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LDF Issues Statement on Passing of Cicely Tyson

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill issued the following statement on the passing of Cicely Tyson:

“We have lost a true legend tonight. Cicely Tyson transcended stage and screen across a brilliant and celebrated seven-decade career. Her powerful portrayals of Coretta Scott King, Jane Pittman, Harriet Tubman, and countless others left a lasting impression for generations of Americans and paved the way for Black artists to follow in her footsteps.

“Ms. Tyson was an idol to so many young Black girls and women – myself included. Her dignity and grace were unmatched. As was her immense talent and dedication to her craft and community. Ms. Tyson’s commitment to only taking on roles that she described as having ‘strength, pride, and dignity’ came at a significant professional cost, but she was undeterred – understanding the power of her platform and fighting to change the entertainment industry’s stereotypes of Black women. Throughout her career, she took on roles that cut to the core of the Black experience in America, bringing to television and the stage important stories that needed to be told.

“Ms. Tyson’s appearance at LDF’s 2019 National Equal Justice Awards Dinner – where she accepted an award on behalf of fellow icon Harry Belafonte – is a moment I will treasure forever. Her presence on stage captivated all those in attendance and was one of the evening’s lasting memories. My heart goes out to her friends and family. She will be deeply missed.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).