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**Recommended Citation**

Center for Performing Arts, "Bill Cosby" (2006). *Center for Performing Arts Memorabilia*. Book 255.  
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# THE CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Governors State University

presents

## BILL COSBY

September 30, 2006

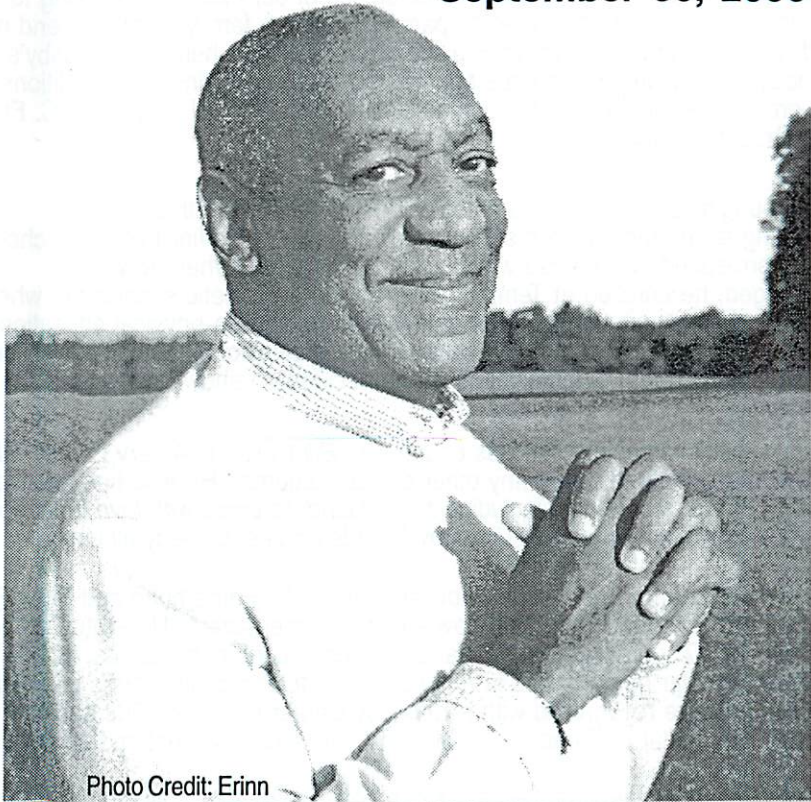


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This presentation is supported by the Performing Arts Fund, a program of Arts Midwest funded by the National Endowment for the Arts with additional contributions from General Mills Foundation, Land O'Lakes Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council, an agency of the state of Illinois. The Center's 2006/2007 Season is sponsored in part by a generous grant from the Illinois Arts Council.



Major funding for this event has also been provided by:

**Summit Laboratories, Inc.** and **Jovon Broadcasting Corporation**

# BILL COSBY

## Biography

Bill Cosby is, by any standards, one of the most influential stars in America today. Whether it be through concert appearances or recordings, television or films, commercials or education, Bill Cosby has the ability to touch people's lives. His humor often centers on the basic cornerstones of our existence, seeking to provide an insight into our roles as parents, children, family members, and men and women. Without resorting to gimmickry or lowbrow humor, Bill Cosby's comedy has a point of reference and respect for the trappings and traditions of the great American humorists such as Charlie Chaplin, Will Rogers, W.C. Fields and Groucho Marx.

As a young student, Cosby often neglected his studies for athletics. After repeating tenth grade, he left school to join the Navy. He finished high school via a correspondence course while still in the service. When he was discharged, he enrolled at Temple University on an athletic scholarship where he earned academic honors. His goal was to become a physical education teacher. He probably could have made it as a professional football player, but the world is richer in laughter because he decided on show business.

Cosby's initial immediate success began with *Bill Cosby Is A Very Funny Fellow, Right?* and continued with many other comedy albums. He also has released a number of jazz recordings, including *hello, friend: to enniss with love* (released in 1997). Cosby has earned five Grammy Awards for best comedy album.

The 1984-92 run of *The Cosby Show* and his books *Fatherhood* and *Time Flies* established new benchmarks on how success is measured. His status at the top of the TVQ survey year after year continues to confirm his appeal as one of the most popular personalities in America. His lifelong contributions to American culture were recognized with a Kennedy Center Honor in 1998 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in July 2002, America's highest civilian honor.

Today, Cosby has touched the hearts of a new generation of young children with his Emmy Award winning *Little Bill* animated series, which aired daily on Nickelodeon and Saturday mornings on CBS. The show was based on Cosby's popular children's books. His interest in young people also spawned his best-selling book, *Congratulations! Now What?*, published by Hyperion. The book contains his amusing yet wise take on college life and what lies ahead for the new graduate in the real world.

*Friends of a Feather: One of Life's Little Fables*, a HarperEntertainment book released in May 2003, is Cosby's most recent children's book. Illustrated by his daughter, Erika, this beautiful story explores the theme of being true to yourself.

*I Am What I Ate ... and I'm frightened!!!*, Cosby's newest book published by HarperCollins was released on September 21, 2004 and entered the *New York Times* Best Seller List at #5. It offers a hip, humorous, hard-earned wisdom on the healthy lifestyle and the behavior behind it.

His best seller *Fatherhood* was launched appropriately enough on Father's Day as an animated series on *Nick at Nite*.

Bill and Camille Cosby in conjunction with Fox Studios premiered a live action/animated Fat Albert motion picture. It has been a box office success. The Fat Albert television show is now available on DVD and is selling briskly.

Busy as he is with his many ventures, Cosby has been a crusader throughout his career for a better world and for better understanding between people. Besides his involvement with a host of charity organizations, Cosby is also an active trustee of his alma mater, Temple University of Philadelphia. As philanthropists, Bill and Camille Cosby have made substantial gifts in support of education (most notably to predominantly African American colleges) and to various social service and civil rights organizations. In addition, Cosby earned a Masters Degree in Education (M. Ed.) in 1972 and his Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.) in 1977 from the University of Massachusetts. His doctoral thesis was titled "The Integration of Visual Media Via Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids Into the Elementary Schools Culminating as a Teacher Aid to Achieve Increased Learning."

Cosby's been busy raising a family, too. He married the former Camille Hanks on January 25, 1964, while she was still a student at the University of Maryland. They raised four daughters (Erika, Erinn, Ensa and Evin) and one son (Ennis Cosby). The family resides in New England.

When speaking of Camille, Cosby has urged an amendment to the saying, "Behind every good man there's a good woman." He suggests that "behind" should be substituted by "Three miles ahead." Camille has not only raised five children, but has also been totally involved in her husband's career. She produced his last album and taped two concerts over the past few years. She has received her doctorate in education and plays an active role in a number of important national organizations.

Camille Cosby has enjoyed great success with the best-selling book *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years*. First she produced the property as a Broadway play and then as a television movie. The play was nominated for three Tony Awards and the television film won a Peabody Award. Camille also produced a one-hour sociological documentary film *No Dreams Deferred*, which aired on over 150 public television stations. When Oprah Winfrey debuted her new magazine in April 2000, she chose Camille as her very first interview.

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