

Acclaimed Broadcaster, Author And Social Activist To Receive Sankofa Freedom Award

Tavis Smiley, broadcaster, author, publisher, advocate and philanthropist, will receive the 2016 Sankofa Freedom Award, presented by Tulsa City-County Library's African-American Resource Center. He will accept the award January 28, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., at Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford. Smiley will speak, answer questions and sign copies of his books, which are available for purchase. This event is free and open to the public.

From his celebrated conversations with world figures to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders, Smiley has emerged as an

outstanding voice for change. Smiley is currently the host of the late-night television talk show "Tavis Smiley" on PBS, as well as "The Tavis Smiley Show" from Public Radio International. Smiley has written 18 books. His memoir, "What I Know for Sure: My Story of Growing Up in America," became a New York Times best seller.

Smiley compiled and edited, "The Covenant with Black America," which became the first nonfiction book by a Black-owned publisher to reach the top spot on The New York Times best-seller list.

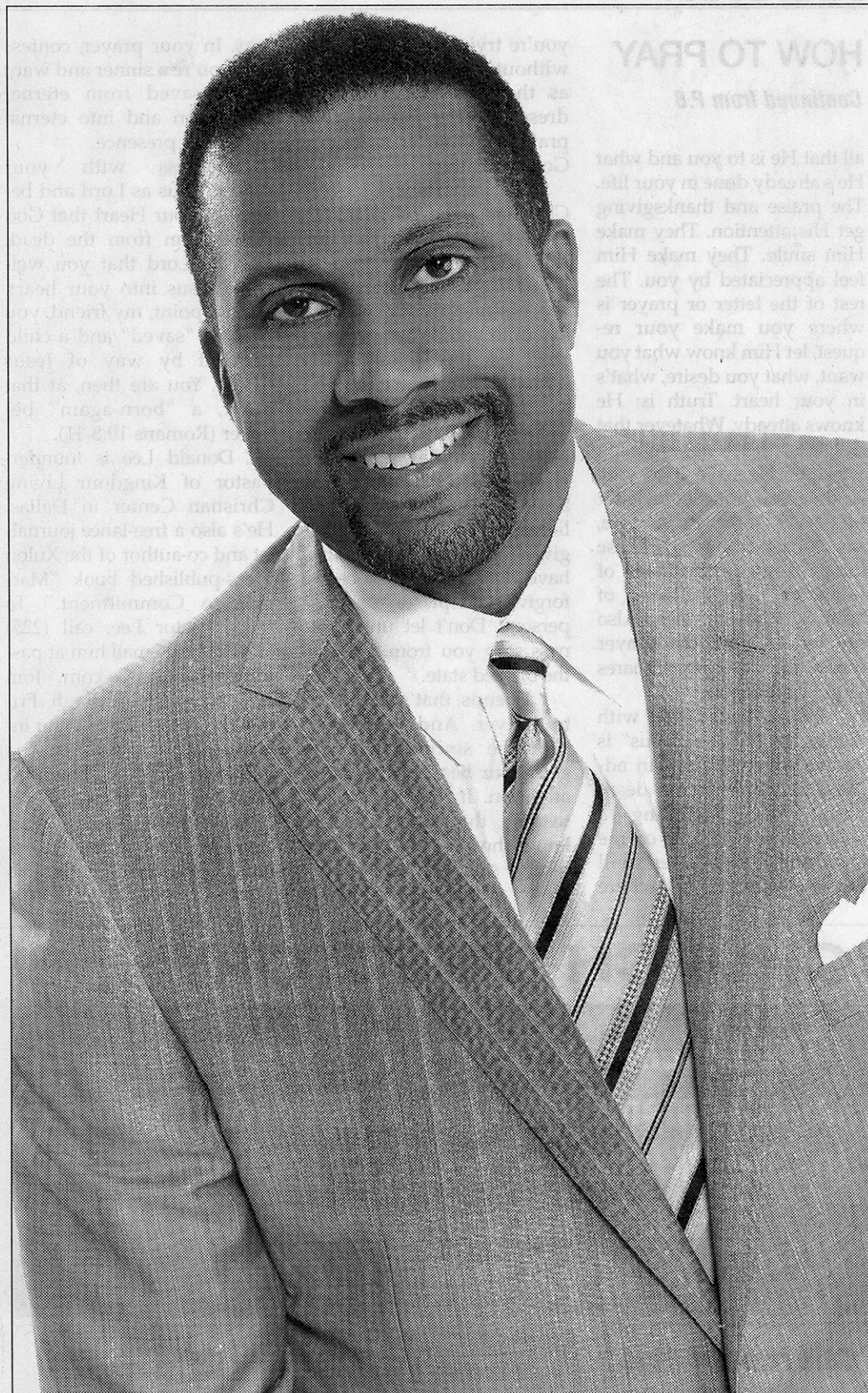
"The Covenant with Black America - 10 Years Later" is set for publication

January 11, 2016. A decade after the release of the historic manifesto, African-Americans continue to face devastating disparities in health, housing, criminal justice, education and economic opportunities. In the new book Smiley calls for a renewal of "The Covenant," presenting the original action plan alongside new data from the Indiana University School of Public & Environmental Affairs to underscore missed opportunities and the work that remains to be accomplished.

In his best-selling book, "The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto," Smiley and co-author Dr. Cornel West challenge all Americans to re-examine their assumptions about poverty in America - what it really is and how to eradicate it.

His most recent text is "My Journey with Maya," a remarkable story of friendship, love and courage. In this book, Smiley shares personal memories of his 28-year friendship with Maya Angelou, one of history's most fascinating women. The book is being adapted as a stage play by Tony-winning director Kenny Leon, and Smiley's 2014 New York Times best seller, "Death of a King: The Real Story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Year," is being produced as a television series special by Emmy-winner J.J. Abrams in partnership with Warner Brothers. Smiley created the nonprofit Tavis Smiley Foundation to provide leadership training and development for youth. Since its inception, more than 6,000 young people have participated in the foundation's "Youth to Leaders" training workshops and conferences.

"It is a great cause for celebration to present the Sankofa Freedom Award to Mr. Smiley," said Alicia Lattimer, African-American Resource Center coordinator. "With 18 informative books on his résumé, significant radio and television pres-



PHILANTHROPIST, ADVOCATE, PUBLISHER, author and broadcaster Tavis Smiley, will receive the 2016 Sankofa Freedom Award, presented by Tulsa City-County Library's African-American Resource Center. (Contributed Photo)

ence, and passion in leading the fight for human rights, youth development and focus on eradication of poverty, Mr. Smiley is a force to be reckoned with. We recognize him as a game changer and salute his outspoken advocacy."

Sankofa is a word from the Akan language, which is spoken in southern Ghana. Literally translated, Sankofa means: "We must go back and reclaim our past so we can move forward; so we understand why and how we came

to be who we are today."

The Sankofa Freedom Award consists of a \$7,000 cash prize and an engraved medallion. It is awarded every-other-year in February during Black History Month to a nationally acclaimed individual who has dedicated his or her life to educating and improving the greater African-American community. Previous recipients of the Sankofa Freedom Award include: Susan L. Taylor (2014), Hill Harper (2012), Pearl Cleage (2010), Nikki

Giovanni (2008) and Dr. Michael Eric Dyson (2006). The award is presented by the Tulsa Library Trust and TCCL's African-American Resource Center. Major sponsors for the award include Tulsa Library Trust.

For more information about the Sankofa Freedom Award or the African-American Resource Center, call the Rudisill Regional Library, (918) 549-7645, or visit the library's website, www.tulsalibrary.org.