

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings made the following [statement](#) on the House floor on February 28, 2012 honoring Cathy Hughes as a distinguished recipient of the 2012 NAACP Chairman's Award:

M. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate an outstanding human being and my dear friend, Ms. Cathy Hughes, on receiving this year's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Chairman's Award, the highest honor the NAACP has to offer. Cathy is a true symbol of American entrepreneurship and success. From her humble beginnings growing up in an Omaha housing project to becoming a leader in the media industry, Cathy embodies the spirit of determination and hard work.

Cathy's story is nothing short of remarkable. Born Catherine Elizabeth Woods in 1947, Cathy was the eldest of four children. By the age of 17, Cathy had dropped out of high school and become a single mother. Although she attended two universities in Nebraska, she did not have the opportunity to graduate. Despite these challenges, Cathy knew that she wanted a career in radio from a very young age and, in 1969 at the age of 22, began volunteering at KOWH, an African American owned radio station based out of Omaha, Nebraska. There, she excelled in the radio business and caught the attention of the Howard University School of Communications in Washington, D.C., where she was offered a position as a lecturer and assistant dean. By 1978, Cathy had become the vice-president and general manager of WYCB-AM and, a year later, along with her former husband, founded Radio One and purchased her first radio station in Washington D.C., WOL 1450.

Times were not easy at WOL 1450. Because of the lack of funding, Cathy had to give up her apartment and live with her son at the station. She also filled several roles as owner, producer, radio personality, and DJ, since she could not afford to pay personnel. But her perseverance and determination to see her dream succeed kept her going. Today Radio One is the largest African American owned and operated radio broadcast network, with over 65 radio stations in every major market in the United States and the seventh largest network in the nation. In 2004, Cathy launched TV One, a cable television channel dedicated to capturing the rich and diverse experience of African American life, history, and culture.

On February 17, 2012, Ms. Hughes was honored at the 43rd NAACP Image Awards, the premier multicultural awards show that recognizes the achievements of people of color in the fields of television, music, literature, film, and creative social justice. Cathy's name has been added to an illustrious list of past honorees, such as U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Regina

Benjamin, Former Vice-President Al Gore, then Senator Barak Obama, and Aretha Franklin. And no one could be more deserving.

M. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month, it is my distinct honor and privilege to recognize a pioneer in the media industry, a leader in the African American community, and my dear friend, Ms. Cathy Hughes. I commend her for her tireless dedication to empowering the disenfranchised and for continuing to be a powerful voice for those who too often remain unheard. Cathy, I wish you all the best for many years to come.

- [ARCHIVED HEROES](#)