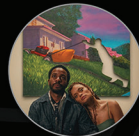




FEBRUARY 19, 2025

BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL



SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDEES



Using the power of cinema to bring communities together!

aafca.com



African American Film
Critics Association



[theaafca](https://twitter.com/theaafca)

[#aafca360](https://twitter.com/aafca360)



Morgan Stanley

GLOBAL SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

We are proud to sponsor the

16th Annual African American Film Critics Association Awards

and extend our congratulations
to this year's honorees for their
outstanding achievements as we
celebrate their talents.

Morgan Stanley Global Sports & Entertainment is a highly specialized wealth management division, dedicated to serving the unique and complex needs of athletes, entertainers, creators and top professionals in the sports and entertainment industry. To learn more, visit www.morganstanley.com/gse



Welcome to AAFCA 16!

As we kick off the “**Sweet Sixteen**” year of the African American Film Critics Association (AAFCA) Awards, we’re thrilled to celebrate this incredible milestone with you. Taking time to reflect on the obstacles we’ve overcome, we know there are still important lessons ahead to navigate. We are confident that Hollywood will continue to rise above adversity and do what we’ve always done: Uplift, educate, and inspire audiences around the world with the endless possibilities of storytelling. We remain steadfast in our mission to deliver messages of hope, resilience, and creativity. This year marks the 16th edition of the AAFCA Awards, and we are proud to celebrate not only the remarkable films of the past year but also the indomitable spirit of our industry.

The work of this year’s AAFCA winners extends across the cinematic landscape. From the astounding magic of **Wild Robot**, to the rich cultural depth of **The Piano Lesson**, the poignant storytelling of **Nickel Boys**, the profound humanity of **Sing, Sing**, and the beauty and transformative power of **She Taught Love**, each film serves as a testament to the excellence of artistry. It is a privilege to recognize work that captivates us and opens our eyes to the boundless potential and passion of storytelling.

This year, AAFCA will also honor the tireless service of first responders who have supported their communities during the recent Southern California fires. Please join us as we celebrate the art of filmmaking, the people behind the scenes, the communities that support us, and the strength that keeps pushing us forward.

As we enter a period where we may face challenges to our personal and creative freedoms, Hollywood will continue to raise awareness about the issues that need to be addressed, while also offering relief and entertainment to help us through turbulent times.

Thank you for being part of this celebration of the best in film, and here’s to another year of inspiring creativity and storytelling.

With appreciation,
Gil Robertson
President & Co-Founder
African American Film Critics Association



RAY FISHER

BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE

The African American Film Critics Association proudly honors **Ray Fisher**, an actor whose journey has been defined by passion, dedication, and exceptional talent. Fisher's portrayal of Lymon in the 2024 film adaptation of ***The Piano Lesson*** is a true revelation which underscores the truth that some performances don't just tell a story—they leave an indelible mark. With ***The Piano Lesson***, Fisher captures the delicate balance of vulnerability and quiet strength, delivering a moving performance overflowing with depth, sincerity, and humanity.

Directed by Malcolm Washington and adapted from August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, the film provided the perfect canvas for Fisher to bring the character to life with nuance, heart, and soul. His performance resonated deeply with audiences and critics alike, cementing his place as one of the most compelling actors of his generation. Fisher's journey from the Broadway stage—where he first embodied Lymon—to the silver screen is a testament to his artistry, discipline, and ability to transform any role into something unforgettable.

Widely recognized for his role as Victor Stone, also known as Cyborg, in the DC Extended Universe franchises of ***Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice*** and ***Justice League***, Fisher has also delivered gripping performances in ***True Detective***, ***Women of the Movement***, ***Meet Joe Black***, ***The Astronaut Wives Club***, and ***The Thomas Crown Affair***—showing a versatility and commitment to his craft that are undeniable.

AAFCA proudly presents the **Breakthrough Performance Award** to **Ray Fisher** whose work inspires, uplifts, and also reminds us of the power of authenticity in storytelling.

