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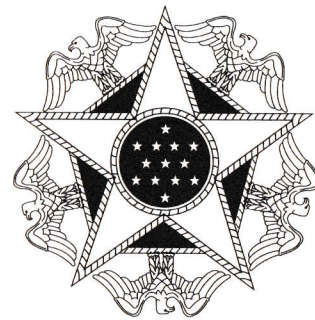
THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. OBAMA

welcome you to

THE WHITE HOUSE

*on the occasion of
the presentation of the*

PRESIDENTIAL
MEDAL OF FREEDOM



Tuesday, November 22, 2016

PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

Originally established as the MEDAL OF FREEDOM by President Truman by Executive Order 9586 of July 6, 1945, the MEDAL was reestablished as the PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM by President John F. Kennedy by Executive Order 11085 of February 22, 1963. It is the highest civil award of our Government. The MEDAL is awarded by the President of the United States to those persons whom he deems to have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. The MEDAL may be awarded to citizens of other nations and may be awarded posthumously.

President Kennedy announced the first PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM awards on July 4, 1963. President Lyndon Johnson then made the first presentations of the PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM in a ceremony at the White House on December 6, 1963.



THE RECIPIENTS

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Elouise C. Cobell
"Yellow Bird Woman"
(Posthumously)

Ellen DeGeneres

Robert De Niro

Richard L. Garwin

William H. Gates III
and Melinda French Gates

Frank Gehry

Margaret Heafield Hamilton

Thomas J. Hanks

Grace Murray Hopper
(Posthumously)

Michael J. Jordan

Maya Y. Lin

Lorne Michaels

Newton N. Minow

Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón

Robert Redford

Diana Ross

Vin Scully

Bruce F. Springsteen

Cicely Tyson

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

An iconic basketball player who revolutionized the sport with his all-around play and signature skyhook, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is a 19-time All-Star, a 6-time world champion, and the leading scorer in NBA history. Adding to his achievements on the court he also left his mark off of it, advocating for civil rights, cancer research, science education, and social justice. In doing so, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar leaves a towering legacy of compassion, faith, and service to others—a legacy based not only on the strength and grace of his athleticism, but on the sharpness of his mind and the size of his heart.



ELOUISE C. COBELL "YELLOW BIRD WOMAN"

(POSTHUMOUSLY)

A member of the Blackfeet Nation, Elouise Cobell spent her life defying the odds and working on behalf of her people. As a young woman, she was told that she wasn't capable of understanding accounting. So she mastered the field—and used her expertise to champion a lawsuit whose historic settlement has helped restore Tribal homelands to her beloved Blackfeet Nation and many other Tribes. Today, her tenacious and unwavering spirit lives on in the thousands of people and hundreds of Tribes for whom she fought and in all those she taught to believe that it is never too late to right the wrongs of the past and help shape a better future.



ELLEN DEGENERES

In a career spanning three decades, Ellen DeGeneres has lifted our spirits and brought joy to our lives as a stand-up comic, actor, and television star. In every role, she reminds us to be kind to one another and to treat people as each of us wants to be treated. At a pivotal moment, her courage and candor helped change the hearts and minds of millions of Americans, accelerating our Nation's constant drive toward equality and acceptance for all. Again and again, Ellen DeGeneres has shown us that a single individual can make the world a more fun, more open, more loving place—so long as we “just keep swimming.”



ROBERT DE NIRO

For over 50 years, Robert De Niro has delivered some of the screen's most memorable performances, cementing his place as one of the most gifted actors of his generation. From “The Godfather Part II” and “The Deer Hunter” to “Midnight Run” and “Heat,” his work is legendary for its range and depth. Relentlessly committed to his craft, De Niro embodies his characters, creating rich, nuanced portraits that reflect the heart of the human experience. Regardless of genre or era, Robert De Niro continues to demonstrate the extraordinary skill that has made him one of America's most revered and influential artists.



