

NAACP TO HONOR JOTAKA EADDY, FOUNDER AND CEO OF #WINWITHBLACKWOMEN, WITH THE MILDRED BOND ROXBOROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPACT AWARD; HONOR ESSENCE WITH VANGUARD AWARD FOR FASHION AT THE “56TH NAACP IMAGE AWARDS” CREATIVE HONORS

February 6, 2025 at 12:00 PM

LOS ANGELES (February 6, 2025) - Today, the NAACP announced Founder and CEO of #WinWithBlackWomen Jotaka Eaddy will receive the newly named Mildred Bond Roxborough Social Justice Impact Award and ESSENCE COMMUNICATIONS, INC. will receive the Vanguard Award FOR FASHION at the “56th NAACP Image Awards” Creative Honors on Friday, February 21 in Los Angeles.

The NAACP Image Awards Committee also announced the renaming of the Social Justice Impact Award to honor the life and legacy of civil rights activist Mildred Bond Roxborough. Roxborough has worked with the NAACP for over 70 years, making her the longest-serving NAACP staff member. Her career began in 1954 as national staff field secretary. She has served in various roles, including administrative assistant to executive director, director of operations, director of programs, director of events, and director of development - working alongside prominent civil rights and NAACP leaders, Medgar Evers, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Vernon Jordan, Judge Constance Baker Motley, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Previous Social Justice Impact Award honorees include Benjamin Crump, Nikole Hannah-Jones, and Stacey Abrams.

“The renaming of the Mildred Bond Roxborough Social Justice Impact Award underscores the profound legacy of a trailblazer whose dedication to justice continues to inspire generations,” said Karen Boykin-Towns, Vice Chair of the NAACP Board of Directors and Chair of the NAACP Image Awards Committee. “Jotaka Eaddy’s impact exemplifies the enduring power of Black women leading with strength, vision, and purpose. Her tireless advocacy has ignited a lasting, generational momentum, equipping the Black community - especially women, with the resources, knowledge, and freedom to thrive. Her unwavering commitment has not only paved pathways for progress but also inspired a movement that continues to transform lives and communities.”

As an award-winning strategist and advocate who is described by Forbes as the “Olivia Pope of Silicon Valley,” Jotaka Eaddy brings over 20 years of experience in policy, advocacy, and movement building. Notably, she served as the NAACP Senior Advisor to the President and CEO under Ben Jealous’ leadership, where she also worked alongside Mildred Bond Roxborough in the pursuit of civil rights, further cementing her commitment to social justice. At the height of

the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Jotaka founded the movement #WinWithBlackWomen, an intersectional group composed of Black women leaders from business, sports, movement, politics, entertainment, and beyond, united in their support of Black women. Most recently, under her leadership, #WinWithBlackWomen organized virtual meetings, fundraising efforts, and voter mobilization activations during the 2024 presidential election - reaching over 100,000 voters and raising more than \$2.6 million.

The Vanguard Award for Fashion will be presented to ESSENCE COMMUNICATIONS, INC. for its powerful voice in championing Black women and culture for over 50 years. What started as a publication has grown into a movement and a bold affirmation of Black womanhood. Celebrating its 55th anniversary in 2025, ESSENCE magazine's first issue released in 1970 to shine a light on the achievements of Black women and amplify their voices. A legacy media giant, ESSENCE (part of The Sundial Group of Companies) has redefined beauty, style, and success on their own terms, leaving a lasting impact on culture and representation, with experiences like ESSENCE Fashion House and the coveted Best in Black Fashion Awards. Previous Vanguard Award honorees include June Ambrose, Bethann Hardison and Ruth E. Carter.

"The Vanguard Award pays tribute to changemakers, who are making an undeniable impact on our culture. Before inclusivity became a trend, ESSENCE was already championing the strength of our community, the richness of our culture, and the women who shape it," said Karen Boykin-Towns, Vice Chair of the NAACP Board of Directors and Chair of the NAACP Image Awards Committee. "We are proud to honor ESSENCE for its ongoing commitment to amplifying Black voices. As a platform where Black women are celebrated, recognized, and elevated, ESSENCE has captured our spirit and paved the way for new opportunities for us all."

