

OPRAH'S ROOTS

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press information



Production Biographies

HENRY LOUIS GATES JR.

Host, Executive Producer

Henry Louis Gates Jr. is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University.

Professor Gates is the author of *Finding Oprah's Roots: Finding Your Own* (Crown), to be published in January 2007. He was the host and executive producer of, as well as participant in, the critically acclaimed 2006 PBS series *African American Lives*.

Professor Gates is Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford African American Studies Center, the first comprehensive scholarly online resource in the field of African American Studies and Africana Studies. He 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*. His most recent books are *America Behind the Color Line: Dialogues with African Americans* (Warner Books, 2004), *African American Lives*, co-edited with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (Oxford, 2004), and *The Annotated Uncle Tom's Cabin*, edited with Hollis Robbins (W. W. Norton, 2006).

In addition, Professor 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). Professor Gates authenticated and facilitated the publication, in 1983, of *Our Nig, or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859), by Harriet Wilson, the first novel published by an African American woman. Two decades later, in 2002, Professor Gates authenticated and published *The Bondwoman's Narrative* by Hannah Crafts, dating from the early 1850s and now considered one of the first novels written by an African American woman. He is also 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, Professor 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* and a biweekly guest column in *The New York Times* in 2004. 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. Professor Gates has also produced and hosted two previous series for PBS, 1999's *Wonders of the African World* and

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2004's *America Beyond the Color Line*, and authored the companion volumes to both.

Professor 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 history, summa cum laude, from Yale University in 1973. Before joining the faculty of Harvard in 1991, he taught at Yale, Cornell and Duke Universities. Professor Gates has received 44 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, Professor 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.

WILLIAM R. GRANT

Executive producer

William R. Grant is director of science, natural history and features programs at Thirteen/WNET New York, the flagship of the U.S. public television system. He joined WNET in 1995 after 12 years at WGBH in Boston, where he was managing editor of *Frontline* and executive editor of *Nova*. At WGBH he also served as executive producer of *Living Against the Odds* and *Made In America?*

At WNET he is in charge of one of public television's largest documentary production departments, which brings to national broadcast an average of 60 hours of programs a year in the areas of natural history, science, history, business, travel, and other topics. While at WNET he has also been executive producer of *Innovation* and *Going Places*, two PBS anthology series, and numerous miniseries, including *America on Wheels*, *Savage Skies*, *Savage Earth*, *Savage Seas*, *Knife to the Heart*, *Stephen Hawking's Universe*, *On the Trail of Mark Twain*, *The American President*, *In Search of Ancient Ireland*, *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, *Slavery and the Making of America*, *African American Lives* and the upcoming *The Supreme Court*. He has been responsible, as executive in charge of production, for *Nature*, one of public television's most watched continuing series, and the miniseries *Savage Planet*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *Secrets of the Pharaohs*, *Warship*, *Africa*, *1900 House*, *Frontier House*, *Manor House*, *The Secret Life of the Brain*, *Colonial House*, *Texas Ranch House*, and *Warplane*.

Prior to joining WGBH in 1983, he was for 14 years a reporter and editor at two of the nation's largest daily newspapers - the *Detroit Free Press* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, where his work won numerous awards. In 1979-80 he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. He was inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame in 2001 and in 2005 was named to the University of Kentucky's Hall of Distinguished Alumni.

Programs produced under his supervision have won 11 national News and Documentary Emmy awards, including one for the 2005 series *Slavery and the Making of America*, one for the 2004 series *DNA*, and six George Foster Peabody awards, including one for the 2002 series *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*.

PETER W. KUNHARDT

Executive Producer

Peter Kunhardt, a 10-year veteran of ABC News, was executive producer of the critically

acclaimed 2006 PBS series *African American Lives*. In 1987 he formed Kunhardt Productions in order to work more closely with both his father and brother. In 1988, he won his third national Emmy Award for *JFK: In His Own Words* on HBO. Kunhardt is co-author of *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography*, and served as producer and director of the ABC miniseries *Lincoln*, the Discovery Channel documentary *Barnum* and *The American President* for PBS. During the past 18 years he has overseen more than 120 hours of programming for PBS, the networks and cable.

GRAHAM JUDD

Producer, Director

Graham Judd was the series producer of the critically acclaimed 2006 PBS series *African American Lives*. A New York-based filmmaker, Judd for the last 20 years has specialized in producing ambitious and popular history and current affairs documentaries. Judd began his career as a staff producer with the BBC, for whom he produced and directed many high-profile television projects, including *Heart of the Matter*, a multi-award-winning series exploring ethical issues arising from current affairs. In 2001, Judd moved to the United States to produce *Muslims*, a two-hour *Frontline* special investigating the global resurgence of Islam through stories of individual Muslims around the world. Since then, documentaries he has created and supervised have aired not only on PBS, but also on ABC, Discovery Channel and The History Channel. In 2004, Judd served as series producer for the prime-time PBS history series, *History Detectives*.

DYLLAN MCGEE

Senior Producer for Kunhardt Productions

Dyllan McGee joined Kunhardt Productions in 1993, where she is senior producer for all documentaries and educational programming. Past projects McGee has worked on for PBS include the landmark 2006 series *African American Lives*, *Freedom: A History of US*, and *The American President*, as well as *In Memoriam* for HBO and *The Kennedy Tapes Revealed* for Bravo. In addition, McGee serves as the supervising producer for Picture History, an online resource for 19th- and 20th-century photography. McGee is a trustee of the Taft School and lives in Katonah, N.Y., with her husband and two children.

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