

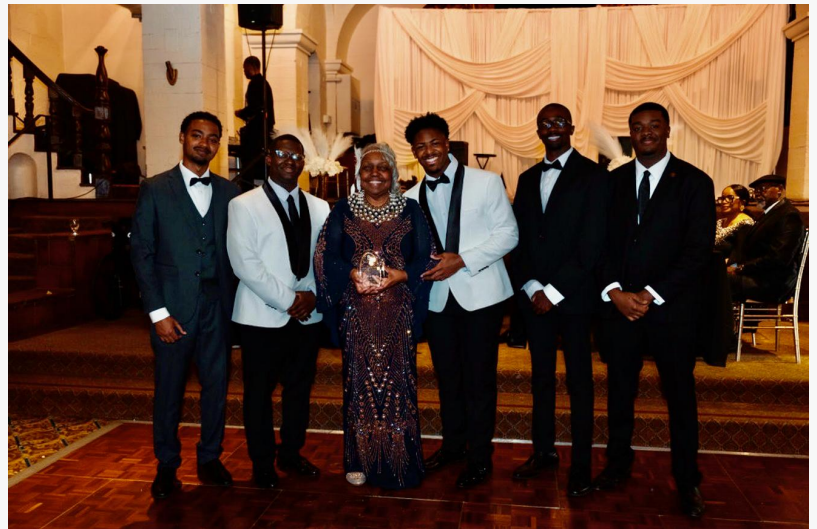
# The Golden Renaissance Scholarship Gala Awarded Ten Local Legends

RIVERSIDE, CA, UNITED STATES, June 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Inaugural Golden Renaissance Scholarship Gala recently honored ten legends. Awards were presented for Lifetime Achievement, Public Servant of the Year, Trailblazer of the Year and Legacy of Impact. The Gala was created by the [Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Phi Upsilon Chapter](#) and held in the Grand Parisian Ballroom at the historic [Mission Inn Hotel & Spa in Riverside.](#)

The 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award winners are: [Dr. Judy White, Ed.D.](#) , retired Riverside County Superintendent of Schools; Emmett Terrell, retired Deputy Superintendent of Pomona Unified School District; Dr. Norman Towels, retired Assistant Superintendent of Val Verde Unified School District.

The 2026 Public Servant of the Year Award winners are Vernon Jackson and Bishop Kelvin Simmons for their commitment to civic leadership and community service.

The 2026 Trailblazer of the Year Award winners are Dr. Theresa Price and Dr. Eric Bishop, Ed.D., for their visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to educational excellence



Left to right, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Phi Upsilon Chapter Vice-President, Nebiyu Semunigus; President, Terance Williams Jr; Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, Dr. Judy White; Master of Ceremonies, Heath Williams II; Zyeir Shabete, and Malachi Hawkins



Left to right, Tap Dancers, B'jon Carter-Burnell and Asaph Sobers

and community empowerment.

The 2026 Legacy of Impact Award winners are posthumously awarded to Marion Black, Jr. and Reggie Webb for their enduring contributions to the Inland Empire community. Marion Black's wife, Charlotte, was also recognized with the prestigious Yellow Rose Award for her service, leadership, and dedication to uplifting others.

"Collectively, the honorees have dedicated decades to expanding educational access, improving student outcomes, mentoring future leaders, and creating opportunities for underserved communities throughout Southern California," said Phi Upsilon Chapter (<https://www.phiupsilon.net/>) President Terance Williams Jr.

More than 300 guests attended the sold-out event, arriving in Harlem Renaissance-inspired attire that transformed the Grand Parisian Ballroom into a Roaring Twenties scene.

"Guests adorned in top hats, white gloves, opera-length pearls, feathered headdresses, and vintage-inspired fashion gathered to celebrate Black excellence and honor the educational leaders whose work has transformed countless lives throughout the Inland Empire," said Heath Williams II, the Master of Ceremonies.

The evening embodied Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's (<https://apa1906.net/>) motto: "First of All, Servants of All, We Shall Transcend All."

"As a community-serving organization, the Phi Upsilon Chapter created the Golden Renaissance Scholarship Gala to recognize individuals whose unwavering commitment to education,



Left to right, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Phi Upsilon Chapter Yellow Rose Award Recipient, Charlotte Black and Master of Ceremonies, Heath Williams II.



Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Phi Upsilon Chapter Treasurer, Zyeir Shabete; Vice-President, Nebiyu Semunigus; Public Servant of the Year, Vernon Jackson; Master of Ceremonies, Heath Williams II; President, Terance Williams Jr; Malachi Hawkins

mentorship, and service has produced extraordinary impacts across generations,” said Chapter President Terance Williams Jr.

“We wanted to honor the individuals whose living legacy we’ve inherited and upon whose shoulders we stand,” said Terance Williams Jr. He added, “It is so important to pay homage to those who came before us. Without their courage, sacrifice, and leadership, we would not have the path that we follow today.”

“We are all present here tonight because one of these individuals has extraordinarily impacted our lives,” said Heath Williams. “Whether directly or indirectly, their commitment to service and educational excellence has created opportunities for countless students, families, educators, and community members throughout our region.”

As guests enjoyed a three-course dining experience, they were immersed in a captivating Cotton Club-Style dinner show that brought the spirit of the Harlem Renaissance to life.

The entertainment featured a live jazz ensemble, dazzling tap dance performances, and an unforgettable vocal showcase by acclaimed recording artist Tamarra Hicks, who delivered powerful renditions of jazz and blues classics.

“Education is not only a path, but the clearest path toward socioeconomic mobility. When educational opportunities are stripped away, entire futures are disrupted. When mentorship disappears, identities suffer”, said the keynote speaker, Dr. Antoine Hawkins, President of the California Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators (<https://www.caaasa.org/>) and Deputy Executive Superintendent of the Western Region of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Riverside Council member Sean Mill (<https://www.seanforriverside.com/>) delivered a proclamation to the chapter from the Office of the Mayor (<https://riversideca.gov/mayor/>) and City Council. Mill described the Gala as a truly historic moment for the City of Riverside (<https://riversideca.gov/>) and praised the Chapter for creating an event that celebrated the region’s educational pioneers.

“A powerful spoken-word performance by Dr. Anthony Blacksher moved guests, whose poetic



Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Phi Upsilon Chapter Vice-President, Nebiyu Semunigus; Master of Ceremonies, Heath Williams II; President, Terance Williams Jr; Public Servant of the Year Award Recipient

presentation beautifully captured the spirit of the Harlem Renaissance,” said Heath Williams.

Acclaimed Inland Empire artist, Maryam Trebeau captivated the audience with a live visual art performance. Throughout the evening, guests watched as Trebeau created an original portrait of Eugene Kinkle Jones, one of the seven visionary founders of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. The completed work was revealed to a standing ovation.

Former San Bernardino County School Board member and president of the Black Voice News Foundation (<https://bvfoundation.org/>), Hardy Brown II, described the Gala as “one of the most extraordinary events to take place in the Inland Empire.” Brown commended the Chapter for creating an evening that celebrated both history and future opportunity.

Also present for the Gala were gubernatorial candidate and California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony K. Thurmond; Vice-President of the California State Board of Education, Dr. Cynthia Glover Woods; Councilwoman for the City of La Verne, Wendy Lau; Board Trustee of the San Bernardino City Unified School District, Felicia Alexander; Damon Alexander, former member of the San Bernardino City Council.

Proceeds from the Gala will directly support the Phi Upsilon Chapter’s Go-To-High-School, Go-To-College Program. Established nationally in 1922, the initiative provides mentorship, scholarship opportunities, college-readiness support, and educational resources to increase access, persistence, graduation, and long-term success for Black male youth.

The inaugural Golden Renaissance Scholarship Gala was co-sponsored by the University of La Verne, 10th House Education Foundation, Alpha West Empowerment Foundation, Wine Now!, EmpowerU Edutainment, National College Resources Foundation, 100 Black Men of the Inland Empire, Dameron Communications, Black Voice News, The Kaiser Family Foundation, Charles Bibbs Art Studio, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), Hawkins Legal, P.C., and Pomona Unified School District.

About The Phi Upsilon Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc

The Phi Upsilon Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., proudly known as the 888th House of Alpha, has made a measurable and lasting impact on the campus of the University of La Verne (<https://www.laverne.edu/>) and the Greater Los Angeles community. Through steadfast dedication to scholarship, leadership, brotherhood, and Service to All Mankind, the chapter has actively engaged in outreach initiatives, civic involvement, and educational advancement.

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