

LL Cool J Is Youngest And First Rapper To Receive Kennedy Center Honors



LL Cool J was among the Kennedy Center Honors 2017 class in Washington D.C last night. He was celebrated alongside pop star Gloria Estefan, dancer Carmen de Lavallade, television legend Norman Lear and singer-songwriter Lionel Richie. At 49, LL Cool J is the youngest person and first hip-hop artist to receive the distinction. Q-Tip became the center's first artistic director of hip-hop last year. LL Cool J gave thanks to "Those who came before me and who followed me" on an [Instagram](#) post Saturday. President Trump did not attend and Norman Lear had threatened to boycott the event if he did. When LL was asked about Trump he said:

I think in this environment, right now, the political climate can be a bit distracting and tonight it's about the arts, and so that's what we're focused on. I'm not looking to use this as a soapbox to take shots or try to be divisive. I don't want to go there. I think it's about the love, the culture. I want hip-hop to be remembered as a unifying force. We're coming in here and it's going to be unity and music and love and art and dance and TV.

The ceremony will air on CBS December 26th at 9PM ET. WTOP News did an interview with LL Cool J on the red carpet. Watch it below.

[youtube id="gJMrm8uVi40"]