AFRICANAMERICAN
aafca
FILMCRITICSASSOCIATION

7TH ANNUAL

TV HONORS

CELEBRATE THE BEST IN TELEVISION

PRESENTED BY

Morgan Stanley

GLOBAL SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2025
11AM TO 2PM
HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT HOTEL



aafca.com

aafca | African American Film Critics Association | The AAFCA Channel

#aafca360


Morgan Stanley
GLOBAL SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT
We are proud to sponsor the
7th Annual African American Film Critics Association TV Honors
And celebrate with all of today's honorees on their outstanding achievements.
morganstanley.com/gse
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.
© 2025 Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC. Member SIPC.
CRC 4648169 07/25 CS 1819583-5986756 07/25



Dear Distinguished Guests,

It is always a pleasure to gather at the historic Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel - the very site of the first Academy Awards-in a space steeped in entertainment history. We welcome everyone to the 7th edition of AAFCA TV Honors, an afternoon dedicated to celebrating the very best in television and the visionary creatives who are shaping its future. Thank you for being here.

In the current environment, which challenges the very essence of our humanity, the shows and performers we honor this year vividly embody the indelible spirit of creative individuals. These works rise above challenging social and political conditions, illustrating the power of resilience in the face of all odds. Their stories continue to inspire us, showcasing the ability of people to overcome forces that seek to diminish or erase them.

Our 2025 Class of Special Achievement Honorees is exceptional and transformative, contributing significantly to the industry through their work and leadership. They represent a remarkable body of bright and intelligent individuals, and this year is no different. We are proud to celebrate their presence and impact, as their efforts make the entire entertainment landscape better, not only for those who work in it but for the audiences who experience their creations.

All our honorees exemplify the values AAFCA stands for: excellence, inclusion, innovation, and the power of storytelling to empower and transform.

Again, we thank you for joining us in honoring these remarkable human beings for their accomplishments.

Warm regards,
Gil Robertson
President
African American Film Critics Association (AAFCA)



NNEKA ONUORAH
HORIZON AWARD

A proud Nigerian American born and raised in Queens, New York, Nneka Onuorah has made it her mission to use the lens not just to entertain, but to illuminate. From her very initial steps into the industry—first as a BET intern and later as a producer on "Black Girls Rock!"—Nneka has charted a path defined by boldness, authenticity, and fearless representation.

Nneka has built an extraordinary body of work rooted in truth-telling and visibility. She made her directorial debut with "The Same Difference," a courageous and uncompromising documentary that examined internalized homophobia and gender policing within the Black lesbian community. The film sparked difficult but necessary conversations and earned a GLAAD nomination for Outstanding Documentary.

Since then, Nneka credits include "First and Last," the Netflix original that follows inmates through their intake and release from prison; "My House," a Viceland series that dives into the vibrant world of New York's Black queer ballroom scene; and "Burn Down the House," a deeply personal portrait of Parisian dancer and activist Kiddy Smile, which premiered at NewFest. In 2021, she took her vision global with "The Legend of the Underground," a searing documentary co-directed with Giselle Bailey.

Then came a groundbreaking milestone. In 2022, Nneka directed the hit Amazon Prime series "Lizzo's Watch Out for the Big Grrrls." The show, which centers on body positivity, self-love, and sisterhood, won Outstanding Competition Program and earned Nneka the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Directing for a Reality Program. Most recently, she returned to the screen with yet another dynamic film: "Megan Thee Stallion: In Her Words." The Amazon Prime documentary, produced by Roc Nation and Time Studios, debuted as the platform's number one documentary.

For her unwavering dedication to inclusion, barrier-breaking achievements, and her power to move culture forward, we are proud to present the Horizon Award to the unstoppable Nneka Onuorah

AMAZON **MGM STUDIOS**

thanks the
African American Film Critics Association
and proudly congratulates our honoree



Horizon Award

Nneka Onuorah

Producer/Director
Megan Thee Stallion: In Her Words



MICHELLE BUETEAU
TRAILBLAZER AWARD

As an actress, comedian, producer, writer, television host, and podcaster, Michelle is a true multi-hyphenate. But more than that, she is an innovator—unapologetically bold, joyfully authentic, and powerfully real.

