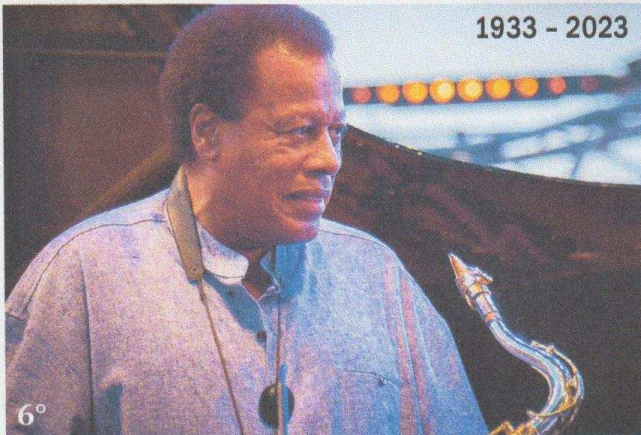
6°

Zandra Flemister with U. S. President Gerald R. Ford and (below) escorting Prime Minister of Jamaica Michael Manley (far right) during his visit to Washington, D.C., in December 1977.



Zandra Flemister

Zandra Iona Flemister (November 21, 1951 - February 21, 2023) joined the United States Secret Service in 1974, becoming the first Black American woman to serve as an agent, standing at the side of presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter and their families, and specifically protecting first daughters Susan Ford and Amy Carter. But from her first days on the job, Ms. Flemister endured acts of racism and discrimination that would ultimately drive her from the agency she had so eagerly hoped to serve. She was often relegated to undesirable roles within the agency, which investigated forgery, counterfeiting and other financial crimes in addition to protecting the president, vice president, and other dignitaries and their families. Flemister resigned from the Secret Service in June 1978 to join the United States Foreign Service. During her thirty-plus years as a diplomat with the Foreign Service, Flemister became a specialist in consular affairs, among other fields, with postings in capitals that included Buenos Aires, Madrid, London, and Seoul, and rose to the post of Consul General in Pakistan and represented the State Department in liaison with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Terrorist Screening Center in Washington, D.C. In 2000, Flemister gave sworn testimony in support of a class action lawsuit alleging that the Secret Service was rife with racial discrimination. More than one hundred former agents joined the suit. In 2017, the Secret Service paid \$24 million to settle the lawsuit.



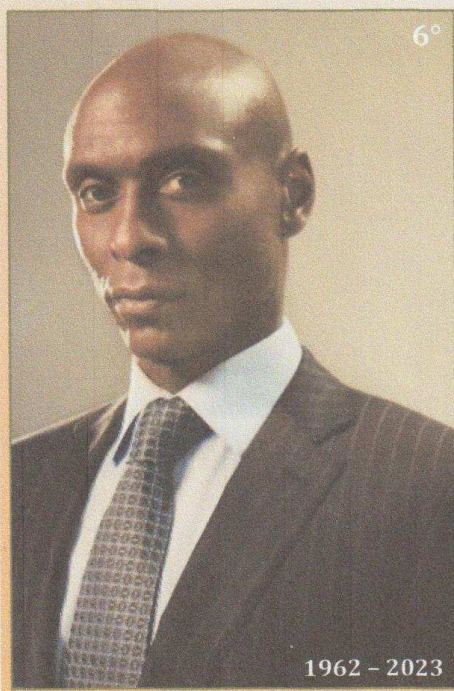
1933 - 2023

6°



WAYNE SHORTER

In his youth, the jazz saxophonist Wayne Shorter (August 25, 1933 - March 2, 2023) was awarded the nickname "Mr Gone," in recognition of his distant, otherworldly air. Shorter came to prominence in the late 1950s as a member of, and eventually primary composer for, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. In the 1960s, Shorter joined Miles Davis's Second Great Quintet, with Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter. He then co-founded with pianist Joe Zawinul the jazz fusion band Weather Report. Eventually Shorter succeeded to the title of jazz's greatest living improviser: a musician, composer, and bandleader universally admired for his originality and breadth of vision. His sense of cool detachment helped him to create a musical microclimate that was unique and immediately identifiable. From 1977 through 2002, he appeared on ten Joni Mitchell studio albums. He played an extended solo on the title track of Steely Dan's album *Aja* and played the sax solo on Don Henley's song "The End of the Innocence." Shorter toured with guitarist Carlos Santana, keyboardist Herbie Hancock, bassist Marcus Miller, and drummer Cindy Blackman Santana under the name Mega Nova. He can be heard on the soundtrack of the Harrison Ford film *The Fugitive*. During his career, Wayne Shorter recorded over 20 albums as a bandleader. He is the recipient of the NEA Jazz Masters Award, the prestigious Polar Music Prize, the Kennedy Center Honors Award, the Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award, and a total of 12 Grammy Awards®, the most recent awarded just last month. His last album release, a triple-CD set titled *Emanon*, featured music for a chamber orchestra and live recordings of his quartet from a London concert, accompanied by a lavishly produced comic book reflecting his lifelong interest in science fiction. In 2018, Shorter retired from his near 70-year performing career due to health issues. He continued working as a composer, creating a "new operatic work" titled *Iphigenia* with Esperanza Spalding which premiered on November 12, 2021, at the Cutler Majestic Theatre. Wayne Shorter was born in Newark, New Jersey, as was legendary vocalist Sarah Vaughan.

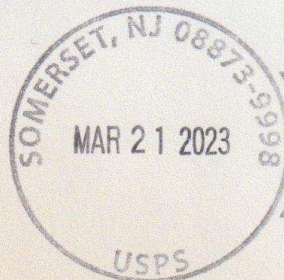
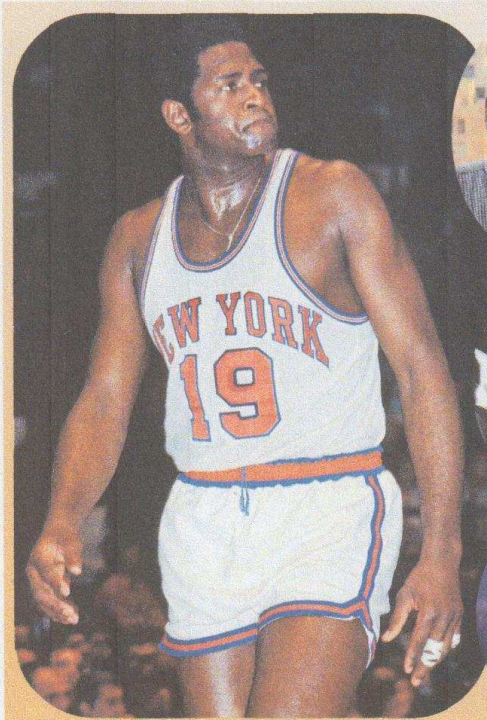


1962 - 2023



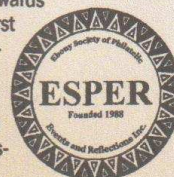
LANCE REDDICK

Possessed of an athletic build and a deep, resonant voice, the incisive, intense, multi-talented actor Lance Solomon Reddick (June 7, 1962 - March 17, 2023) made his television debut in an episode of *New York Undercover* (1994). He soon found himself much in demand - and ultimately typecast - as powerful authority figures. His first regular role was on HBO's *Oz* where he played undercover detective Johnny Basil posing as a prison inmate (1997-2003). Reddick was best known for playing defense attorney Cedric Daniels in *The Wire* (2002-2008), special agent Phillip Broyles in *Fringe* (2008-2013), and Chief Irvin Irving in *Bosch* (2014-2020). Despite his trademark intensity, Reddick also showed off a lighter side, guest starring in the sitcom *Young Sheldon*. In film, he was best known for starring as the mysterious Charon in the *John Wick* franchise (2014-2023). Reddick also voiced characters in video games including Sylens in *Horizon Zero Dawn* and *Horizon Forbidden West* and Commander Zavala in the *Destiny* franchise. He will appear posthumously as the Greek god Zeus in the upcoming series *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*.