RICHARD L. GARWIN

One of the most renowned scientific and engineering minds of our time, Dr. Richard Garwin has always answered the call to help solve society's most challenging problems. He has coupled his pioneering work in defense and intelligence technologies with leadership that underscores the urgency for humanity to control the spread of nuclear arms. Through his advice to Republican and Democratic administrations dating to President Eisenhower, his contributions in fundamental research, and his inventions that power technologies that drive our modern world, Richard Garwin has contributed not only to this Nation's security and prosperity, but to the quality of life for people all over the world.



WILLIAM H. GATES III AND MELINDA FRENCH GATES

Few people have had the profound global impact of Bill and Melinda Gates. Through their work at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, they've demonstrated how the most capable and fortunate among us have a responsibility to use their talents and resources to tackle the world's greatest challenges. From helping women and girls lift themselves and their families out of poverty to empowering young minds across America, they have transformed countless lives with their generosity and innovation. Bill and Melinda Gates continue to inspire us with their impatient optimism that, together, we can remake the world as it should be.



FRANK GEHRY

Never limited by conventional materials, styles, or processes, Frank Gehry's bold and thoughtful structures demonstrate architecture's power to induce wonder and revitalize communities. A creative mind from an early age, he began his career by building imaginary homes and cities with scrap material from his grandfather's hardware store. Since then, his work continues to strike a balance between experimentation and functionality, resulting in some of the 20th century's most iconic buildings. From his pioneering use of technology to the dozens of awe-inspiring sites that bear his signature style to his public service as a citizen artist through his work with Turnaround Arts, Frank Gehry has proven himself an exemplar of American innovation.



MARGARET HEAFIELD HAMILTON

A pioneer in technology, Margaret Hamilton defined new forms of software engineering and helped launch an industry that would forever change human history. Her software architecture led to giant leaps for humankind, writing the code that helped America set foot on the moon. She broke barriers in founding her own software businesses, revolutionizing an industry and inspiring countless women to participate in STEM fields. Her love of exploration and innovation are the source code of the American spirit, and her genius has inspired generations to reach for the stars.



THOMAS J. HANKS

Throughout a distinguished film career, Tom Hanks has revealed the character of America, as well as his own. Portraying war heroes, an astronaut, a ship captain, a cartoon cowboy, a young man growing up too fast, and dozens of others, he's allowed us to see ourselves—not only as we are, but as we aspire to be. On screen and off, Tom Hanks has honored the sacrifices of those who have served our Nation, inspired a new generation of young people to reach for the sky, and called on us all to think big—and to believe.



GRACE MURRAY HOPPER

(POSTHUMOUSLY)

As a child who loved disassembling alarm clocks, Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper found her calling early. A Vassar alumna with a Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale, Hopper served in the Navy during World War II, becoming one of the first programmers in early computing. Known today as the “Queen of Code,” Grace Hopper’s work helped make coding language more practical and accessible. She invented the first compiler, or translator, a fundamental element of our now digital world. “Amazing Grace” was committed to making the language of computer programming more universal. Today, we honor her contributions to computer science and the sense of possibility she inspired in generations of young people.



MICHAEL J. JORDAN

Powered by a drive to compete that earned him every major award in basketball, including six NBA championships, five Most Valuable Player awards, and two gold medals, Michael Jordan has a name that's become a synonym for excellence. His wagging tongue and high-flying dunks redefined the game, making him a global superstar whose impact transcended basketball and shaped our Nation's broader culture. From the courts in Wilmington, Chapel Hill, and Chicago to the owner's suite he occupies today, his life and example have inspired millions of Americans to strive to "Be Like Mike."



MAYA Y. LIN

Boldly challenging our understanding of the world, Maya Lin's designs have brought people of all walks of life together in spirits of remembrance, introspection, and humility. The manipulation of natural terrain and topography within her works inspires us to bridge our differences and recognize the gravity of our collective existence. Her pieces have changed the landscape of our country and influenced the dialogue of our society—never more profoundly than with her tribute to the Americans who fell in Vietnam by cutting a wound into the Earth to create a sacred place of healing in our Nation's capital.



