

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES

Thirteen/WNET New York
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PBS

Biography

DR. HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

Series Host, Executive Producer



Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the W.E.B. Du Bois professor of the Humanities and chair of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, as well as director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research.



Dr. Gates is co-editor, with K. Anthony Appiah, of the encyclopedia *Encarta Africana* (1999), published on CD-ROM by Microsoft and in book form by Basic Civitas Books under the title *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*. He is the author of *Wonders of the African World* (1999), the companion book to the six-hour PBS television series of the same name.



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In addition, Dr. Gates is the author of several works of literary criticism, including *Figures in Black Words, Signs and the 'Racial' Self* (Oxford University Press, 1987); *The Signifying Monkey A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford, 1988), winner of the 1989 American Book Award; and *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (Oxford, 1992). He is the author of *Colored People: A Memoir* (Knopf, 1994), which traces his childhood experiences in a small West Virginia town in the 1950s and 1960s; *The Future of the Race* (Knopf, 1996), co-authored with Cornel West; and *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man* (Random House, 1997).

An influential cultural critic, Dr. Gates' publications include a 1994 cover story for *Time* magazine on the new black Renaissance in art, as well as numerous articles for *The New Yorker*. In addition, he has edited several anthologies, including *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (W.W. Norton, 1996), and *The Oxford-Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black Women Writers* (Oxford, 1991), and is the co-editor of *Transition* magazine. Dr. Gates has also produced and hosted two previous series for PBS, 1999's *Wonders of the African World* and 2004's *America Beyond the Color Line*.

Dr. Gates earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in English Literature from Clare College at the University of Cambridge. He received a B.A. in English Language and Literature, summa cum laude, from Yale University in 1973. Before joining the faculty of Harvard in 1991, he taught at Yale, Cornell, and Duke Universities. Dr. Gates has received 40 honorary degrees, as well as a 1981 MacArthur Foundation "Genius Award," the 1993 George Polk Award for Social Commentary, the *Chicago Tribune* Heartland Award in 1994, and the Golden Plate Achievement Award in 1995. In addition, Dr. Gates was named one of *Time* magazine's "25 Most Influential Americans" in 1997, one of *Ebony* magazine's "100 Most Influential Black Americans" in 2005, received a National Humanities Medal in 1998, and in 1999 was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

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