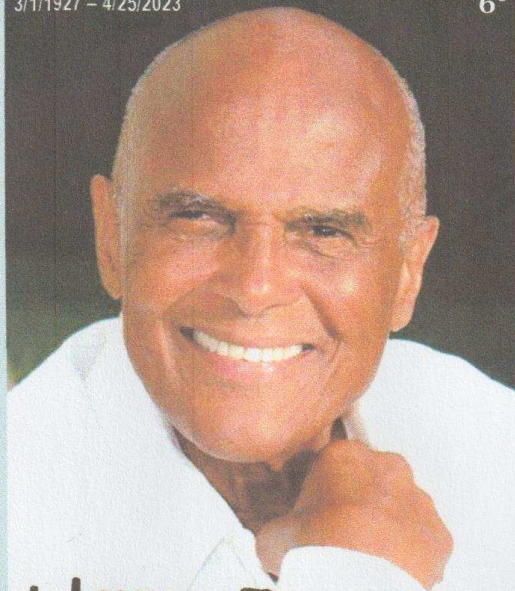
Willis Reed

Nicknamed "The Captain," Willis Reed (June 25, 1942 - March 21, 2023) spent his entire professional playing career (1964-1974) with the New York Knicks as a center and was the emotional leader on their two NBA championship teams. His accomplishments include seven All-Star selections, two NBA Finals MVP awards among them. During the 1969-70 season, he became the first player to sweep the MVP awards for the regular season, All-Star Game, and NBA Finals. His No. 19 was the first number retired by the Knicks, and he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame in 1982. In 1996, he was voted one of the "50 Greatest Players in NBA History." Reed had a successful post-playing career as a coach and executive.

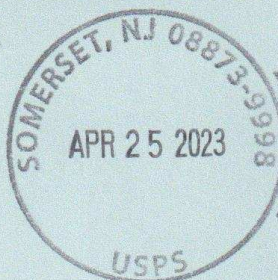


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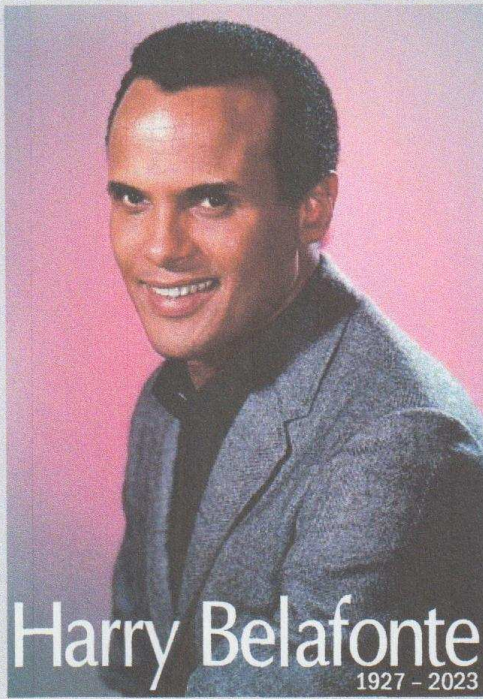
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Harry Belafonte

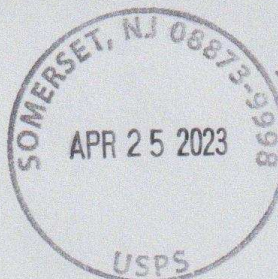


Harry Belafonte - actor, producer, singer, and activist - burst to fame in the 1950s and made calypso music a national phenomenon with "Day-O" (The Banana Boat Song) - His breakthrough album *Calypso* (1956) became the first LP in the world to sell more than 1 million copies within a year - He received two Grammy Awards and the Grammy Hall of Fame Award - He was the first Black man to win a Tony Award on Broadway in the 1953 revue *John Murray Anderson's Almanac* - In 1960, he was the first Black person to receive an Emmy Award for *The Revlon Revue: Tonight With Belafonte* - He was the first Black American television producer - He was featured in numerous films from Otto Preminger's hit musical *Carmen Jones* (1954) as a GI who falls for temptress (Dorothy Dandridge) to *Buck and the Preacher* (1972) and *Uptown Saturday Night* (1974) with Sidney Poitier to Spike Lee's Academy Award-winning *BlackKkKlansman* (2018) as an elderly civil rights pioneer - In real life, he was a civil rights activist and confidant of Martin Luther King, Jr. - From 1987 until his death, he was a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and supported several other humanitarian causes - He received the Kennedy Center Honors in 1989 - He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1994 - He received EGOT status with the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (non-competitive) from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2014 - In 2022, Belafonte was selected for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. RIP Harry!

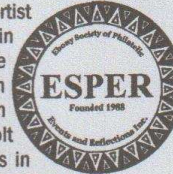


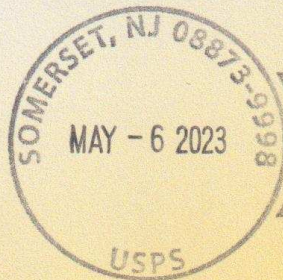
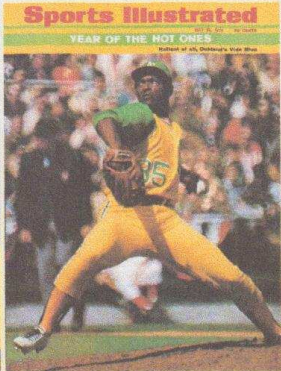
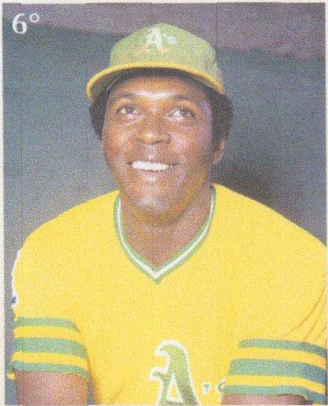
Harry Belafonte