With her hit Netflix series "Survival of the Thickest," which she created and executive produced, Michelle brought her own story to life—centered on a plus-sized, single Black woman navigating love, fashion, and reinvention with humor and heart. Based on her acclaimed essay collection of the same name, the show earned Michelle an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Breakthrough Creative in Television.

She made history as the first woman to tape a Netflix stand-up special at the iconic Radio City Music Hall with "A Buteau-ful Mind"—a fearless, funny, and deeply personal set that reminded audiences everywhere that laughter is liberation. Her debut special, "Welcome to Buteaupia," earned the Critics' Choice Award for Best Comedy Special and solidified her place among comedy's elite.

In film, Michelle continues to shine with standout performances in projects like "BABES, Marry Me," "Always Be My Maybe," and "First Wives Club." And as the charismatic host of Netflix's "The Circle" and "Barbecue Showdown," she brings the same warmth, wit, and no-nonsense brilliance that fans have come to love.

Michelle is a working mom of twins, a proud advocate for body positivity, a champion of representation, and a cultural commentator who keeps it real—always. Whether she's sharing pre-dawn parenting chaos or walking red car pets, she does it with heart, hustle, and hilarious honesty.

For her bold storytelling, her boundary-breaking career, and her unwavering commitment to showing up fully and fabulously in every space she enters, we are proud to celebrate her with the 2025 AAFCA TV Honors Trailblazer Award.

NETFLIX THANKS

AAFCA

AND PROUDLY CONGRATULATES
OUR WINNERS

FOREVER

BEST NEW SHOW

BEST DIRECTOR

Anthony Hemingway, Thembi Banks,
Mara Brock Akil and Regina King

BEST WRITING

AND SALUTES OUR HONOREES

MARA BROCK AKIL
LEGACY AWARD

MICHELLE BUTEAU
TRAILBLAZER AWARD





AYO DAVIS

SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE AWARD

Ayo Davis is the president of Disney Branded Television—the division behind some of the most popular and meaningful content for kids and families today. In this role, Ayo oversees a powerhouse slate of live-action, animated, and unscripted content across Disney+, Disney Channel, Disney XD, and Disney Junior.

Since stepping into her leadership role in 2021, Ayo has helped mold a new model of storytelling for Disney—one rooted in creativity, representation, and emotional connection. She doesn't just greenlight projects – she greenlights joy with content that resonates across a lifetime.

From Bluey, the #1 streaming series for preschoolers, to Marvel's Spidey and His Amazing Friends, Big City Greens, and the popular Descendants: The Rise of Red, Ayo's creative guidance has led Disney Branded Television to unprecedented success.

Under Ayo's guidance, Disney Junior has remained the #1 preschool network for 12 straight years, while Disney Channel continues to hold its place as the #1 cable network for Girls 6–11. She is also a known champion of talent, who, through initiatives like ABC Discovers, has helped redefine what opportunity looks like in Hollywood.

As a woman who has spent over two decades inside The Walt Disney Company—rising through the ranks from casting executive to president—Ayo Davis has shaped what leadership should look like in the entertainment space. We are proud to present her with AAFCA's Salute to Excellence Award.

DISNEY PROUDLY CONGRATULATES OUR AAFCA WINNERS AND HONOREE



STERLING K. BROWN
PARADISE
BEST ACTOR

hulu
PARADISE
BEST DRAMA

SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES
THE Supremes AT EARL'S ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT
BEST TV MOVIE



AYO DAVIS
President of Disney Branded Television
SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE AWARD

Disney



TINA PERRY
VISIONARY AWARD

We celebrate a woman who has redefined the blueprint for inclusive, purposeful media leadership—Tina Perry, president of OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network—and the recipient of the 2025 AAFCA TV Honors Visionary Award.

A revered force in television, a culture-shaping strategist, and a relentless champion for authentic storytelling, Tina Perry has not only steered OWN through a pivotal evolution—she's transformed it into a cultural touchstone. Under her groundbreaking leadership, OWN has become a powerful force in television, connecting deeply with Black audiences and centering Black women in ways that feel bold, nuanced, and long overdue. From scripted excellence like "Queen Sugar," "Greenleaf," and "David Makes Man," to the vibrant landscape of unscripted storytelling with "Love & Marriage: Huntsville," "Ready to Love," "Belle Collective," "Put A Ring On It," and more, Tina has curated a network that feels like home—one where Black lives, Black joy, Black families, and Black love are seen, honored, and amplified.