LORNE MICHAELS

One of the most transformative entertainment figures of our time, Lorne Michaels followed his dreams to New York City, where he created a sketch show that brought satire, wit, and modern comedy to homes around the world. Under his meticulous command as executive producer, "Saturday Night Live" has entertained audiences across generations, reflecting—and shaping—critical elements of our cultural, political, and national life. Lorne Michaels' creative legacy stretches into late-night television, sitcoms, and the big screen, making us laugh, challenging us to think, and raising the bar for those who follow. As one of his show's signature characters would say, "Well, isn't that special?"



NEWTON N. MINOW

As a soldier, counsel to the Governor of Illinois, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, and law clerk to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Newton Minow's career has been defined by his devotion to others. Deeply committed to his family, the law, and the American people, his dedication to serving and empowering the public is reflected in his efforts to ensure that broadcast media educates and provides opportunity for all. Challenging the media to better serve their viewers, his staunch commitment to the power of ideas and information has transformed telecommunications and its influential role in our society.



DR. EDUARDO J. PADRÓN

As a teenage refugee from Cuba, Eduardo Padrón came to the United States to pursue the American Dream, and he has spent his life making that dream real for others. As president of the community college he once attended, his thoughtful leadership and commitment to education have transformed Miami Dade College into one of the premier learning institutions in the country, earning him praise around the world. His personal story and lasting professional influence prove that success need not be determined by our background, but by our dedication to others and our passion for creating an America that is as inclusive as it is prosperous.



ROBERT REDFORD

Robert Redford has captivated audiences from both sides of the camera through entertaining motion pictures that often explore vital social, political, and historical themes. His lifelong advocacy on behalf of preserving our environment will prove as enduring a legacy as his award-winning films, as will his pioneering support for independent filmmakers across America. His art and activism continue to shape our Nation's cultural heritage, inspiring millions to laugh, cry, think, and change.



DIANA ROSS

A daughter of Detroit, Diana Ross helped create the sound of Motown with her iconic voice. From her groundbreaking work with The Supremes to a solo career that has spanned decades, she has influenced generations of young artists and shaped our Nation's musical landscape. In addition to a GRAMMY® Lifetime Achievement Award and countless musical accolades, Diana Ross has distinguished herself as an actor, earning an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe Award. With over 25 albums, unforgettable hit singles, and live performances that continue to captivate audiences around the world, Diana Ross still reigns supreme.



VIN SCULLY

With a voice that transcended a sport and transformed a profession, Vin Scully narrated America's pastime for generations of fans. Known to millions as the soundtrack of summer, he found time to teach us about life and love while chronicling routine plays and historic heroics. In victory and in defeat, his colorful accounts reverberated through the bleachers, across the airwaves, and into our homes and imaginations. He is an American treasure and a beloved storyteller, and our country's gratitude for Vin Scully is as profound as his love for the game.



BRUCE F. SPRINGSTEEN

As a songwriter, a humanitarian, America's Rock and Roll laureate, and New Jersey's greatest ambassador, Bruce Springsteen is, quite simply, The Boss. Through stories about ordinary people, from Vietnam veterans to steel workers, his songs capture the pain and the promise of the American experience. With his legendary E Street Band, Bruce Springsteen leaves everything on stage in epic, communal live performances that have rocked audiences for decades. With honesty and empathy, he holds up a mirror to who we are—as Americans chasing our dreams, and as human beings trying to do the right thing. There's a place for everyone in Bruce Springsteen's America.



CICELY TYSON

For sixty years, Cicely Tyson has graced the screen and the stage, enlightening us with her groundbreaking characters and calls to conscience, humility, and hope. Her achievements as an actor, her devotion to her faith, and her commitment to advancing equality for all Americans—especially women of color—have touched audiences of multiple generations. From “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,” to “Sounder,” to “The Trip to Bountiful,” Cicely Tyson's performances illuminate the character of our people and the extraordinary possibilities of America.