1927 - 2023

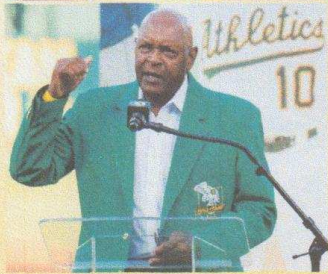


Harry Belafonte - actor, producer, singer, and activist - burst to fame in the 1950s and made calypso music a national phenomenon with "Day-O" (The Banana Boat Song). He was the first Black man to win a Tony Award on Broadway, for his interpretation of American and Caribbean folk music in the 1953 revue *John Murray Anderson's Almanac*. Six years later, he was the first Black person to receive an Emmy Award for *The Revlon Revue: Tonight With Belafonte*, a CBS special that presented a history of Black American life through music. He made his film debut in *Bright Road* (1953), in the role of a school principal opposite a teacher played by Dorothy Dandridge. They were reunited in *Carmen Jones* (1954), with Belafonte as a GI who falls for a temptress. In 1956, his third album, *Calypso*, topped the Billboard top-albums chart and was the first album by any single artist to reach the million-seller mark. Throughout his career, Belafonte was involved in various causes. He was a supporter of the civil rights movement and a close friend of Martin Luther King, Jr. Belafonte was active in African humanitarian efforts, notably appearing on the charity song "We Are the World" (1985). In 1987, he became a UNICEF goodwill ambassador. He received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2014. In 2022, Belafonte was selected for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.





VIDA BLUE

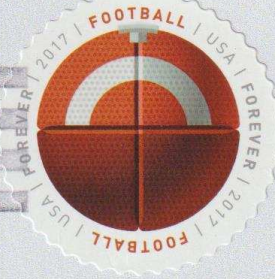
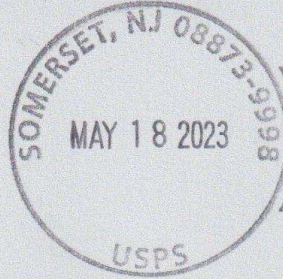
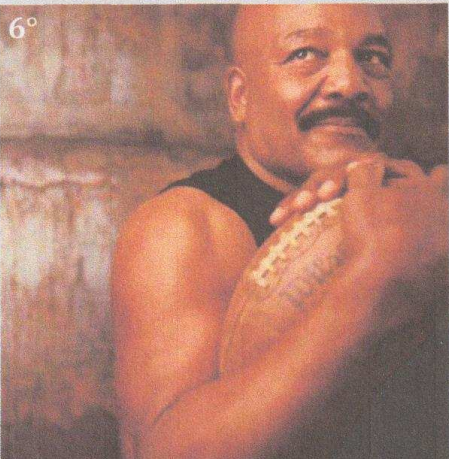


Vida Rochelle Blue, Jr. (July 28, 1949 – May 6, 2023) was a left-handed pitcher in Major League Baseball from 1969 to 1986, most notably as an integral member of the Oakland Athletics dynasty that won three consecutive World Series championships from 1972 to 1974. Selected by the then-Kansas City Athletics on the second round of the 1967 amateur draft, Blue made his big league debut on July 20, 1969, about a week shy of his 20th birthday, in the team's second year after moving to Oakland. In his fourth start, Blue pitched a no-hitter against Minnesota on September 21, at 21 years, 55 days that made him the youngest pitcher to throw a no-hitter since the live ball era started in 1920. Blue was voted the 1971 American League Cy Young Award and Most Valuable Player after going 24-8 with a 1.82 ERA and 301 strikeouts with 24 complete games, eight of them shutouts. He was 22 at when he won MVP, the youngest to win the award. He remains among just 11 pitchers to win MVP and Cy Young in the same year. A six-time All-Star, Blue was the first of only five pitchers in major league history to start the All-Star Game for both the American League (1971) and the National League (1978). During his 17-year career, he pitched for the Oakland Athletics (1969-1977), the San Francisco Giants (1978-1981; 1985-86), and the Kansas City Royals (1982-83).



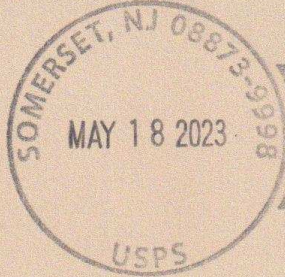
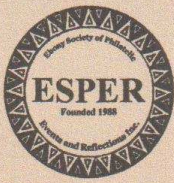
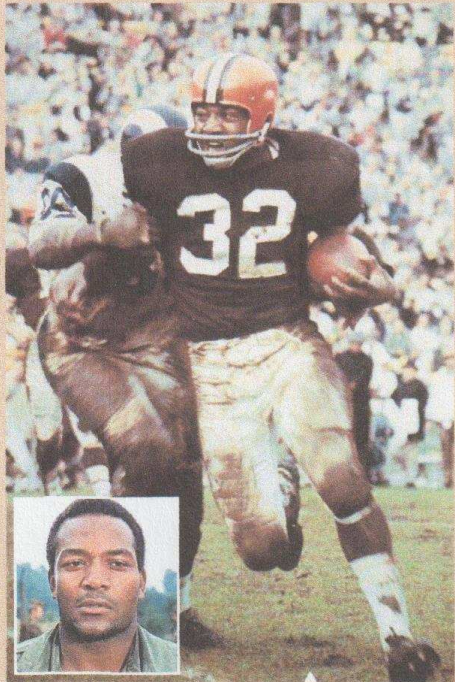
GRACE BUMBRY

Mezzo-soprano and soprano opera singer Grace Bumbry (January 4, 1937 – May 7, 2023) became a trailblazer for other Black women in opera. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, into a musical family, Bumbry was inspired when her mother took her to a recital of Marian Anderson, the American contralto who in 1955 became the first Black singer at New York's Metropolitan Opera. In 1958, Bumbry was a joint winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions with soprano Martina Arroyo. They became part of a generation of acclaimed Black opera singers that included Leontyne Price, Shirley Verrett, George Shirley, and Reri Grist. In 1959, Bumbry gave her first concert in London, and a year later, she celebrated her opera debut in Paris as Amneris in Verdi's *Aida*. Bumbry gained international renown when she was cast as Venus in *Tannhäuser* at the 1961 Richard Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, Germany, at age 24, the first Black singer to appear there, which earned her the nickname "Black Venus." Reviews of her Bayreuth debut on July 23, 1961, were mostly positive but resulted in 200 protest letters to the festival. As a result of the attention, Bumbry was invited by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to sing at a White House state dinner the following February. Debuts followed at Carnegie Hall in November 1962, London's Royal Opera in 1963, and Milan's Teatro alla Scala in 1964. Bumbry appeared at the Met on October 7, 1965, as Princess Eboli in Verdi's *Don Carlo*, the first of 216 performances with the company. Her final full opera at the Met was at Amneris in Verdi's *Aida* on November 3, 1986. Among her many honors, Bumbry was inducted into the St. Louis Walk of Fame; she was bestowed the UNESCO Award, the Distinguished Alumna Award from the Academy of Music of the West, Italy's Premio Giuseppe Verdi, and was named Commandeur des Arts et Lettres by the French government. She received a Grammy Award in 1972 for Best Opera Recording. She was among those honored with the 2009 Kennedy Center Honors, for her contribution to the performing arts. Grace Bumbry died at age 86 in a hospital in her chosen hometown of Vienna, Austria.