But Tina's vision extends beyond the screen. She's led OWN into new territory—across streaming platforms, digital media, and audio storytelling—ensuring that the network's reach expands with the times while remaining rooted in mission.

Tina understands that culture is power. That leadership is legacy. And that visibility isn't enough - we need ownership, creativity, and courage at the table. For her trailblazing leadership, her unapologetic focus on elevating narratives for unsung voices, and her tireless devotion to culture, community, and progress, we are proud to present the Visionary Award to Tina Perry.



WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

proudly congratulates all of the
winners and honorees recognized at the

AAFCA
TV HONORS AWARDS

including

TINA PERRY
PRESIDENT OF OWN

and this year's recipient of the

VISIONARY AWARD

for her enduring
contributions to television





KEITH LE GOY

TV VANGUARD AWARD

Keith Le Goy is Chairman of Sony Pictures Television (SPT), responsible for all television production operations, including SPT's legendary game shows, as well as all television and home entertainment distribution for Sony Pictures' film and television content, and the studio's cable networks, such as GSN (Game Show Network), across the US, Latin America and Europe.

Sony Pictures Television (SPT) is one of the television industry's leading content providers, producing, distributing and carrying programming worldwide in every genre and for every platform. Sony Pictures Television (SPT) produces a wide array of premium programming worldwide, including the longtime #1 and #2-rated game shows, Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy!, as well as The Boys, Cobra Kai, The Last of Us, S.W.A.T., Outlander, For All Mankind, Shark Tank, 90-Day Fiancé, Twisted Metal, The Night Agent, Dark Matter, and many more.

Previously, Le Goy served as Chairman of Worldwide Distribution Networks for Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE). In this role, he led the studio's combined television and home entertainment distribution and marketing businesses. Le Goy also oversaw SPE's Crunchyroll anime business, as well as its successful cable networks in Latin America and Europe. Prior to that, he held the role of President of Distribution for Sony Pictures Television (SPT) before expanding his role to include oversight of home entertainment and networks. Le Goy was President of International Distribution from 2008 and was SPT's Executive Vice President of Distribution, since 2006. He was previously based at SPT's Latin America headquarters in Miami, where he served as Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Latin America, for three years. He joined SPT in 1999 as Senior Vice President, European Distribution, based at Sony's European headquarters in London.


SONY
PICTURES
Congratulates
Keith Le Goy
On Receiving
The AAFCA TV Vanguard Award
www.sonypictures.com © 2015 Sony Pictures Television Inc. All rights reserved.



MARA BROCK AKIL
LEGACY AWARD

We celebrate a trailblazer who didn't just open doors, she built new ones. Mara Brock Akil, the award-winning producer, writer, and creator behind some of the most influential television of the past 25 years, is a force whose legacy continues to unfold in powerful, game-changing ways.

From her early days writing on South Central and Moesha, to becoming the youngest African American showrunner on network television at just 30 with Girlfriends, Mara has redefined what it means to center Black women's stories with intelligence, style, and soul. Her work on "The Game," "Being Mary Jane," and "Black Lightning" cemented her status as a cultural architect. She has consistently held a mirror to society, reflecting our struggles, joys, and truths with unflinching honesty and deep humanity.

Through her production companies Akil Productions and Story27, she has mentored the next generation of creatives, built inclusive writers' rooms, and created authentic worlds where Black characters are complex, beautiful, flawed, and free.

Most recently, Mara brought her unique voice to "Forever," the Netflix series adapted from Judy Blume's groundbreaking 1975 novel. The story, reimagined through Mara's lens, centers Black teen love in all its emotional, awkward, powerful glory.

For her groundbreaking contributions to television, her fearless storytelling, and her commitment to empowering others, we are proud to present the Legacy Award to Mara Brock Akil.

