

Pam Grier & MC Lyte To Receive Harvard's W.E.B. Du Bois Medal



Pam Grier and MC Lyte are among this year's recipients of Harvard's W.E.B. Du Bois medal awarded to those who have made significant contributions to African-American culture and intellectual life. Grier is the prototype for the female action hero because of her career in the '70s as an icon of the blaxploitation genre. Director Quentin Tarantino created the movie *Jackie Brown* specifically for Grier and she was a cast member of *The L Word*. MC Lyte is an icon of rap for her output in the '80's and '90's including her classic album *Lyte As A Rock*. Opera singer Jessye Norman and *The Wire*'s David Simon will also receive the medal at the event taking place October 6th at Hutchins Center for African and African-American Research at Harvard.

Throwback: Pam Grier

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Pam Grier's film career started in 1970 when she appeared as a partygoer in the movie *Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls*. She became a supporting actress after working on Jack Hill's women in prison flicks *The Big Doll House* and *Women in Cages*. *Cool Breeze* would be her first official blaxploitation film, but it

was the vigilante action movie *Coffy* that became her breakout hit. Grier was a new type of cinematic heroine because she was African-American, passionate and exuded a sexuality that was confident but not cheap. The role was written for a white actress but none were able to handle a gun or the required physicality. Grier attributes her preparedness to her feminist grandfather who encouraged the girls in her family to be independent. *Foxy Brown*, *Sheba Baby* and *Friday Foster* cemented her place as the first woman to be an action star in the movies. Each role showcased Grier as a sexy but tough character who typically sought justice for the people in her life who were wronged by criminal and corrupt organizations. At the end of the '70's she had a role in *Greased Lightning* where she met Richard Pryor and embarked on a highly publicized personal relationship with him. In the '80's Grier had memorable roles in *Fort Apache*, *The Bronx* and *Something Wicked This Way It Comes*. Television work on the hit show *Miami Vice* also kept her relevant. Grier returned to the spotlight in 1997 with the Quentin Tarantino-directed *Jackie Brown*. Tarantino adapted Elmore Leonard's *Rum Punch* for the story and he created the film with Grier in mind and used it to pay tribute to her earlier work in *Foxy Brown* and *Coffy*. The film was critically acclaimed and Grier received Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild, Saturn and Chicago Film Critics Awards nominations. Her next big sighting came on *The L Word* where she played Kate "Kit" Porter, the R&B singing sister of Jennifer Beal's character for six seasons. In 2010 she published her memoir, *Foxy: My Life In Three Acts*. When Grier isn't doing television and film work she cares for the horses, turkeys, chickens and dogs at her home in Colorado.

Media Questions Of The Week

[youtube]XukHU8y5GRQ[/youtube]

1. Was it really wrong for Mary J. Blige to revisit stereotypes about Black people like the [Coon Chicken Inn](#) for a Burger King commercial when Aretha Franklin did a [Snickers](#) ad? Or how about Busta Rhymes's ["Pass The Courvoisier?"](#) And why didn't her people tell her that if she had promoted the "salads" or the "smoothies" instead of chicken the public would've called her a hero?

[youtube]QJd5hUCqlHU[/youtube]

2. Is Young Jeezy correct when he says that the streets will erupt if George Zimmerman is not charged for the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin?



3. Is Pam Grier's choice of Halle Berry to play her in a biopic the best person for the job?

Pam Grier On The View & Fox News



[For Hip Hop News & Entertainment](#) at
DimeWars.Com

Pam Grier has been promoting her book [Foxy:My Life In Three Acts](#).She like so many women has a story of sexual molestation

that again proves the relevance of a film like "Precious." She is also a survivor of cancer.