



***BILLY DEE WILLIAMS, TIFFANY HADDISH AND OMARI  
HARDWICK CONFIRMED AS HONOREES AT THE  
2018 AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL HONORS***

*ACTOR & COMEDIAN CEDRIC THE ENTERTAINER  
TO HOST THE ANNUAL EVENT*

*Show Returns to Los Angeles Sunday, February 25, 2018  
#ABFFHonors*

***NEW YORK, NEW YORK – November 29, 2017*** – The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) Honors is proud to present legendary actor, singer and writer **Billy Dee Williams** with the “Hollywood Legacy Award;” actor **Omari Hardwick** with the “Distinguished ABFF Alumni Award;” and actress and comedian **Tiffany Haddish** with the “Rising Star Award” at the 2018 ABFF Honors. The awards gala will take place on February 25, 2018 at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles.

The awards show celebrates individuals of African descent who have made distinguished contributions to American culture through their work, and salutes the year’s best movies and television shows. ABFF Honors was created by American Black Film Festival founder Jeff Friday, to promote camaraderie and a spirit of mutual appreciation among multicultural artists in Hollywood. Actor and comedian **Cedric The Entertainer** will host the annual event.

The “Hollywood Legacy Award” is presented to a renowned artist whose trailblazing work and groundbreaking achievements, over at least four decades, have inspired generations and made an enduring contribution to film and television. **Billy Dee Williams** embodies the true spirit of an industry icon and will be the recipient of this year’s award.

Williams has continued to break barriers in Hollywood and distinguish himself as a talented and driven actor, who has been fearless in pursuing acting jobs and has served as a role model for actors of color. As a veteran actor for the past 50 years, his extraordinary resume of work in film and television include *Brian Song*, *Mahogany* and *Lady Sings the Blues*, which have all become classics in Black cinema.

In the 80’s, George Lucas tapped him to play the scoundrel, Lando Calrissian, in *“The Empire Strikes Back,”* which he reprised in *“The Return of the Jedi.”* He also played the district

attorney, Harvey Dent, in 1989's, "*Batman*." These roles opened a distinct lane for black actors to pursue roles in science fiction films.

He was duly smooth and charming as a love interest for Diahann Carroll on ABC's, "*Dynasty*" and also won strong praise for his portrayal of Motown founder Berry Gordy in the ABC miniseries, "*The Jacksons: An American Dream*."

Each year, the ABFF Honors "Distinguished ABFF Alumni Award" is given to an alumnus of the American Black Film Festival, in recognition of their career achievement since their debut at the festival. **Omari Hardwick** has been a continued advocate of the festival and its mission. He was the first host of "ABFF Independent," a show which highlighted independent films presented at ABFF festivals throughout the years, and airs on Aspire TV. As an actor, musician and poet, his breakout role in the hit Starz series, *Power*, has catapulted him to superstar status. Past television and film roles include *Tyler Perry's For Colored Girls* (2010), and BET Network's *Being Mary Jane*. Hardwick has been a part of the ABFF family for many years and ABFF Honors is proud to applaud him for his significant accomplishments in entertainment.

**Tiffany Haddish** is quickly establishing herself as one of the most sought-after comedic talents in television and film. Haddish starred in Universal's hit summer movie, *Girls Trip*, alongside Jada Pinkett Smith, Queen Latifah and Regina Hall. She will next be seen starring with Tracy Morgan in the new TBS show, *The Last O.G* and just wrapped production on Universal's, *Night School*, with co-star Kevin Hart. Recently, Haddish broke barriers and became the first black female stand-up comedian to host SNL. Upcoming projects she is currently developing include, *Limited Partners* for Paramount, and *The Temp*, for Universal, which she will executive produce and star in both.

Haddish's journey to success has been inspirational to many and ABFF Honors is thrilled to salute her with the "Rising Star Award," at this year's ceremony, in acknowledgement of her recent success and future promise.

Award-winning director and producer, Ava DuVernay, will round out our honorary awards for the evening and will receive the "Industry Visionary Award." This award is presented to a pioneering artist in acknowledgment of their outstanding accomplishments in the motion picture and television industry.

Our 2018 honorees will join an illustrious list of past ABFF Honors celebrants, including actors **Denzel Washington, Regina King, Don Cheadle, Diahann Carroll, Queen Latifah, Issa Rae, Terrence Howard** and filmmakers and producers **Ryan Coogler, F. Gary Gray** and **Will Packer**.

The many high-profile presenters and guests have included **Viola Davis, Kerry Washington, Robert Downey Jr., Jamie Foxx, Ice Cube, Cecily Tyson, Lee Daniels, Anthony Anderson, Regina Hall, Taye Diggs, Octavia Spencer, KeKe Palmer, Nia Long, Morris Chestnut, Omari Hardwick** and **Pharrell Williams**, among others.

The event is an elegant and spirited awards dinner, with a presentation of competitive awards and special honors in the following categories: **Movie of the Year Award, Television Show of the Year Award (in the categories of Drama and Comedy), Hollywood Legacy Award, Industry Visionary Award, Distinguished ABFF Alumni**

## **Award and the Rising Star Award.**

In just two years, ABFF Honors has become one of the most talked about Hollywood events, attracting top-tier talent and press coverage in mainstream and African American media outlets including *LA Times*, *Essence*, *Variety*, *Deadline*, *Extra*, and *The Associated Press*. The show had its broadcast premiere on BET Networks.

The event is executive produced by ABFF Ventures founder Jeff Friday and Suzanne de Passe for de Passe Entertainment.

For media inquiries, apply for media credentials and additional information about the 2018 ABFF Honors, please log on to [www.ABFFHonors.com](http://www.ABFFHonors.com).

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## **ABOUT ABFF**

The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) is an annual event dedicated to showcasing quality film and television content by and about people of African descent. The festival is committed to the belief that Black artists and content creators deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts. ABFF founder Jeff Friday conceived the festival in 1997 as a vehicle to promote diversity in the motion picture industry, and strengthen the Black filmmaking community through resource sharing, education, artistic collaboration and career development. For more than two decades, the ABFF has been the standard-bearer of excellence in independent Black cinema, having premiered the works and supported the careers of many of today's most successful artists, including Ryan Coogler (*Black Panther*), Anthony Anderson (*Blackish*), Will Packer (*Girls Trip*), Issa Rae (*Insecure*), Omari Hardwick (*Power*) and Raoul Peck (*I Am Not Your Negro*). Today, it is the preeminent pipeline for Black talent, in front of and behind the camera, significantly expanding the range of talent in the entertainment industry at large. The ABFF is a property of ABFF Ventures LLC, a multifaceted entertainment company specializing in the production of live events, television and digital content, targeted to upscale African American audiences. The company is a joint venture between Film Life Inc. and Black Enterprise, two prominent media and event companies, each with legacies of showcasing the best of African American culture and achievement.

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## **PRESS CONTACT:**

Michelle Huff Elliott  
Strategic Heights Media  
[michelle@strategicheights.com](mailto:michelle@strategicheights.com)  
212-634-7176