

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**HATTIE MCDANIEL, FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO WIN AN ACADEMY
AWARD®, FEATURED ON NEW 39-CENT POSTAGE STAMP**

LOS ANGELES – Hattie McDaniel, movie actress, singer, radio and television personality, and the first African American to win an Academy Award today became the 29th honoree in the U.S. Postal Service’s long-running Black Heritage commemorative stamp series.

The 39-cent Hattie McDaniel commemorative stamp highlights the achievements of this legendary performer who won the Oscar for her role as Mammy in the award-winning 1939 film *Gone With the Wind*. The new stamp is available today only in Beverly Hills Post Offices and nationwide tomorrow, January 26.

“When you are a person who is determined and hard-working, the tables can be turned. Hattie, though the youngest child of former slaves, achieved her greatest honor doing what she loved most—entertaining—for her role impersonating a slave,” said Edgar Goff, nephew of Hattie McDaniel. “Her favorite expression was, ‘Humble is the way.’”

Although McDaniel was often heavily criticized for playing maids and other stereotypical roles, she worked behind the scenes to battle racism and discrimination. McDaniel is remembered for saying, “I’d rather play a maid than be one,” and although she encountered racism in Hollywood, she and several other black actors worked to change the film industry from within during the 1940’s.

“The United States Postal Service is proud to salute the life and extraordinary legacy of Hattie McDaniel,” said James C. Miller, Chairman of the U.S. Postal Service’s Board of Governors, who dedicated the stamp. “This stamp is a powerful reminder of her unprecedented contribution to Hollywood and to her pioneering legacy to help make this country a better place.”

The ceremony took place at the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, where the Hattie McDaniel collection includes photographs of Hattie and other family members, as well as scripts and other documents. The collection also contains a large number of recordings from the radio program, “Beulah.”



Joining Chairman Miller from the Postal Service was Delores Killete, Vice President, Consumer Advocate. Also participating in the ceremony were Academy President Sid Ganis; Edgar Goff, nephew of Hattie McDaniel; Kim Goff-Crews, a grandniece of McDaniel and Dean of Students, Wellesley College; Dr. Mynora J. Bryant, International Grand Basileus, Sigma Gamma Rho, Inc. of which McDaniel was an honorary member; Ann-Marie Johnson, National First Vice President, Screen Actors Guild; Johnny Grant, Hollywood's Honorary Mayor; Linda Hopkins, Jazz and Blues legend; and Vonzell Solomon, performer, 2005 "American Idol" finalist and former postal carrier.

"We at the Academy are proud to see a portrait of Academy Award winner Hattie McDaniel, the first African American to win an Oscar, gracing a U.S. postage stamp," said Academy President Sid Ganis. "We hope this newest recognition will remind Americans everywhere of the great stride forward made by this unassuming pioneer."

Among the honored guests were cast members from *Gone with the Wind* including Ann Rutherford, Patrick Curtis, Mickey Kuhn, and Cammie King Conlon; *Wonderful Smith*, McDaniel's friend and Chauffeur; Karl Malden, Member Emeritus, Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) and past president of the Academy; Jean Picker Firstenberg, Member, CSAC, and CEO, American Film Institute; Al Iniguez, Pacific Area Vice President, U.S. Postal Service; Bill Almaraz, Los Angeles District Manager, U.S. Postal Service; Koula Fuller, Beverly Hills Postmaster; and members of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

McDaniel joins 28 other honorees in the Postal Service's Black Heritage commemorative stamp series which salutes outstanding African-American activists, theorists, writers, educators and leaders. Other notable Americans in the series include: the first African-American woman to be honored on a U.S. stamp and the first honoree in the Black Heritage series, abolitionist Harriet Tubman; Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.; prominent historian and son of a former slave, Dr. Carter G. Woodson; writer and composer Scott Joplin; Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; and classically trained performance artist Marian Anderson.

McDaniel was born June 10, 1895, in Wichita, Kan., and raised in Denver, Colo. Showing signs of her talent at an early age, she dropped out of school as a teenager to tour with vaudeville companies and traveled with musical ensembles and minstrel shows, including one run by her father. She sang on Denver radio as early as 1925, and she wrote and recorded several of her own songs.

McDaniel arrived in Hollywood in 1931 and soon began to appear in films. She is credited with appearing in more than 90 films, but is believed to have appeared in as many as 300, including uncredited roles as extras, maids, and chorus singers. She sang a duet with Will Rogers in *Judge Priest* (1934), a film directed by John Ford, and she often appeared alongside many of the brightest stars of the era, such as Clark Gable and Jean Harlow in *Saratoga* (1937) and Katharine Hepburn in *Alice Adams* (1935), which featured a comic performance by McDaniel. Some of her other notable films included *Show Boat* (1936), *In This Our Life* (1942), which was praised for the depth and humanity of its black characters, and *Since You Went Away* (1944).

From 1947 until 1952, McDaniel played the title role in The Beulah Show, which was broadcast on national radio. As the first radio show to feature a black star, The Beulah Show was praised by the NAACP and the National Urban League. Although McDaniel again played a maid, she insisted that her character not speak in dialect, and she successfully negotiated the right to alter scripts that did not meet her approval. Shortly before her death, McDaniel was preparing to replace an actress in the television version of the The Beulah Show. McDaniel died of breast cancer at the age of 57 on October 26, 1952.

The stamp was designed by Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD and features a 1941 photograph of McDaniel by Tim O'Brien of Brooklyn, NY in the dress she wore on February 29, 1940, when she won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

The Postal Service continues its commitment to honor the historical achievements and contributions of African Americans. Through the popular Black Heritage stamp series these significant and educational contributions will continue to be recognized in the future. To see the Hattie McDaniel commemorative stamp and other images from the 2006 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Current U.S. postage stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available at 1-800-STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items is also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

HATTIE MCDANIEL STAMP
POSTMASTER
325 NORTH MAPLE DR
BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by February 24, 2006.

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 1-800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

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