JIM BROWN

James Nathaniel Brown (February 17, 1936 – May 18, 2023) was a football fullback, civil rights activist, and actor. He played for the Cleveland Browns of the National Football League (NFL) from 1957 through 1965. Considered to be one of the greatest running backs of all time, as well as one of the greatest players in NFL history, Brown was a Pro Bowl invitee every season he was in the league, was recognized as the AP NFL Most Valuable Player three times, and won an NFL championship with the Browns in 1964. He led the league in rushing yards in eight out of his nine seasons, and by the time he retired, he held most major rushing records. Brown was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1971. He was named to the NFL's 50th, 75th, and 100th Anniversary All-Time Teams, comprising the best players in NFL history. His number 32 jersey is retired by the Browns. Jim Brown also is widely considered one of the greatest lacrosse players of all time and was inducted in the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1983. Shortly before the end of his football career, Jim Brown became an actor. He appeared in several films including *The Dirty Dozen*, *Ice Station Zebra*, *Three the Hard Way*, *The Running Man*, *He Got Game*, and *Any Given Sunday*. Brown has been described as Hollywood's first Black action hero.



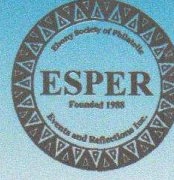
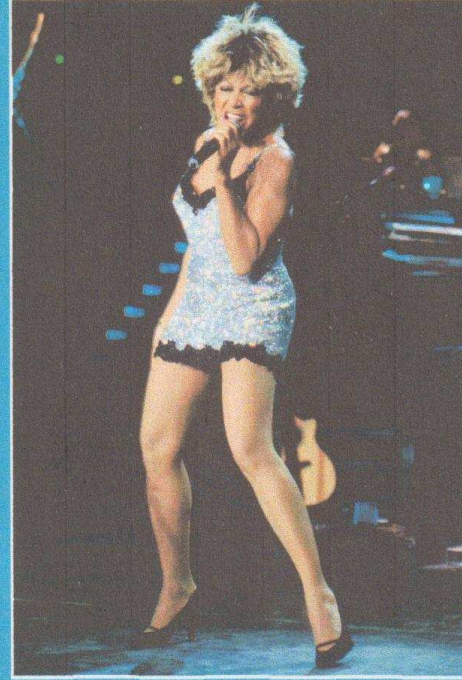
Jim Brown

Jim Brown (1936 - 2023), the legendary Cleveland Browns running back, completed his professional career holding the records for most rushing yards in a season, most rushing yards in a career, most rushing touchdowns, most total touchdowns, and most all-purpose yards. What he achieved in a nine-year NFL career is so astounding that he is widely considered the greatest NFL player ever. In the 1964 NFL title game, he rushed for 114 yards when the Browns pounded the Baltimore Colts, 27-0, delivering Brown a coveted championship ring. Jim Brown started his movie career while still playing for the Browns. After his career ended, the pro football hall-of-famer became an actor and civil rights activist, focusing on entrepreneurial opportunities and housing fairness for minorities. He appeared in his first notable film, MGM's classic 1967 war film *The Dirty Dozen*. Over the next 46 years, Brown went on to appear in more than 50 movies and TV shows. His extensive filmography includes the dystopian Arnold Schwarzenegger sci-fi thriller *The Running Man*, the violent Tim Burton sci-fi comedy *Mars Attacks*, and the Oliver Stone sports drama *Any Given Sunday*.



TINA Turner

Iconic singer Tina Turner (November 26, 1939 - May 24, 2023) was the voice behind epic hits like "River Deep - Mountain High," "What's Love Got to Do With It?," "Private Dancer," "Proud Mary," "The Best," and "We Don't Need Another Hero (Thunderdome)." Revered as "The Queen of Rock," she was born Anna Mae Bullock in the heart of the Tennessee delta. Having sold over 100 million records worldwide, Turner is one of the best-selling recording artists of all time. She received twelve Grammy Awards, which include eight competitive awards, three Grammy Hall of Fame awards, and a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. She was the first Black artist and first woman to be on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine, which ranked her among the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time and the 100 Greatest Singers of All Time. Turner has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and on the St. Louis Walk of Fame. She was twice inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, with Ike Turner in 1991 and as a solo artist in 2021. She also was a 2005 recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors. Tina Turner was born and died in the year of the rabbit, was a practicing Buddhist, and on April 22, 2013, she became a citizen of Switzerland.



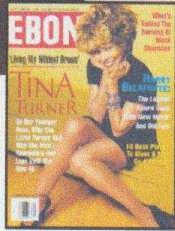
Tina Turner

Tina Turner (born Anna Mae Bullock; November 26, 1939 - May 24, 2023) was an American-born Swiss singer. Known as the "Queen of Rock 'n' Roll," she rose to prominence as the lead singer of the Ike & Tina Turner Revue before launching a successful career as a solo performer. Her 1984 multi-platinum album *Private Dancer* contained the hit song "What's Love Got to Do with It," which won the Grammy Award for Record of the Year. Her chart success continued with "Better Be Good to Me," "Private Dancer," "We Don't Need Another Hero (Thunderdome)," "Typical Male," "The Best," "I Don't Wanna Fight," and *GoldenEye*. Turner also acted in the films *Tommy* (1975) and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985). In 1993, *What's Love Got to Do with It*, a biographical film adapted from her autobiography I, *Tina: My Life Story*, was released. In 2009, Turner retired after completing her *Tina: 50th Anniversary Tour*. In 2019, she became the subject of a jukebox musical on Broadway, *Tina*. Adrienne Warren won her first-ever Tony for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a musical for her electric performance. Tina Turner died at her home in Küssnacht, Switzerland, on May 24.



TINA!

Singer, actor, author
Sang on "We Are the World" all-star charity single
Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award recipient
Kennedy Center Honoree
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee
Hollywood Walk of Fame



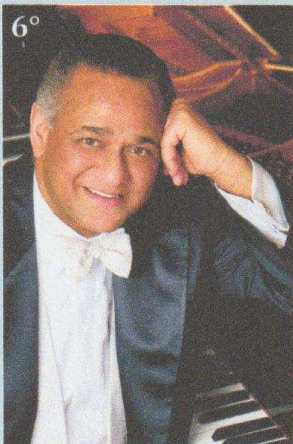
YEAR OF THE RABBIT

JANUARY 12, 2023
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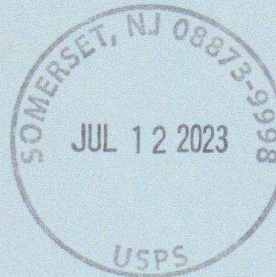


FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Born November 26, 1939 (Year of the Rabbit) - Died May 24, 2023 (Year of the Rabbit)

