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Acclaimed author and entrepreneur to receive Tulsa-City County Library's Sankofa Freedom Award

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Susan L. Taylor, award-winning journalist, community activist and entrepreneur, will receive the 2014 Sankofa Freedom Award, presented by Tulsa City-County Library's African-American Resource Center. She will accept the award Feb. 8, at 10 a.m., at Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford. This event is free and open to the public.



Taylor is synonymous with "Essence" magazine, where she began her career as a freelance fashion and beauty editor in 1970, the year the magazine was founded. By 1981 she achieved the title of editor-in-chief and was the driving force behind one of the most celebrated African-American owned businesses of our time.

While at Essence, Taylor wrote the monthly inspirational column "In the Spirit," which led to the publishing of three best-selling volumes of selected columns, "In the Spirit: The Inspirational Writing of Susan L. Taylor," "Lessons in Living" and "All About Love, Favorite Selections from In the Spirit on Living Fearlessly." She co-authored a fourth book, "Confirmation: The Spiritual Wisdom That Has Shaped Our Lives," with her husband Khephra Burns.

Taylor is the first and only African-American woman recognized by the Magazine Publishers of America with the Henry Johnson Fisher Award and the first to be inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors Hall of Fame. She also received the NAACP President's Award for Visionary Leadership.

Today, Taylor focuses much of her time with the National CARES Mentoring Movement, which she founded in 2006 as Essence CARES. The CARES mentoring movement is a campaign to recruit adults to help at-risk children who are in peril of losing ground. The goals of her organization are to increase high school graduation rates among African-American students, end violence in African-American communities and stem the over-incarceration of young adults.

She also is the co-founder of Future PAC, the first national political action committee devoted to providing a network of support and sources of funding for African-American women seeking federal and state-level political offices.

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Along with Danny Glover, she is the co-chair of Shared Interest, a capital campaign to raise money to build housing in the rural areas of South Africa, and serves on the boards of the joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

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.

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. Sponsorship opportunities are still available for the 2014 Sankofa Freedom Award. Contact Larry Bartley, Trust and Development director, 918-398-6681.

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.

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