AMAZON **MGM STUDIOS**

thanks the
African American Film Critics Association
and proudly congratulates our winners



HARLEM

Best Comedy
Top Ten Television Program



CROSS

Top Ten Television Program



DENISE NICHOLAS

TV ICON AWARD

Denise Nicholas is not just a legendary actress. She is a writer, a truth-teller, a barrier-breaker… and one of the most respected artists of her generation. Her journey began not on a red carpet, but in the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. As a young woman, Denise traveled the South with the Free Southern Theater, using performance as protest, art as activism. She would go on to hone her craft at the Negro Ensemble Company in New York City—an incubator of Black talent and stories—where her voice first echoed on the American stage.

But it was television that first brought her into our homes and our hearts. As Liz McIntyre on the groundbreaking series "Room 222," Denise became one of the first Black women to play a non-stereotypical professional role on primetime television. As a poised, compassionate guidance counselor, she portrayed Black excellence with grace and dignity—opening the door for countless actresses to follow.

She continued to break barriers as Harriet DeLong, the strong-willed councilwoman on "In the Heat of the Night." What began as a recurring role grew into a leading part that spanned six years and 130 episodes.

The drama series also extended Denise's artistic development by allowing her to write six episodes of the series and quietly became one of the first Black women to write for a major network drama.

She later pivoted to literature, and in 2005, her debut novel, "Freshwater Road," was hailed by critics as one of the year's best books. Now, with her highly anticipated memoir, "Finding Home," due out this fall, Denise prepares to tell her own story in her own words.

She is a pioneer. A storyteller. A symbol of what is possible when talent meets courage.

We proudly present the TV Icon Award to Denise Nicholas.

CONGRATULATIONS
DENISE NICHOLAS AND THE AAFCA!



A NEW MEMOIR FROM THE AUTHOR
OF *FRESHWATER ROAD,* DENISE NICHOLAS

FINDING **HOME**

ON SALE NOVEMBER 4TH

"A DISTINCT AMERICAN VOICE."
—JAMES MCBRIDE,
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER

NBCUNIVERSAL

PROUDLY CONGRATULATES OUR

AAFCA TV AWARDS HONOREES



Best Ensemble
Top 10 Show of the Year



Best Comedy
Top 10 Show of the Year

AND THANKS THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
FOR THIS RECOGNITION

NBCUniversal


Congratulations
KATHY BATES
& SKYE P. MARSHALL
on your Best Actress and Breakthrough Talent
wins at the 7th AAFCA Honors!
CBS ORIGINAL
Matlock
CBS | CBS STUDIOS
©2025 CBS Studios Inc. All rights reserved.

THANK YOU TO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GEN ZONE TEAM



BEST REALITY

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”
-DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

tv+

CONGRATULATIONS TO

The Big Cigar

ON RECEIVING THE AAFCA TV HONOR

Best Limited Series




tv+
CONGRATULATIONS TO
NUMBER ONE
ON THE CALL SHEET
ON RECEIVING THE AAFCA TV HONOR
Best Documentary



Executive Producer	Gil Robertson IV
Producer	Abdul Malik Abbott
Associated Producer	Shon Fuller
Event Coordinator	Shon Fuller
Technical Director	Justin Jemerson
Sound	Mark Laurent
Editors	Adam Laiben, Andy Badaras, Maria Badaras, Dominique Ulloa, Yoshua Khan, Abdul Malik Abbott
Script	Vincent Terrell Durham
Guest Relations:	Scott Hamilton
Art/Graphics	Kimberly Malhoit
Coordinators	Trina Kort, Stephanie Thornton
Payroll & Bookkeeping	Jeaunine Askew & Shashanna Singh
Public Relations	Perception PR
Grooming	Precious Jackson
Photographer	Arnold Turner, Sheri Determan, Byron Rogers
Videographer	Yoshua Khan

AAFCA, Thanks Comcast, Morgan Stanley - Sports & Entertainment Wealth, Northwestern Mutual, Amazon Prime, Netflix, Apple TV +, NBC/Universal, Warner Bros, CBS, Disney, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Hulu, Searchlight, Worthi PR, and Movie by Misfits for their support.


aafca
GOES TO
Broadway
OCTOBER 13, 2025
aafca.com