

African-American literary industry giants gather in NYC

Written by Kam Williams



Book Expo America, publishing's premier annual convention, was held this year at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City from May 29th to the 31st. On Saturday afternoon, black literary giants representing every area of the industry gathered inside the hall's African-American Pavilion for a reception sponsored by publishers Tony and Yvonne Rose of Amber Communications Group. The event's award program was hosted by ravishing Renaissance woman Heather Covington, CEO of Disilgold.com.

The roster of honorees in attendance reads like a Who's Who list, starting with Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth, the fiery-also ran from Trump's reality show, "The Apprentice." Omarosa kicked off the festivities with the keynote speech, and she was followed to the stage by Lifetime Achievement Award recipient actor Wesley Snipes, best-selling authors Omar Tyree, Zane and Terrie Williams, Tom Joyner Morning Show co-host Sybil Wilkes, AALBC.com founder Troy Johnson, BlackNews.com's Dante Lee, AMAG Magazine's James Lisbon and Mosaic Books' Ron Cavanaugh.



Accolades were also in order for Princeton professor Cornel West, TV talk show host Tavis

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Smiley, authors of the year Brenda L. Thomas, Kelly Starling-Lyons, Brother G and Irene Smalls, and publishers of the year by Charisse Carney-Nunes (Self), Richard Jeanty (Urban) and Wade and Cheryl Hudson (Independent). Then there were PR agent to the stars Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati, NAACP Image Awards Literary Coordinator Annette Thomas, Tushe Group President Lynette McMillon, career coach Shayla Price and crime fiction writer Kevin Weeks.

The Trailblazer Award went to Gregory Perkins, owner of the largest African-American greeting card company in the U.S. while the Pioneer Award was garnered by Carole Hall, former editor-in-chief of John Wiley & Sons' African-American division. Rounding out the recipients in attendance were Black Expressions Book Club editor-in-chief Carol Mackey, Atria Books' senior editor Malaika Adero, business leader Tom Joyner, Jr., writer Dawayne Williams and hip-hop poet West Coast Biz.



A great time was had by all, especially while socializing at the after-soiree, the “Black Pack Party” hosted later that evening by Troy and Ron along with industry moguls Michele Gipson and Linda Duggins aboard a boat docked nearby on the Hudson River. Between the sensational sunset and balmy weather, you couldn’t ask for a more perfect setting to make the most of excellent networking opportunities for novices and professionals alike.