

15th Annual American Black Film Festival honors Keenen Ivory Wayans

Film Life, Inc., CEO, Jeff Friday, is pleased to announce Emmy Award-winning producer/director Keenen Ivory Wayans as honoree at the landmark 15th Annual American Black Film Festival (ABFF).

In recognition of his success in the film and television industry for nearly 25 years, Wayans will be honored with the Entertainment Icon Award at the festival's culminating event, ABFF Honors, taking place on Saturday, July 9, at The Fillmore Miami Beach - Jackie Gleason Theater in Miami, FL.

The Keenen Ivory Wayans' award presentation will be the highlight of ABFF's annual awards show, where the festival's independent film awards are presented and artists are saluted for their achievement in cinema and passionate portrayal of stories about people of color.

Past honorees have included Morgan Freeman, Lee Daniels, Spike Lee, Robert Townsend, Russell Simmons and Halle Berry. Originally noted for his infamous stand-up routines, Keenen Ivory Wayans was the first from his famed comedic family to gain notoriety.

After years of performing on the circuit, in 1987 Wayans produced and co-wrote the hugely successful feature film Eddie Murphy Raw, catapulting his

career to the next level. Having established himself as a talented entertainment visionary, Wayans followed up with a successful string of hits including the indie film Hollywood Shuffle and the classic parody of "blaxploitation" films, I'm Gonna Get You Sucka.

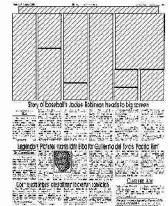
Continuing his success and adding acting to his credits, Wayans broke new ground in television with the Emmy Award-winning Fox comedy series In Living Color. The series single-handedly is credited with launching the careers of such A-list actors Jim Carrey, Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Lopez and Damon Wayans. The show also introduced the television audience to brothers Shawn and Marlon Wayans.

"Keenen Ivory Wayans is a trailblazer in the truest sense of the word," states ABFF founder Jeff Friday. "In fact, very few people in the industry have provided such a dynamic platform in cultivating such notable talent and revolutionizing comedy and comedic television. Beyond that, Wayans has proven to be an amazing mentor to his family by nurturing the careers of his siblings in the industry, and we are proud to bestow him with the festival's highest distinction, especially on our anniversary year."

Wayans other film credits include The Five

Heartbeats with Robert Townsend; A Low Down Dirty Shame; Most Wanted; The Glimmer Man; the hit "coming of age in the hood" movie Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood, in which brothers Shawn and Marlon starred; the nearly \$120 million worldwide grossing film, White Chicks; followed by Little Man and most recently, Dance Flick. In 2000, Wayans wrote and directed the international box office smash hit Scary Movie, a parody of slasher movies, for Dimension Films. The movie went on to break several box office records including biggest opening for an R-rated movie and highest grossing film for an African American director. The film grossed over \$300 million worldwide and led to a successful sequel, Scary Movie 2, which Wayans wrote, directed and produced. Currently Wayans is developing several features, including It Takes a Village, a story about a successful career woman who adopts a baby from a tiny island nation and unwittingly adopts the entire village. He is also executive producing and directing the television pilot Killville for MTV.

HBO is the festival's Founding and Premier Sponsor. Established in 1997, the core mission of the ABFF is to pro-



mote cultural diversity within the motion picture industry. Through its film showcases and special contests, it annually introduces the top echelon of emerging artists to the film and television industry.

The **ABFF** is a property of Film Life, Inc., a New York-based event marketing, production and film distribution company founded in 2000 by Jeff Friday (CEO). For full details on this year's festival, please visit www.abff.com.