MALCOLM WASHINGTON

EMERGING DIRECTOR



The African American Film Critics Association proudly honors **Malcolm Washington**, a visionary director whose debut feature has captivated audiences and critics alike. With ***The Piano Lesson***, Washington breathes new life into a classic to deliver a masterful adaptation that proves how great storytelling transcends mediums. Adapted from August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning play, this 2024 Netflix drama explores legacy, family, and how its lasting imprint shapes our cultural consciousness.

Led by a stellar ensemble cast including Samuel L. Jackson, John David Washington, and Danielle Deadwyler, Washington's adaptation reimagines Wilson's iconic work for the screen with nuance, depth, and cinematic vision. Premiering at the 51st Telluride Film Festival and released to widespread acclaim, ***The Piano Lesson*** not only shows Washington's talent behind the camera but also highlights his ability to draw out unforgettable performances.

His journey as a filmmaker is built on passion, discipline, and unwavering dedication to authentic storytelling. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in film studies, Washington went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts in directing from the esteemed AFI Conservatory, laying the foundation for his distinct storytelling approach.

Already recognized with multiple breakthrough director awards, including honors from the Chicago International Film Festival and the Hamptons International Film Festival, Washington is proving that his cinematic voice is one to watch—and one to be celebrated.

The African American Film Critics Association proudly presents the **Emerging Director Award** to **Malcolm Washington**. With ***The Piano Lesson***, he has not only honored the legacy of August Wilson but has also begun crafting an extraordinary legacy of his own.

NETFLIX THANKS

AAFCA

AND PROUDLY CONGRATULATES
OUR WINNERS

Daughters

BEST DOCUMENTARY

EMILIA PÉREZ

BEST INTERNATIONAL FILM

THE PIANO LESSON

BEST ENSEMBLE

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

DANIELLE DEADWYLER

AND SALUTES OUR HONOREES

NICOLE AVANT

AAFCA BEACON AWARD

RAY FISHER

AAFCA BREAKOUT PERFORMANCE AWARD

MALCOLM WASHINGTON

AAFCA EMERGING DIRECTOR AWARD



NICOLE AVANT

BEACON AWARD



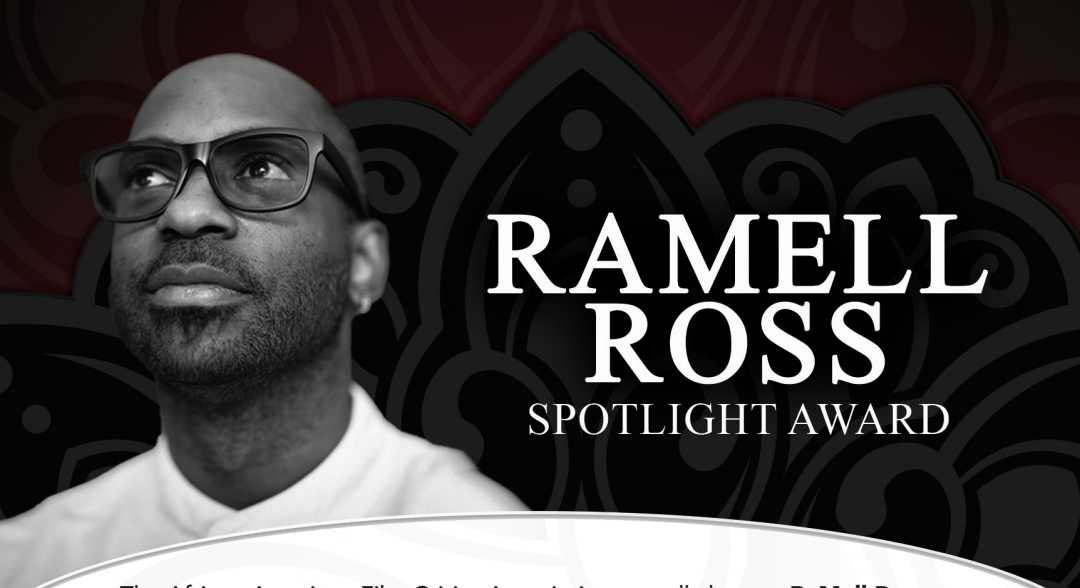
The African American Film Critics Association celebrates **Nicole Avant**, a visionary leader whose life's work exemplifies service, storytelling, and social impact. As a best-selling author, U.S. diplomat, and award-winning producer, Avant has dedicated her career to amplifying powerful narratives that honor history and inspire future generations.