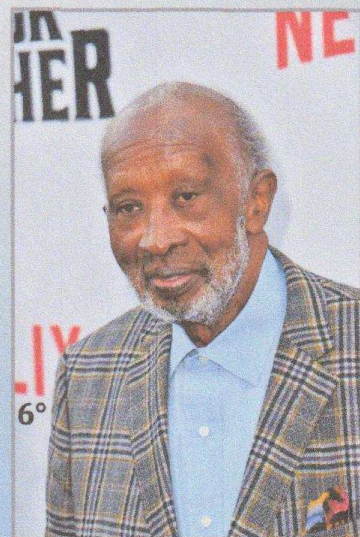


1946 - 2023

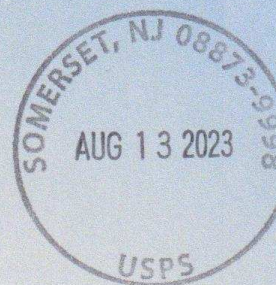


André Watts

André Watts (June 20, 1946 - July 12, 2023) was a classical pianist. Born in Nuremberg, Allied-occupied Germany, he was the son of a Hungarian mother, a pianist, and a Black American father, a U. S. Army non-commissioned officer. Watts spent his early childhood in Europe, living mostly near army posts where his father was stationed. Watts began to study the violin when he was four. By age six, he decided the piano was his instrument. When he was eight years old, his father's military assignment brought the family to the United States. They settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At age ten, Watts performed Mendelssohn's G minor concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and at fourteen, Franck's Symphonic Variations, again with the Philadelphia Orchestra. At sixteen, he auditioned at Carnegie Recital Hall in a competition to play in conductor Leonard Bernstein's televised Young People's Concert series with the New York Philharmonic. Watts' performance of the Liszt Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat at a Young People's Concert on January 12, 1963, was videotaped and nationally televised on CBS on January 15, 1963. He won a Grammy Award for Best New Classical Artist in 1964. By the mid-1970s, Watts was giving 150 concerts, recitals, and chamber performances per season, performing about eight months out of the year. Over the six decades of his career, he performed as soloist with every major American orchestra and most of the world's finest orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra.

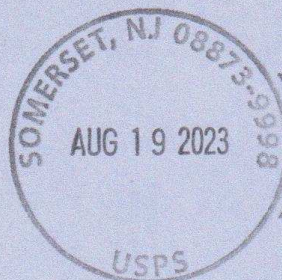
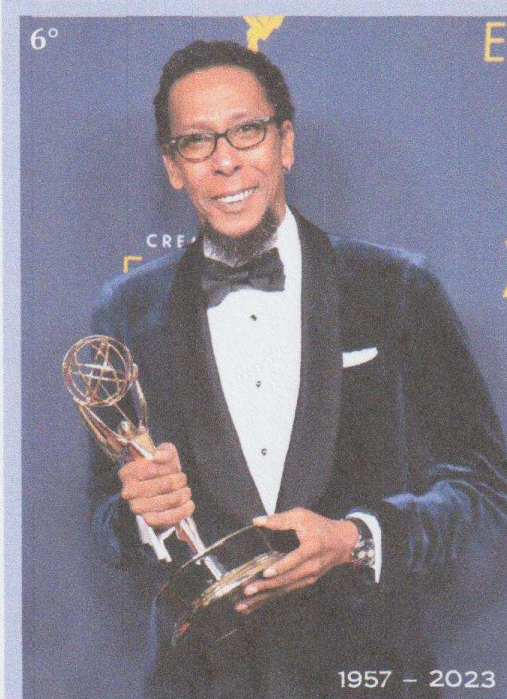


Throughout his career, Clarence Avant fought for the recognition and fair compensation of Black creators.



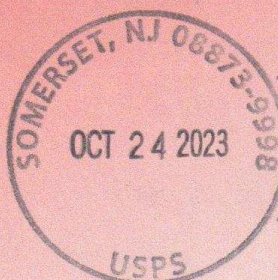
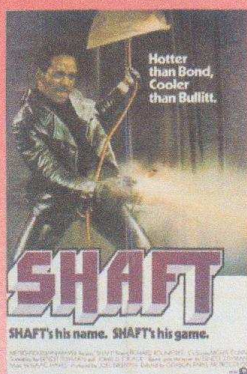
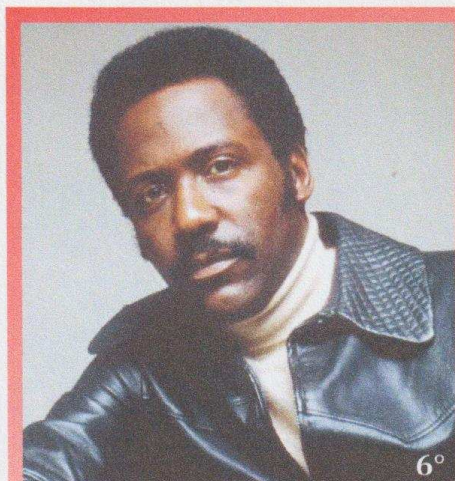
Clarence Avant

Executive and businessman Clarence Alexander Avant (February 25, 1931 - August 13, 2023) was a major power broker who helped launch, guide, or boost the careers of generations of musicians, entertainers, sports stars, and politicians to the extent that he was known as the "Black Godfather." Among the notable names he advised are Quincy Jones, David Geffen, Jay-Z, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Pharrell Williams, Whitney Houston, Antonio "L.A." Reid, Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, Lionel Richie, Jimmy Iovine, Irving Azoff, Reginald Hudlin, Sylvia Rhone, Queen Latifah, Jheri Busby, Jon Platt, Sean Combs, Snoop Dogg, and Jamie Foxx. As a young man, Avant started out by managing a range of musicians in the 1950s, including blues singer Little Willie John, film music composer Lalo Schifrin, who wrote the theme to *Mission: Impossible*, jazz vocalist Sarah Vaughan, and jazz organist Jimmy Smith. During his career, Avant brokered the sale of Stax Records in the 1960s; discovered and signed "Ain't No Sunshine" singer Bill Withers in the '70s; co-promoted *Bad*, Michael Jackson's first solo world tour, in the '80s, and became the chairman of Motown Records after founder Berry Gordy Jr. sold the company in the '90s. Avant's influence extended to sports. He helped running back Jim Brown transition from football to acting and produced a primetime television special for Muhammad Ali. When baseball great Henry "Hank" Aaron was on the verge of surpassing Babe Ruth as the game's home run champion, in 1974, Avant made sure that Aaron received the kind of lucrative commercial deals often elusive for Black athletes, starting with a personal demand to the president of Coca-Cola. Avant was a major behind-the-scenes force in politics, seeding the early careers of Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, and Jimmy Carter. He also advised President George H.W. Bush. Among other accomplishments, Avant was inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2021, has been awarded the Industry Icon Award at the Grammys, and he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



