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Writer, mentoring advocate Susan L. Taylor to accept award in Tulsa

■ The writer and program leader is coming to Tulsa.

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Posted: Wednesday, February 5, 2014 12:00 am | Updated: 7:20 am, Wed Feb 5, 2014.

By NOUR HABIB World Staff Writer | 0 comments

Passion has been Susan L. Taylor's guiding light throughout her career.

It's why she founded a cosmetics company catering specifically to black women when she was frustrated by the lack of suitable cosmetic choices for herself.

It's why she began writing a spiritual column for the magazine she headed when she realized that no other publication was catering to people's emotional needs.

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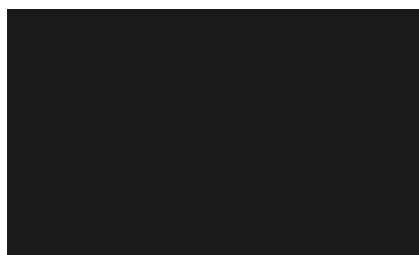
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And it's why, after Hurricane Katrina, she started what is now known as the National CARES Mentoring Movement to recruit adults to help at-risk youth.

Taylor, best known for her career with Essence Magazine, will be in Tulsa on Saturday to accept the 2014 Sankofa Freedom Award presented by the Tulsa City-County Library's African-American Resource Center. She will accept the honor at 10 a.m. at Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave., during a public ceremony.

Taylor landed her job with Essence as a beauty editor in 1970, when the magazine heard about her cosmetics company. By 1981, she was editor-in-chief of the magazine.

While at Essence, Taylor began writing an inspirational column called "In the Spirit," and later expanded the idea into books.

"It came to my attention that no other U.S. publication, popular medium, was writing about spirituality," she said. "I started writing about it because I asked myself, 'What do I care about most?'"

"When we are emotionally well, everything else in our lives works."

Taylor, who has won multiple awards for her work, was the first black woman inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors Hall of Fame.

She said it took her breath away to win the Sankofa award. "I could not believe it when I opened the letter and read that I was going to be awarded for work that I feel is my responsibility to do."

Today, Taylor focuses on the National CARES Mentoring Movement, which has affiliates throughout the country. Program volunteers are asked to devote at least one hour a week to working with a young person who is at risk. The goals of the organization include increasing high school graduation rates among African-Americans, ending violence in African-American communities and stemming the high incarceration rate of young adults.

The Sankofa Freedom Award is given every other year 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. Sankofa is a word from the Akan language, which is spoken in Ghana, and 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."

Sankofa Freedom Award presentation

Who: Susan L. Taylor, founder of National CARES Mentoring Movement

When: 10 a.m. Saturday

Where: Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave.

What: The award consists of a \$7,000 cash prize and an engraved medallion. It is presented every other year during Black History Month to an individual who has dedicated his or her life to educating and improving the greater African-American community.

For more: Read about the National CARES Mentoring Movement at caresmentoring.org

Nour Habib 918-581-8369

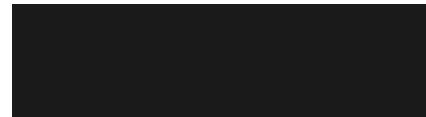
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House speaker steps down

By Tom Ichniowski

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