Her latest film, Netflix Original ***The Six Triple Eight***, highlights the story of the first all-Black female battalion in Europe during WWII, a never-before-told narrative long overlooked. Avant's passion for preserving history is also seen in ***The Black Godfather***, a documentary about her father's legacy in the music industry. It earned Emmy and NAACP Image Award nominations, along with the AAFCA Award for Best Documentary in 2020. In addition, Avant's work on ***Trees of Peace*** further solidifies her commitment to untold stories.

Avant's memoir, ***Think You'll Be Happy***—a reflection on grief, resilience and optimism—became a **USA Today** bestseller, resonating deeply with readers worldwide.

In addition to her work in film and literature, Avant has a strong public service and philanthropic background. She donated the Jacqueline Avant Children and Family Center in honor of her mother, to support families in need, and served as the youngest and first African American woman U.S. Ambassador to The Bahamas. Appointed by President Barack Obama to the role, Avant lead initiatives in education, women's empowerment, and economic development. As a result of her efforts, she was nominated for the Sue M. Cobb Award for Exemplary Diplomatic Service.

From Hollywood to global philanthropy, Avant's journey is a testament to courage, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to positive change. Please join us in celebrating the **2025 AAFCA Beacon Award** honoree, **Nicole Avant!**



RAMELL ROSS

SPOTLIGHT AWARD

The African American Film Critics Association proudly honors **RaMell Ross**, a director redefining storytelling through an intellectual and visionary lens. With his 2024 adaptation of Colson Whitehead's ***Nickel Boys***, Ross has solidified his place as one of the most innovative voices in cinema today. His masterful direction brings Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel to life with raw emotion and visual poetry, earning him the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Director and further establishing his reputation as a filmmaker of immense depth and artistry.

Ross first captivated audiences with his groundbreaking debut documentary, ***Hale County This Morning, This Evening***, a poetic portrait of Black life in the American South. The film's innovative approach earned him an Academy Award nomination and a Peabody Award, marking the arrival of a storyteller uniquely attuned to the beauty and complexity of everyday existence.

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, and raised in Fairfax, Virginia, Ross's journey to filmmaking is as extraordinary as his work. A former basketball player turned artist and director, Ross' creative pursuits took root in Greensboro, Alabama, where he began documenting life through his lens. Ross' commitment to exploring Black identity, history, and resilience has made his work both timely and timeless.

Beyond his contributions to cinema, Ross is also shaping the next generation of visual artists as a Professor of Practice at Brown University, ensuring that his impact extends far beyond the screen.

AAFCA proudly presents the **Spotlight Award** to **RaMell Ross**, celebrating his brilliance, vision, and the undeniable mark he continues to leave on the world of film and art.



ORION AMAZON MGM STUDIOS

THANK THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
AND PROUDLY CONGRATULATE OUR
16TH ANNUAL AAFCA HONOREES

SPOTLIGHT AWARD
RAMELL ROSS

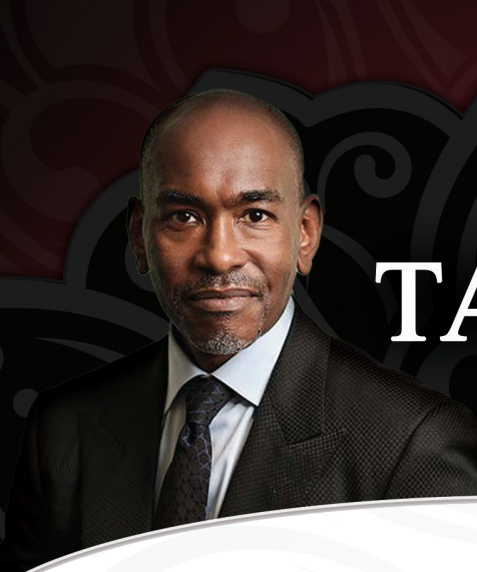
BEST DIRECTOR
RAMELL ROSS

BEST PICTURE
NICKEL BOYS

AAFCA'S TOP 10 FILMS OF THE YEAR
NICKEL BOYS

NICKEL BOYS

DIRECTED BY RAMELL ROSS
SCREENPLAY BY RAMELL ROSS & JOSLYN BARNES
BASED ON THE BOOK "THE NICKEL BOYS" BY COLSON WHITEHEAD

A portrait of Paul Tazewell, a Black man with a short beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background behind him is dark with intricate, light-colored patterns.

