

R.I.P. Lena Horne

The legendary icon Lena Horne passed yesterday at New York Presbyterian Hospital of undisclosed causes. Ms.Horne started her career in the '30's as a dancer at the Cotton Club in Harlem when she was 16 years old. In the '40's she became the first Black entertainer to get a big contract with MGM studios even though she filmed performance scenes that were cut for southern audiences. The company hired its first Black hairdresser because of Horne's presence and when you read articles in Essence magazine in the 2000's where Black actress Nia Long reveals that many Blacktresses wear weaves because studios do not hire Black hairstylists you realize the heft of Horne's success. In 1944 she became the first Black star to appear on the front of a fan magazine when *Motion Picture* made her their cover girl. The Brooklyn born singer also became known for her outspoken stance on racism in America because of the racism she experienced living in Los Angeles and traveling the south to entertain the military troops. Take a look at her performance of "Stormy Weather" in the movie of the same name that is distinguished for its offering of the illustrious members of early Black Hollywood. Rosie O'Donnell did a couple of gracious interviews of Horne in the late '90's that are now pertinent historical pieces.