



## MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release  
February 15, 2024

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## **Bill Duke to Receive Ja'Net Dubois Lifetime Achievement Award from Pan African Film & Arts Festival During Centerpiece**

### **WHAT:**

The Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) is thrilled to announce that actor/director Bill Duke will receive the Ja'Net Dubois Lifetime Achievement Award during its Centerpiece on Thu., Feb. 15 at the Directors Guild of America in Los Angeles. PAFF's Centerpiece will feature the world premiere of the Ethiopian war film "For the Love of the Motherland."

### **WHEN:**

Thursday, February 15, 2024  
5 p.m. media check-in  
5:30 p.m. Red Carpet  
7 p.m. Program

Directors Guild of America  
7920 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA

### **WHO:**

- Actor/Director Bill Duke
- Theodros Teshome Kebede, Director, "For the Love of the Motherland"



- Other notable guests, elected officials, foreign dignitaries, and talent

## **WHY:**

Originally the Pan African Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Award, but renamed after the late “Good Times” actress and co-founder of PAFF, The Ja'Net DuBois Lifetime Achievement award holds immense significance within the Black entertainment industry and beyond, serving as a beacon of recognition for individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the arts, culture, and society at large. Named in honor of the iconic actress, singer, and humanitarian, Ja'Net DuBois, this award celebrates a lifetime of creativity, innovation, and dedication to one's craft. It not only commemorates the outstanding achievements of its recipients but also highlights their enduring impact on audiences, communities, and future generations. Through honoring individuals who have left an indelible mark on the world through their talent, advocacy, and philanthropy, the Ja'Net DuBois Lifetime Achievement award inspires others to strive for excellence and use their talents to make a positive difference in the world. Past recipients have included Beah Richards (2000), Danny Glover (2003), Melvin Van Peebles (2004), and Alfre Woodard (2017).

## **About Bill Duke**

Bill Duke is an actor, director, producer and humanitarian in Hollywood, with more than 40 years of experience on-screen and behind the camera. His acting credits include recent television and feature film roles on HBO Max. Mr. Duke appeared in “No Sudden Move” with Don Cheadle, Matt Damon, Brandon Frazier, and Julia Fox. He was also in Starz “Gaslit” with Julia Roberts and Sean Penn, Tyler Perry’s “The Oval,” “Black Lightning,” the critically acclaimed “Mandy,” and the highly lauded Stephen Soderbergh film “High Flying Bird”. Bill Duke is known worldwide for roles in “Predator,” “American Gigolo,” “Car Wash,” “Action Jackson,” “Commando,” “Menace II Society,” “Bird on a Wire,” “Get Rich or Die Tryin,” “X-Men 3,” “Henry's Crime,” “The Big Bang,” “Starsky & Hutch,” “Karen Sisco,” and “Lost”.

Bill is legendary for his directing prowess and agility in television and film as the first Black director on numerous television shows. His credits for film and television include, “Falcon Crest,” “Dallas,” “Knots Landing,” “Fame,” “Hill Street Blues,” “Miami Vice,” and PBS’ “The Killing Floor” for which he won the Sundance Special Jury Award in 1985, just to name a few.



The accolades continued with a feature film directorial debut in 1991 for “A Rage in Harlem,” which was an official selection at the Cannes Film Festival for the prestigious Palme d’Or. This global recognition led to further opportunities including directing feature more feature films and documentaries: “Sister Act 2,” “Deep Cover,” “Hoodlum,” “The Cemetery Club,” “Not Easily Broken,” “Deacons for Defense,” and the documentaries “Dark Girls” and “Light Girls”.

“Dark Girls” aired on Oprah Winfrey's OWN Network and succeeded as one of the most successful programs on the network.

Most recently, Bill directed the feature film, “Created Equal” and was featured in the documentaries, “What is a Man,” and “What is a Woman”. He's currently working on several film and TV projects. Bill's autobiography, “Bill Duke: My 40-Year Career on Screen and Behind the Camera” was released in November 2018. He also authored “The Journey: Tale of Human Healing” and “Works of the Invisible Man”.

Throughout the course of his career, Bill Duke has been recognized by prestigious leaders and institutions for his work in television and film. He was appointed to the National Endowment of Humanities by President Bill Clinton and the Board of the California State and Film Commission by Former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. He has also served on the Board of Trustees at the American Film Institute and as the Time Warner Endowed Chair in the Department of Radio, Television, and Film at Howard University. He was also recognized by his peers with a Lifetime Achievement Tribute from the Directors Guild of America’s African- American Steering Committee in 2010. In May of 2022, Bill was honored at The Jonathan Foundation for Learning Disabilities Gala for being an entertainment legend and humanitarian. On June 20, 2022, Bill was honored to be in the Kingdom Day Parade with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. November 19, 2022, Bill gained another honor at the 11th Annual “I've Known Rivers Film Festival when he received the Living Legend Award along with a Certificate of Appreciation from the California Assembly.