PAUL TAZEWELL

INNOVATOR AWARD

The African American Film Critics Association honors **Paul Tazewell**, a distinguished costume designer whose work has redefined storytelling across film, television, and theater. With over three decades of experience, Tazewell's costume designs bring characters to life and enrich narratives.

Tazewell's craft shines in Universal's ***Wicked***, the Academy Award-nominated film with 10 nominations, including Best Costume Design. Working with director John M. Chu, Tazewell transformed the world of Oz, blending fantasy with historical influences to create magical yet deeply rooted designs for its cast, including co-stars Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande.

Additional accolades include an Emmy Award for NBC's ***The Wiz! Live!*** and work on films such as ***Harriet***, ***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks***, and ***Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert***. And, he has earned two Lucille Lortel Awards, four Helen Hayes Awards, a CDGA Award, and the Princess Grace Statue Award.

A master craftsman, Tazewell has collaborated with esteemed institutions like The Metropolitan Opera, The Bolshoi Ballet, and The Kennedy Center. His Broadway journey began with ***Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*** and includes designs for ***In the Heights***, ***Ain't Too Proud***, ***The Color Purple***, and ***Memphis***. His work on ***Fire Shut Up in My Bones*** marked The Met's first opera by an African American composer.

Tazewell's recent work includes ***Death Becomes Her*** and ***Suffs***, which earned him a Drama Desk Award and a Tony nomination. His legacy continues to inspire as an educator at Carnegie Mellon University.

AAFA proudly presents the **Innovator Award** to **Paul Tazewell**.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND DREAMWORKS
SALUTE THE MEMBERS OF THE

AAFC

AND PROUDLY CONGRATULATE
ALL OF OUR WINNERS

WICKED

INNOVATOR AWARD

Paul Tazewell

THE
WILD ROBOT

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

Kris Bowers

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE



DREAMWORKS



A24

**THANKS THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
AND CONGRATULATES OUR WINNERS**

BEST ACTOR
COLMAN DOMINGO

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
CLARENCE MACLIN

BEST SCREENPLAY
CLINT BENTLEY & GREG KWEDAR

Congratulations to Marianne Jean-Baptiste

on winning
Best Actress
at the
**African American
Film Critics
Association
Awards**

**Hard
Truths**



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT

HOW TO SUE THE KLAN

THE LEGACY OF THE CHATTANOOGA FIVE

12^x OFFICIAL SELECTION
OSCAR QUALIFYING
FILM FESTIVALS

12^x WINNER
BEST DOC SHORT
AWARDS

AVAILABLE IN THE ACADEMY
SCREENING ROOM NOW
COMING TO PBS 2025

FROM PRODUCER **BEN CRUMP**
HOW TO SUE THE KLAN
DIRECTOR **JOHN BEDER**

55TH ANNUAL AA





AFRICANAMERICAN
aafca
FILMCRITICSASSOCIATION



AWARDS

SPECIAL
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS
Luncheon



AFRICANAMERICAN
aafca
FILMCRITICSASSOCIATION
TV HONORS
CELEBRATE THE BEST IN TELEVISION



aafca
GOES TO
Broadway





A TIME TO YELL: MORE THAN A STATUE

REVEALING THE HIDDEN TRUTH

Discover how Charlottesville's 2017 rally—seen through the eyes of Dr. Wes Bellamy and local voices—exposed deep-rooted tensions that ignited a national uproar over a single monument, reshaping one of the most divisive moments in modern American history.

