

BILL COSBY

Biography

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One of America's most prolific comedians of all time, Bill Cosby has dazzled generations of fans with his comedy routines, also captured on his iconic albums and best-selling books such as *Fatherhood* and the groundbreaking *The Cosby Show*. His comedy transcends age, gender, and cultural barriers.

Cosby broke television's racial barrier with a role in *I Spy*, becoming the first African American to costar on a television series and win three consecutive Emmys for "Outstanding Lead Actor" in the dramatic series. The veteran comic hosted the Emmy-winning cartoon *Fat Albert* and the *Cosby Kids*, which began airing in the 1970s and was made into a film in 2004. The show, based on Cosby's childhood in Philadelphia, was designed to educate and entertain.

The former Navy serviceman's illustrious list of accomplishments includes roles on the children's educational show *Electric Company*, and creating and producing the Emmy award winning *Little Bill*, which is based on his bestselling book series.

Perhaps Cosby's greatest contribution to American entertainment and culture is *The Cosby Show*, about a close-knit, upper class black family. Cosby said his intent was to portray an American family. *Time* magazine called the show "an encouraging sign of maturity in matters of race." *The Cosby Show* dominated the No. One spot for years, earning nearly unanimous critical praise. *Life* magazine described the program as "a gentle, whimsical, warmhearted" show whose "delicious ordinariness of its pleasures and tribulations has given millions a fresh, laughter-splashed perspective on their own domestic lives."

For his philanthropic efforts and positive influence as a performer and author, Cosby was honored with a 1998 Kennedy Center Honors Award. In 2002, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor and the 2009 recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.