

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University. An Emmy, Du Pont, and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, and institution builder, he has published numerous books and produced and hosted an array of documentary films about Black History, most recently *Great Migrations* (PBS, 2025). Gates’s groundbreaking genealogy and genetics series, *Finding Your Roots*, which received an Emmy nomination, is in its eleventh season. His latest book, *The Black Box: Writing the Race* (Penguin Random House, 2024), was named one of the *New York Times* 100 Best Books of the Year. Most recently, he was awarded the prestigious Spingarn Medal from the NAACP and was elected an Honorary Fellow by the Royal Academy of Arts in England.

Gates is a recipient of a number of honorary degrees, including from his alma mater, the University of Cambridge. He was a member of the first class awarded “genius grants” by the MacArthur Foundation in 1981, and in 1998 he became the first African American scholar to be awarded the National Humanities Medal. In 2001 he discovered the first novel written by a Black female author, *The Bondwoman’s Narrative*, by Hannah Craft.

A native of Piedmont, West Virginia, Gates earned his B.A. in History, summa cum laude, from Yale University in 1973, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in English Literature from Clare College at Cambridge in 1979, where he is also an Honorary Fellow. A former chair of the Pulitzer Prize board, he is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and serves on a wide array of boards, including the New York Public Library, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Aspen Institute, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Library of America, and The Studio Museum of Harlem. In 2011, his portrait, by Yuqi Wang, was hung in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. In 2023, his portrait, by Kerry James Marshall, was hung at the Fitzwilliam Museum at The University of Cambridge.

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