Tavis Smiley
Political Commentator & Talk Show Personality

From his celebrated conversations with world figures, to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders, as a broadcaster, author, advocate and philanthropist, Tavis Smiley continues to be an outstanding voice for change.

Newsweek profiled him as one of the “20 people changing how Americans get their news” and dubbed him one of the nation’s “captains of the airwaves.”

Smiley hosts the late night television talk show, Tavis Smiley on PBS, and his radio show The Tavis Smiley Show on public radio is distributed by PRI, Public Radio International. Smiley is the first American ever to simultaneously host signature talk shows on both public television and public radio.

Smiley, who started his career as an aide to the late Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, also offers political commentary twice weekly on the Tom Joyner Morning Show. In addition, he has authored nine books. He made publishing history when his book the Covenant with Black America reached #1 on the New York Times bestseller list. His latest is What I Know For Sure: My Story of Growing up in America.

In 2007, Smiley moderated and executive produced the Democratic and Republican All-American Presidential Forums on PBS. This marked the first time in history that a panel exclusively comprised of journalists of color was represented in primetime television conducting a presidential debate.

In 2004, Texas Southern University honored Smiley with the opening of The Tavis Smiley School of Communications and The Tavis Smiley Center for Professional Media Studies, making him the youngest African American to ever have a professional school and center named after him on a college or university campus. Smiley cemented his commitment to TSU with a $1 million gift to the Center.

The mission of his nonprofit organization—Tavis Smiley Foundation—is to enlighten, encourage and empower Black youth. Tavis Smiley Presents, a subsidiary of The Smiley Group, Inc., brings ideas and people together through symposiums, seminars, forums and town hall meetings.

Smiley has received numerous awards and honorary doctorate degrees including one from his alma mater, Indiana University.
Topics:
- African Americans in the 21st Century
- Diversity and Multiculturalism: A National Perspective
- A Five-Part Plan to Succeed in College and the Workplace
- Advocacy: How to Fight for What You Believe and Make a Difference

What People Are Saying About Tavis Smiley...

Jay Leno of The Tonight Show dubbed him “the king of late night public television.”

The Los Angeles Times says he’s on the “fast track, left lane.”

The New York Post screamed, “Look out Larry King—here comes Tavis Smiley!”

The Washington Post declared that he’s “winning friends and influencing people.”

The Philadelphia Inquirer says Smiley is “one of the most important political voices of his generation.”

The Cleveland Plain Dealer summed up Tavis' appeal best: “In the age of high-decibel, in-your-face talk shows, Tavis Smiley keeps the volume low and the content high. He also gets the best guests in broadcasting - presidents, the pope, A-list entertainers. Smiley's style of easy and engaging conversation makes them all feel comfortable. And it works.”

Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Daily News columnists E.R. Shipp writes: "He does what too little of talk radio or television does these days: conducts civil conversations with a broad spectrum of politicians, newsmakers, performers and writers in a forum where one first has to declare one's political alliances. He's comfortable with conservatives, liberals and the undeclared; with the profound and the profane, with elder statesmen and the hip-hop nation. With such stratification in the country, he provides one place that helps promote dialogues that might not otherwise take place before audiences who might not otherwise think that they have anything in common."

DeWayne Wickham in USA Today declares that Smiley is “arguably the nation's most influential black journalist.”

Vanity Fair inducted him into their Hall of Fame.