

TAVIS SMILEY

From his celebrated conversations with world figures, to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders, as a broadcaster, author, advocate and philanthropist, Tavis Smiley continues to be an outstanding voice for change.

Smiley started his career as an aide to the late Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. In 1996, he became the resident social and political commentator on the *Tom Joyner Morning Show*, a post he held for 12 years.

Currently, Smiley hosts the late night television talk show, *Tavis Smiley* on PBS and *The Tavis Smiley Show* distributed by Public Radio International (PRI). Smiley is the first American to simultaneously host signature talk shows on both public television and public radio. *Newsweek* profiled him as one of the "20 people changing how Americans get their news" and dubbed him one of the nation's "captains of the airwaves."

In 2007, Smiley made television history as the moderator and executive producer of the *All-American Presidential Forums on PBS*, the first Democratic and Republican presidential debates broadcast live in primetime with a panel exclusively comprised of journalists of color.

In addition to his radio and television work, Smiley has authored eleven books. His memoir, *What I Know For Sure: My Story of Growing Up in America*, became a *New York Times* best seller and the book he edited, *Covenant with Black America*, became the first nonfiction book by a Black owned publisher to reach #1 on *The New York Times* best seller list.

He is also the presenter and creative force behind **America I AM: The African American Imprint**. This unprecedented traveling museum exhibition will tour the country for four years, celebrating the extraordinary impact of African American contributions to our nation and the world as told through rare artifacts, memorabilia and multimedia.

Smiley's most gratifying accomplishments are rooted in his passion to inspire the next generation of leaders. The Tavis Smiley Foundation, a nonprofit organization, was established to empower Black youth. Since its inception, more than 5,000 young people have participated in the foundation's leadership training workshops and conferences. His communications corporation, The Smiley Group, Inc., is dedicated to supporting human rights and related empowerment issues and serves as the holding company for various enterprises encompassing broadcast and print media, lectures, symposiums and the Internet.

Smiley's achievements have earned him numerous awards and honorary doctorate degrees, including one from his alma mater, Indiana University. He is the youngest African American to have a professional school and center named after him on a college or university campus. **The Tavis Smiley School of Communications** and **The Tavis Smiley Center for Professional Media Studies** are located at Texas Southern University.

One of ten children, Smiley lives in Los Angeles. In his spare time, he enjoys a good game of Scrabble with friends and listening to music.

What People Are Saying About TAVIS SMILEY...

Jay Leno of *The Tonight Show* dubbed him "the king of late night public television."

The *Los Angeles Times* says he's on the "fast track, left lane."

The *New York Post* screamed, "Look out Larry King—here comes Tavis Smiley!"

The Washington Post declared that he's "winning friends and influencing people."

The Philadelphia Inquirer says Smiley is "one of the most important political voices of his generation."

Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer* summed up Tavis' appeal best: "In the age of high-decibel, in-your-face talk shows, Tavis Smiley keeps the volume low and the content high. He also gets the best guests in broadcasting—presidents, the pope, A-list entertainers. Smiley's style of easy and engaging conversation makes them all feel comfortable. And it works."

Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Daily News* columnist E.R. Shipp writes: "He does what too little of talk radio or television does these days: conducts civil conversations with a broad spectrum of politicians, newsmakers, performers and writers in a forum where one first has to declare one's political alliances. He's comfortable with conservatives, liberals and the undeclared; with the profound and the profane, with elder statesmen and the hip-hop nation. With such stratification in the country, he provides one place that helps promote dialogues that might not otherwise take place before audiences who might not otherwise think that they have anything in common."

DeWayne Wickham in *USA Today* declares that Smiley is "arguably the nation's most influential black journalist."

Vanity Fair inducted him into their Hall of Fame.