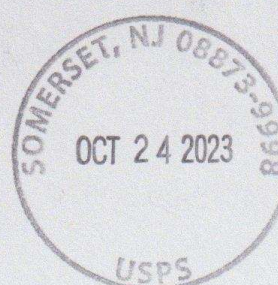
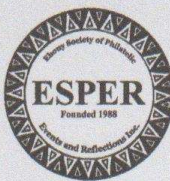
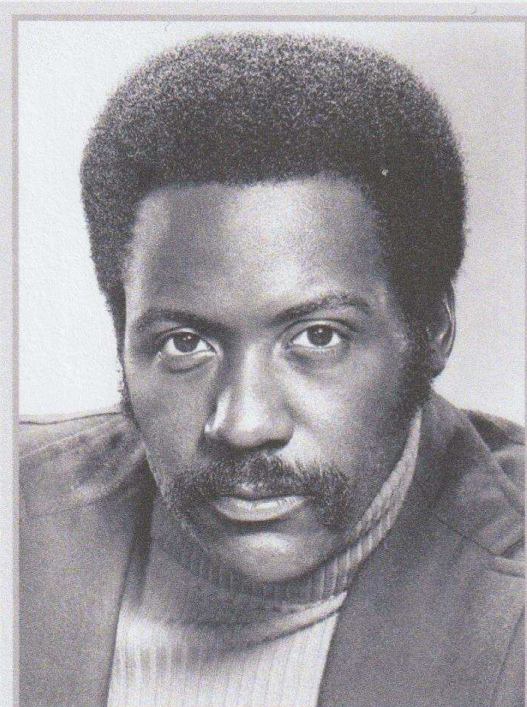
RON CEPHAS JONES

Ron Cephas Jones (January 8, 1957 - August 19, 2023) began his career at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York City, and his love for the stage was present throughout his entire career, including his recent Tony nominated and Drama Desk Award winning performance for his role in *Clyde's* on Broadway. Jones had a long career in television and film, appearing in hits including *Mr. Robot*, *Dog Days*, *Luke Cage*, *Dolemite Is My Name*, *Law & Order: Organized Crime*, and more, but the actor was best known for his recurring role as William Hill, the biological father of Randall Pearson (Sterling K. Brown), in the drama series *This Is Us*. The role earned Jones four consecutive Primetime Emmy Award nominations, winning twice for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series in 2018 and 2020. When his daughter, *Blindspotting* and *Hamilton* star Jasmine Cephas Jones, earned her first Emmy for outstanding actress in a short-form comedy or drama series for her work on Quibi's #FreeRayshawn, the pair became the first-ever father-daughter winners in the same year.



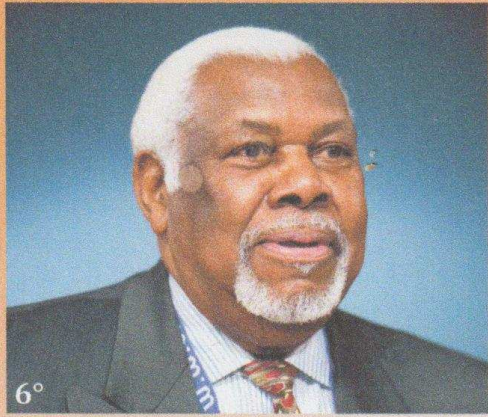
Richard Roundtree

In 1971, Richard Arnold Roundtree (July 9, 1942 - October 24, 2023) was cast in the role of street-smart John Shaft, a part that would break the traditional roles given to Black American actors up to that point, and rocket the actor to stardom. He reprised the role of Shaft in the sequels *Shaft's Big Score* and *Shaft in Africa*, a short-lived TV series, and would also return to the role many years later in the 2000 John Singleton-directed sequel, which also starred Samuel L. Jackson as Shaft's nephew, and again in the 2019 follow up, also titled *Shaft*. Roundtree also portrayed the title character opposite Peter O'Toole as Robinson Crusoe in *Man Friday* (1975), was featured as an army sergeant opposite Laurence Olivier as General Douglas MacArthur in the Korean War drama *Inchon* (1981), and played Burt Reynolds' partner in a private-eye business in *City Heat* (1984). On the 1977 groundbreaking ABC miniseries *Roots*, Roundtree took on the pivotal role of carriage driver Sam Bennett, who falls for Leslie Uggams' Kizzy. Roundtree once revealed that he was most proud of his work in *Once Upon a Time ... When We Were Colored* (1996) about a Black Mississippi family confronting inequality in the South. Away from his most iconic role, Roundtree starred in dozens of movies and TV series over his expansive career. Away from the cameras, Roundtree previously fought and beat breast cancer in the 1990s but lost his life to pancreatic cancer.

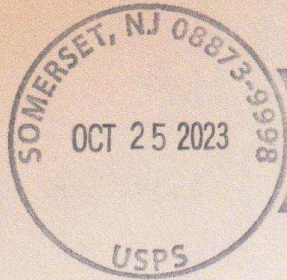


Richard Roundtree

Dubbed the first Black action hero, Richard Arnold Roundtree (July 9, 1942 - October 24, 2023) became one of the faces of the 1970s blaxploitation movement when he starred as John Shaft, the street-smart New York sleuth in *Shaft* (1971), directed by Gordon Parks. The ultracool actor helped open the door to a generation of Black filmmakers and performers with his portrayal of "the cat that won't cop out when there's danger all about." *Shaft's* success was fueled by its title tune, written and sung by Issac Hayes; he performed it at the 1972 Academy Awards ceremony and won the Oscar for best original song. Roundtree returned for *Shaft's Big Score!* (1972) and *Shaft in Africa* (1973) and played the detective on a 1973 CBS series that lasted just seven episodes. When the franchise was rejuvenated in 2000 with Samuel L. Jackson starring as the nephew of the famed shamus, Roundtree appeared as his uncle. He and Jackson came back in 2019 for another movie. Roundtree was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1993 and had a double mastectomy. He died at his home in Los Angeles of pancreatic cancer.

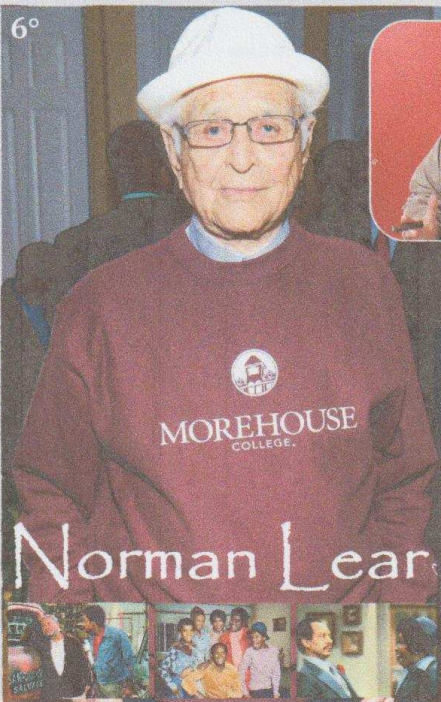


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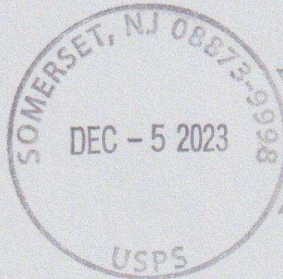