In addition to working on creative projects in Hollywood, the multi-hyphenate superstar has added another sobriquet to his long list of titles--digital network owner. On May 9, 2022, the YOUNITE Network launched, and will morph into a global media force, with global initiatives in the works. Bill also created Duke Media Entertainment to bring quality "Edutainment" to audiences around the globe. He coined the word to symbolize entertainment that also includes an educational element for the audience. Formerly



Yagya Productions, Duke Media has successfully produced critically acclaimed film and television content for more than 30 years.

Additionally, Duke Media is in process of expanding its brand through the development of new media technologies, i.e. cellphone apps, games, and virtual/metaverse world experiences. Since the early 70s, Bill Duke along with industry veterans Michael Shultz and Gordon Parks, have long paved the way for the furtherance of African American actors, writers, directors, and producers in the entertainment and technology industries. Bill Duke has taught the fundamentals of acting to many young aspiring thespians which includes some of today's superstars such as Taraji P. Henson, Anthony Anderson, Shemar Moore, LisaRaye McCoy, Kevin Carroll, Monica Calhoun, Chris Spencer and Emayatzy Corinealdi.

Giving back has been a large part of Bill's Hollywood legacy. He runs the Duke Media Foundation, which for the last ten years has prepared youth for the future by exposing them to specific new media and financial literacy tools. This will enable them to compete, survive, and thrive. The economy is experiencing a paradigm shift far beyond film and TV to media. Film and TV are still important parts of the entertainment landscape. However, new media content has become a dominant force to be reckoned with. Bill encourages students to explore and master new technology as it emerges and evolves.

### **About For the Love of the Motherland**

“For the Love of the Motherland” will reflect how the Tigray War in Ethiopia has fueled divides members of the diaspora. A war that has killed an estimated 162,000-378,000 people, with other reported estimates reaching numbers as high as 600,000 killed.

For many Ethiopians residing in Los Angeles, the premiere of “For the Love of the Motherland” represents a significant moment of cultural recognition and storytelling. Theodore Teshome, whose previous works have garnered critical acclaim for their poignant portrayal of Ethiopian history and identity, has spent years meticulously researching and crafting this film to capture the multifaceted narratives of individuals directly impacted by the conflict.



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The film tells the intimate story of Hayelom and Lielt who are deeply in love. He is from Tigray region in Ethiopia and she is from Ethiopia’s Amhara region. Their love faces an expected turn when Tigray militants invade the Amhara region to take over power of the central government. He joins the militants, she joins the Ethiopian Defense Force, and they become enemies looking to kill one another.

Directed and written by Theodros Teshome Kebede, the film stars Debebe Eshetu, Getahun Hailu, and Tsigereda Bekele.

#### VISUALS:

- Red carpet arrivals featuring notable guests and talent
- Q&A session with Theodros Teshome Kebe and cast members
- Interaction with industry professionals and film enthusiasts

#### INTERVIEWS:

Available interviews with Bill Duke, Theodros Teshome Kebede, and other notable guests and talent upon request.

#### ABOUT THE PAN AFRICAN FILM & ARTS FESTIVAL:

The 32nd Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) makes its return to Los Angeles February 6-19, 2024 at the Cinemark Baldwin Hills XD and Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza to present and showcase a broad spectrum of Black creative works, particularly those that reinforce positive images and help to destroy negative stereotypes of Africans and African-Americans.

Since 1992, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, PAFF has remained dedicated to the promotion of Black stories and images through the exhibition of film, visual art, and other creative expression. Today, PAFF is one of the largest and most prestigious Black film festivals in the U.S. and attracts local, national, and international audiences. In



addition, it is an Oscar-qualifying festival for animation and live-action films, and one of the largest Black History Month events in America.

PAFF is supported in part by the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, LA Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, LA Councilmember Curren Price, LA Councilmember Heather Hutt, LA County Department of Arts and Culture, the LA County COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund administered by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture, Senator Steve Bradford, and Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas.

The 2024 PAFF is possible through the generous support of sponsors including Color Creative, Gilead Sciences, Inc., Stocker Street Creative, Disney, Andscape, BET+, Paramount Pictures, National Geographic, Black Alliance for Justice Immigration, Cal State University, Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit [paff.org](https://paff.org).

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