ATIMETOYELL.COM

✉ MoreThanAStatue@gmail.com 📷 [@ATimeToYell](https://www.instagram.com/ATimeToYell)

RESOURCES FOR CALIFORNIANS AFFECTED BY WILDFIRES

If you or someone you know has been impacted by the recent wildfires in California, there are resources available to help with emergency aid, housing, financial assistance, and recovery efforts.

The LA Disaster Relief Navigator is available at lacity.gov or accessible directly at wildfires.betterangels.la.

American Red Cross – redcross.org
or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



Executive Producer: Gil Robertson IV

Producer: Abdul Malik Abbott

Associated Producer: Shon Fuller

Director: Jonathan X

Associated Director: Dora Mendoza

Technical Director: Justin Jemerson

Sound: Mark Laurent

Editors: Adam Laiben, Andy Badaras, Maria Badaras, Abdul Malik Abbott

Script: Regina Robertson

Script Supervisor: Kristen Laidley

Guest Relations: Scott Hamilton

Art/Graphics: Kimberly Malhoit

Program Editor: Marcia Cole

Coordinators: Trina Kort, Stephanie Thornton

Payroll & Bookkeeping: Jeanine Askew & Shashanna Singh

Public Relations: Perception PR

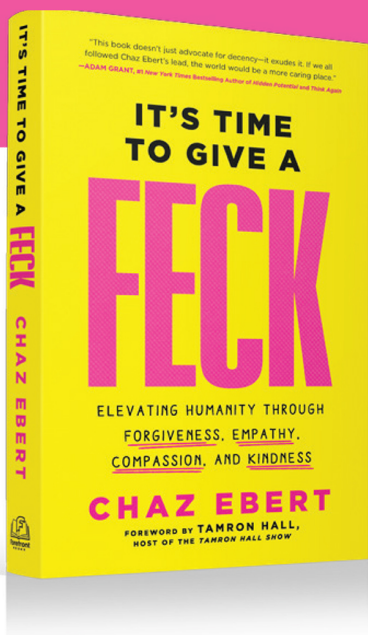
Grooming: Precious Jackson

Photographer: Arnold Turner, Sheri Determan, Byron Rogers

Videographer: Yoshua Khan

AAFC Thanks Comcast, Nissan, Morgan Stanley - Sports & Entertainment Wealth, Amazon-MGM, Netflix, Apple TV +, Universal, Warner Bros, A-24, Andscape, Fulton County Films, Worthi PR, The MRKT, Allied, Roadshow Attractions, Bentonville Film Festival, Bleecker Street Media, and Sony Pictures Entertainment for their support.

A new book from author
CHAZ EBERT



Forgiveness
Empathy
Compassion
Kindness



We all hold the ability to transform empathy into action for greater, more positive personal and global impact. With her words of wisdom, Chaz Ebert has beautifully showcased just how each of us can put this potential into action and, through our service to others, always keep hope alive.

REVEREND JESSE L. JACKSON, SR.,
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE RAINBOW PUSH COALITION

GIVEAFECK.COM

You can also find us at
ROGEREBERT.COM OR **EBERTFEST.COM**.
The 26th Annual Ebertfest will take place
from April 23 - 26, 2025.

SCAN TO
PURCHASE





DRIVEN TO DELIVER AN EXHILARATING PERFORMANCE

Welcome to the 2025 AAFCA Awards.
Congratulations to the winners and the nominees
being honored for their achievements.



2025 Z has limited availability. See local dealer for inventory information.



Lights, Camera, Culture!

It's more than just the big screen—it's a celebration where diverse stories and untapped brilliance in our community take center stage. Just say 'Black Experience' into your Xfinity Voice Remote and embark through a curated content collection of movies, TV shows, original documentaries and much more that pays homage to Black culture, amplifies our narratives, and illuminates our imagination.

We applaud the African American Film Critics Association for honoring this year's filmmakers and talent, whose work continues to expand the scope of representation on screen.

Learn more at [**xfinity.com/blackexperience**](https://xfinity.com/blackexperience)

The Black Experience on Xfinity can also be watched on the free streaming Xumo Play app.

BLACK EXPERIENCE on **xfinity**