Herbert "Bertie" Bowman

Herbert "Bertie" Bowman arrived in Washington, D. C., in 1944 as a 13-year-old runaway from South Carolina where he worked his way up from a janitorial position to becoming the hearing coordinator for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1966. Bowman had dreamed of escaping the grueling life on the farm and his father's rule of law. He saw a glimmer of possibility in 1944 when he met a senator from South Carolina, Burnet Maybank, who invited crowds gathered at a local store to "drop by" and see him if ever they were in Washington, D. C. Bowman managed to track down Maybank, who helped him secure a place to stay and a job sweeping the Capitol steps for \$2 a week. Bowman swiftly established himself as a jack-of-all-trades and eventually became a janitor for the Capitol. During that time, he formed relationships with influential members of the government, including future President Lyndon Johnson. Bowman's close relationships with White politicians — even those who had publicly supported segregation — became an unusual aspect of his career. Bowman called Strom Thurmond a good friend. Bowman also was friendly with Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina, and Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, both of whom also supported segregation. During this time, Bowman also supervised a young Bill Clinton, who, at the age of 21, served as a messenger for the Committee. Bowman recalled in his memoir, *Step by Step*, how the two of them bonded over their shared love of Elvis because years later, former President Clinton penned the book's foreword. Bowman had continued to work in the Capitol until his death at age 92 on October 25, 2023, becoming the longest-serving Black American congressional staffer in U. S. history.



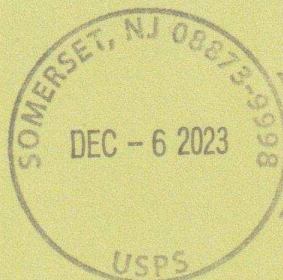
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Norman Milton Lear (July 27, 1922 – December 5, 2023) was a screenwriter and producer who produced, wrote, created, or developed over 100 shows. Black characters in U. S. television in the 1970s were mostly limited to minor roles until Lear made them the focus of some of his shows. Lear was known for creating and producing numerous popular 1970s sitcoms (which brought themes almost nonexistent on commercial television — racial prejudice, divorce, rape, Black inner-city struggle, upward social mobility — to compelling life) including *All in the Family* (1971–1979) which introduced viewers to a blue-collar bigot named Archie Bunker (Carroll O'Connor), *Maude* (1972–1978) which starred Bea Arthur as Maude Findlay, a much-divorced feminist firebrand (and cousin to Edith Bunker), *Sanford and Son* (1972–1977) which starred Redd Foxx as a crusty, old junk dealer, *Good Times* (1974–1979) which followed the family life of Maude's former housekeeper, Florida Evans (Esther Rolle), in a Chicago housing project, *One Day at a Time* (1975–1984) which starred Bonnie Franklin as a divorced mother raising two teenage daughters, *The Jeffersons* (1975–1985), starring Sherman Hemsley and Isabel Sanford, which tracked the upward mobility of the Bunkers' Black American neighbors, George and Louise Jefferson, and *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* (with Louise Lasser as the titular Mary Hartman) was a satirical soap opera that aired in daily weeknight syndication from January 1976 to July 1977. Norman Lear's entertainment career spanned the late 1940s to the 21st century, and he also found prominence in later life as a liberal political activist.

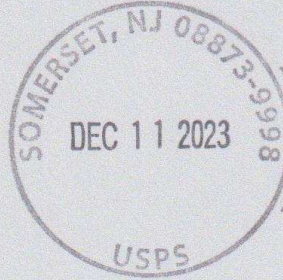
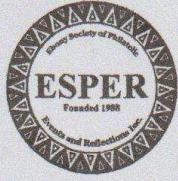
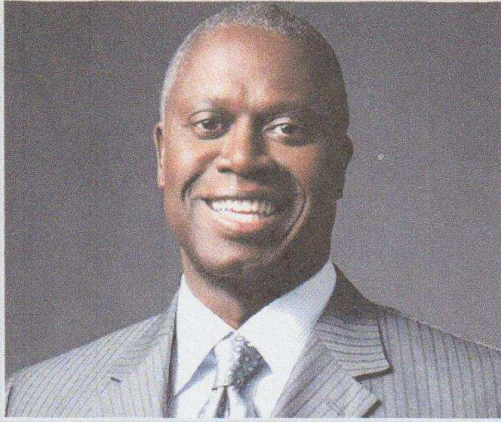


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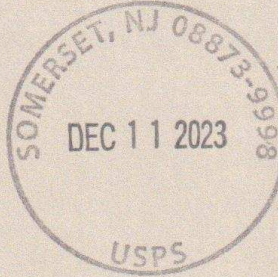
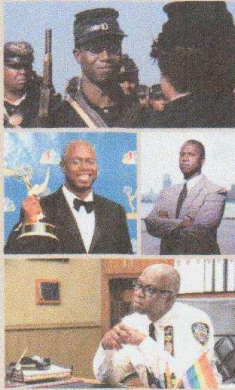
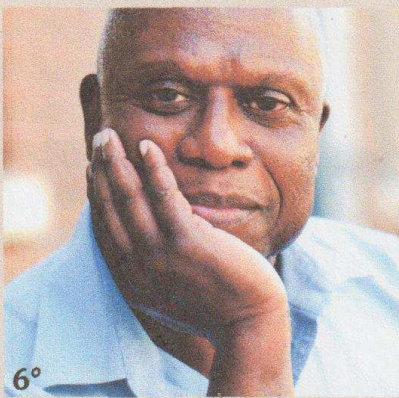
ELLEN HOLLY

Ellen Virginia Holly (January 16, 1931 – December 6, 2023) was the first Black person to star in a soap opera with her lead role on *One Life to Live*. She played the groundbreaking character Carla Gray, who passed for White, on the hit ABC show from 1968 to 1980 and 1983 to 1985. *On One Life to Live*, her attempt to come to terms with her racial identity and her love triangle with two doctors — one White, the other Black — helped launch viewership of the nascent soap opera into high ratings. Holly personally was chosen for the role by television producer Agnes Nixon after she saw a *New York Times* opinion piece that Holly wrote, called "How Black Do You Have To Be?" about the difficulty of finding roles as a light-skinned Black woman. Holly continued to appear on the small screen, with a recurring role as a judge on *The Guiding Light* from 1988 to 1993 and *In The Heat of the Night* from 1989 to 1990 as well as the television movie *10,000 Black Men Named George*, alongside Andre Braugher and Mario Van Peebles. Holly's first roles on television included appearances on *The Big Story* (1957), *The Defenders* (1963), *Sam Benedict* (1963), *Dr. Kildare* (1964), and *The Doctors and the Nurses* (1963 and 1964). She also appeared on the big screen in *Take a Giant Step*, *Cops and Robbers*, and Spike Lee's *School Daze*. A graduate of Hunter College, Holly became a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. during her college years. She began her acting career on New York City and Boston stages. She made her Broadway debut in *Too Late the Phalarope* in 1956 and went on to star in the Broadway productions *Face of a Hero*, *Tiger Tiger Burning Bright*, and *A Hand is on the Gate*. Throughout her years in the theater, she worked opposite such luminaries as Roscoe Lee Browne, James Earl Jones, Jack Lemmon, Barry Sullivan, and Cicely Tyson. Holly also studied with dance pioneer Katherine Dunham and was passionate about the role of dance in revealing the richness of Black American culture.



