

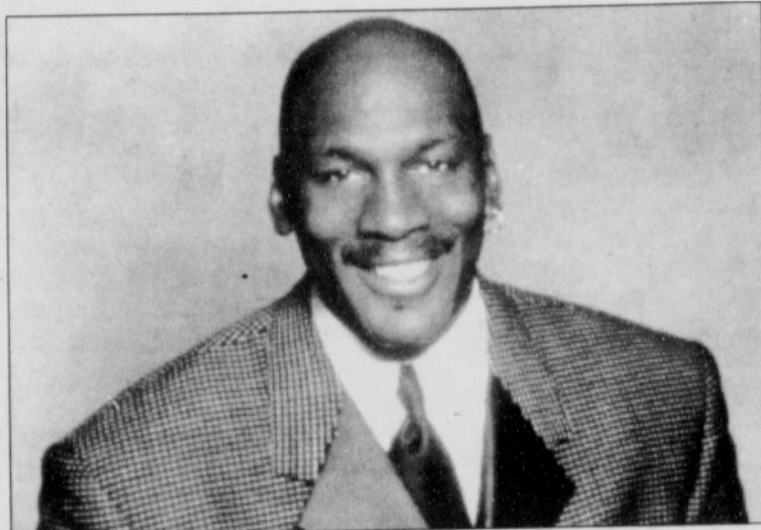
Television

Top Artists celebrate The Essence Awards 2000

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Oprah Winfrey and Bill Cosby were joined onstage by a galaxy of stars to celebrate The Essence Awards 2000, which will air on FOX May 25, 8 to 10 pm. ET/PT. This year's theme, *Building a Better World: A Cause to Celebrate*, honored outstanding individuals who are doing critical work necessary to make a difference in their communities and in the world. Honorees included legendary athlete and role model Michael Jordan and acclaimed actor, humanitarian and Good Will Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Glover.

Also honored were: The Reverend W.C. Martin, minister of the Bennett Chapel Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Texas, and his wife, Donna, who arranged for the adoption of more than one hundred orphaned and foster children by members of his tiny congregation. Mayor Emma R. Gresham, who reclaimed and transformed Keysville, a tiny rural town of about 400 people in southeast Georgia. Mayor Gresham rallied Black people in her community to establish a town government, which local officials unsuccessfully challenged all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. She further united them to demand and fight for a basic



Michael Jordan will be among the people honored at The Essence Awards 2000.

standard of living, including indoor plumbing, sanitation pickup, a library, fire and police protection, a health clinic and after-school programs.

Dr. George Jenkins, Dr. Rameck Hunt and Dr. Sampson Davis of Newark, New Jersey, who as teenagers made a pact to rise above the temptations of the streets and the challenges of poverty to achieve their dreams of becoming doctors. These young medical practitioners currently speak at inner-city schools and churches, offering kids hope and encouragement to follow their dreams. The exciting evening of entertainment included performances by Christina Aguilera, Erykah Badu, Macy Gray,

Ginuwine, Patti LaBelle, Gerald Levert and Hezekiah Walker and The Love Fellowship Crusade Choir. Tyra Banks, Vivica A. Fox, Rah-Digga and Iyanla Vanzant participated in the Special Thirtieth-Anniversary Tribute to ESSENCE magazine.

First Lady Hillary Clinton, Faith Evans, Robert Guillaume, Delroy Lindo, Shemar Moore, Susan Sarandon and Blair Underwood presented, with segments introduced by Harry Belafonte, Kobe Bryant, Mel Gibson, Whoopi Goldberg, Spike Lee, Nelson Mandela, Rosie O' Donnell and Alfre Woodard.

In addition, ESSENCE magazine soars into cyberspace with the

inauguration of the essence.com All-Access Webcast of *The Essence Awards 2000*. This first-ever cybercast of the star-studded event invites surfers to log on to the site during the broadcast to experience the Awards celebration as never before this cyberevent, featuring MTV veejay Ananda Lewis, covers exciting red-carpet arrivals and exclusive backstage celebrity interviews, as well as other special highlights not included on the Fox special. Surfers visiting the site can

see daily clips about ESSENCE, as well as get beauty and fashion tips from ESSENCE editors. Starting one hour prior to the airing of the broadcast, surfers logging on to the essence.com can watch exciting red-carpet arrivals and chat on-line about *The Essence Awards 2000*. The cybercast concludes with exclusive one-on-one backstage celebrity interviews featuring Ananda Lewis. Surfers can also be part of the private VIP post party celebration.

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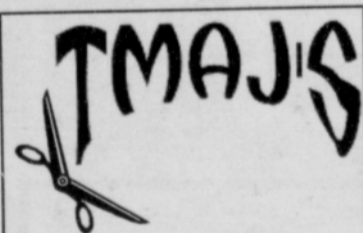
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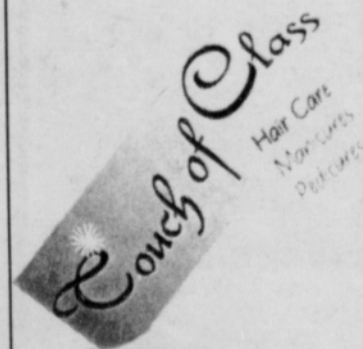
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