ESSENCE has been a trusted guide for the community, covering career growth, financial literacy, health and wellness, politics, and activism. From its early coverage of the Civil Rights Movement, to its ongoing support of social justice movements, ESSENCE has been a driving force for economic, social, political, and whole community progress. For decades, it has remained a beacon of representation, inspiring Black women around the globe to embrace their power, break barriers, and shape the world. The media giant has featured iconic covers with the most talented and impactful Black women in the world, showcasing the depth of beauty of some of our favorite heroines, including Michelle Obama, Beyoncé, Serena Williams, Oprah, and many others, each celebrating their extraordinary achievements and cultural impact.

In addition, the ESSENCE Festival of Culture in New Orleans has become the premier celebration of Black music, culture, and business, attracting top entertainers, thought leaders, and entrepreneurs, creating economic empowerment of over \$1B in the past three years alone, and networking within the local Black business community and beyond. Over the years, ESSENCE has evolved into a digital powerhouse while remaining true to its core mission of uplifting and celebrating Black

women worldwide.

By visiting www.naacpimageawards.net, the public can vote to determine the winners of the “56th NAACP Image Awards” in select categories. Voting closes on February 7, 2025, at 12:00 midnight (ET.) Winners will be revealed during the “56th NAACP Image Awards” telecast on Saturday, February 22, live from the Pasadena Civic Auditorium at 8:00 PM ET/PT on BET and CBS. This year, the broadcast will be extended 30 minutes to 2.5 hours. NAACP will also recognize winners in non–televised Image Awards categories virtually on Tuesday, February 18 and Wednesday, Feb 19 at youtube.com/naacpimageawards and at the 56th NAACP Image Awards Creative Honors Friday, February 21. For information and updates, please follow NAACP Image Awards on Instagram @NAACPImageAwards.

Globally recognized as one of the most distinguished multicultural awards shows, the “56th NAACP Image Awards” will continue a tradition of excellence, uplifting values that inspire equality, justice, and progressive change, and highlighting artists committed to that purpose.

One of the most iconic annual celebrations of Black excellence, the NAACP Image Awards draws the biggest and brightest stars in Hollywood. Previous years' attendees and winners include Ava DuVernay, Gabrielle Union, Dwayne Wade, Courtney B. Vance, Sherri Shepherd, Colman Domingo, Mike Epps, Keke Palmer, Taraji P. Henson, Fantasia, Danielle Brooks, Usher, Tyler Perry, Angela Bassett, Damsion Idris, Michelle Buteau, Victoria Monét, Viola Davis, Beyoncé, Nicco Annan, Ruth E. Carter, Glynn Turman, Quinta Brunson, Nia Long, Keith David, Jennifer Hudson, Stacey Abrams, Tabitha Brown, Erica Campbell, Chris Brown, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Zendaya, Yara Shahidi, Issa Rae, Janelle Monáe, Tracee Ellis Ross, Serena Williams, Kerry Washington, Method Man, Dominique Thorne, Austin Scott, Tyler James Williams, Kyla Pratt, Jabari Banks, and many more.

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About NAACP

The NAACP advocates, agitates, and litigates for civil rights due to Black America. Our legacy is built on the foundation of grassroots activism by the biggest civil rights pioneers of the 20th century and is sustained by 21st century activists. From classrooms and courtrooms to city halls and Congress, our network of members across the country works to secure the social and political power that will end race–based discrimination. That work is rooted in racial equity, civic engagement, and supportive policies and institutions for all marginalized people. We are committed to a world without racism where Black people enjoy equitable opportunities in thriving communities.

NOTE: The Legal Defense Fund – also referred to as the NAACP–LDF – was founded in 1940 as a part of the NAACP, but now operates as a completely separate entity.

ABOUT BET Media Group:

The BET Media Group, a unit of Paramount (NASDAQ: PARAA; PARA), is the world's largest media company dedicated to entertaining, engaging, and empowering the Black community and championing Black culture. Connecting Black audiences through a portfolio of brands including BET, BET+, BET Gospel, BET HER, BET International, BET Jams, BET Soul, BET Studios, and VH1, the BET Media Group is a thriving media ecosystem of leading interconnected platforms across cable TV, streaming, digital, studios, live events and international. For more information about BET, visit www.bet.com and follow @BET on social platforms. For more BET news announcements, visit betpressroom.com.

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