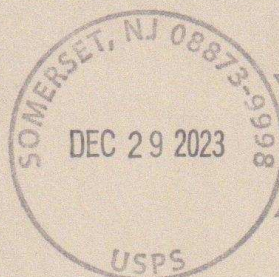
André Braugher

André Keith Braugher (July 1, 1962 - December 11, 2023) would establish himself with the role of Det. Frank Pembleton, a self-righteous, fiery, unyielding, Jesuit-educated police detective, which he would play for seven seasons in *Homicide: Life on the Street*, a gritty police drama on NBC. The 11-time Emmy-nominated actor won his first Emmy for outstanding lead actor in a drama series in 1998 for his portrayal of Pembleton. His second win came in 2006, when he earned an Emmy for outstanding lead actor in a miniseries or movie category for playing Nick Atwater in the FX miniseries *Thief*. Years later, he would play a very different kind of cop on a very different kind of show, shifting to comedy as Capt. Raymond Holt on *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. It would run for eight seasons from 2013 to 2021 on Fox and NBC. Interestingly, Braugher's TV roles included portrayals of stamp honorees: Jackie Robinson (The Court-Martial of Jackie Robinson) and A. Philip Randolph (*10,000 Black Men Named George*). The title refers to the custom of the time when Pullman porters, all of whom were Black, were addressed as "George." The TV movie also starred Charles S. Dutton, Mario Van Peebles, Brock Peters, and Ellen Holly (who died December 6, 2023). Braugher also narrated several PBS documentaries and was a voice actor in animated films. His first film role was as a soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War in the 1989 film *Glory*. He starred or had supporting roles in several other movies. Braugher also was a consummate Shakespearean actor, appearing in productions including *Much Ado About Nothing* (Benedick), *Twelfth Night* (Antonio), *Henry V* (King Henry V, for which he received an Obie Award), *Hamlet* (Claudius), *Macbeth* (Macbeth), and *Othello* (Iago).



André Braugher

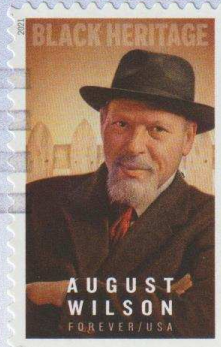
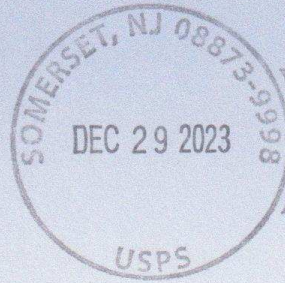
André Keith Braugher (July 1, 1962 - December 11, 2023) was a charismatic and commanding actor, best known for his roles as Det. Frank Pembleton in the gritty police drama series *Homicide: Life on the Street* (1993-1999), master thief and leader of a heist crew Nick Atwater in the FX miniseries *Thief* (2006), used car salesman Owen Thoreau, Jr. in the comedy-drama series *Men of a Certain Age* (2009-2011), and Captain Raymond Holt in the police comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013-2021). Before *Homicide*, Braugher played Det. Winston Blake, Telly Savalas' assistant, in a handful of *Kojak* reunion movies in the late 1980s, early 1990s. Following *Homicide*, Braugher starred in ABC's medical drama *Gideon's Crossing* and CBS' crime drama *Hack*. For his television work, he received two Primetime Emmy Awards from 11 nominations, as well as two Golden Globe Award nominations. Born in Chicago, the Stanford- and Juilliard-educated Braugher found his breakthrough movie role in the 1989 film *Glory*, in which he starred opposite Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Matthew Broderick, as Thomas Searles, a free, educated Black man from the North who joins the first Black regiment in the Union Army. Braugher also co-starred in more than 20 films including *Striking Distance*, *Primal Fear*, *Get on the Bus*, *City of Angels*, *Frequency*, *Poseidon*, and *Salt*. His most recent credits include the 2022 drama *She Said*, in which he portrayed *New York Times* Executive Editor Dean Baquet, who oversaw the work of reporters who exposed Harvey Weinstein's history of sexual harassment in Hollywood. Braugher loved theater and Shakespeare in particular. In a stage production of *Othello*, he played Iago opposite the majestic Avery Brooks in the title role. Their scenes together are the kind of theater you dream about without ever believing you'll see it. And I was fortunate enough to do so. It was absolutely incredible.



Maurice Hines

Maurice Robert Hines, Jr. (December 13, 1943 - December 29, 2023) was an actor, director, singer, and choreographer who famously showcased his skills alongside his late younger brother, Gregory Hines, in a Nicholas Brothers-like act featured in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club*. Hines was about six when he and Gregory made their professional debut as the tap-dancing Hines Kids, and they appeared on Broadway in 1954 as a newspaper boy and shoeshine boy, respectively, in *The Girl in Pink Tights*, choreographed by Agnes de Mille. Shortly after, the brothers began touring as the opening act for such headliners as Lionel Hampton and Gypsy Rose Lee. Their act later was known as the Hines Brothers and then Hines, Hines & Dad after they asked Maurice, Sr. to come aboard in 1963, and they became regular performers at the Apollo Theater in New York. As a solo performer, Maurice Hines went on to star as Nathan Detroit in the national tour of *Gypsy* and *Dolls* before returning to the Broadway stage for *Eubie!* He received a Tony Award nomination in 1986 for best actor in a musical for *Uptown ... It's Hot* and starred again on Broadway in 2006's *Hot Feet*. He conceived, directed, and choreographed both productions. Hines also choreographed national tours of the Louis Armstrong biographical musical *Satchmo* and *Harlem Suite* with successive leading ladies Jennifer Holliday, Stephanie Mills, and Melba Moore, and he was the first Black director to stage a Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular production in New York.

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Sandra Reaves-Phillips

Sandra Reaves-Phillips (December 23, 1944 - December 29, 2023) was an actress, writer, and singer. The South Carolina native made her Broadway debut as Mama Younger in the 1973 musical *Raisin*. She later performed in many stage productions, including *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Black and Blue*, *Blues in the Night*, *Harmony*, *American Dreams*, and *Before It Hits Home*. Reaves-Phillips also performed in a 1999 off-Broadway production of *Rollin' on the T.O.B.A.* Theatre Owners Booking Association, or T.O.B.A., was the vaudeville circuit for Black American performers in the 1920s. She also worked opposite Maurice Hines in his 2006 Broadway musical *Hot Feet*. On the big screen, Reaves-Phillips was featured with saxophonist Dexter Gordon in the film *'Round Midnight* (1986) in the role of Buttercup and in the Morgan Freeman-starring *Lean on Me* (1989); she was Mrs. Powers, the music teacher who leads her students in the title song. But the production that best showcased the breadth of Reaves-Phillips' considerable talent was the one-woman, tour de force stage tribute, *The Late, Great Ladies of Blues & Jazz*, where she captured the music and personas of legendary vocalists Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, and Mahalia Jackson — note that all these women have been commemorated on a U. S. stamp. The show was conceived and written by Reaves-Phillips, and she toured around the country and abroad with the show for more than two decades.