

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

A Service Sorority Founded in 1913

1707 New Hampshire Avenue N.W. ▲ Washington, DC 20009 ▲ (202) 986-2400 ▲ Telefax (202) 986-2513

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2016

CONTACT:

Bernadine W. Stallings, (202) 986-2400, Ext. 383

bstallings@deltasigmatheta.org

Carolyn McCrea, (202) 986-2400

cmccrea@deltasigmatheta.org

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Celebrates the life of Honorary Member Gwen Ifill

WASHINGTON – Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. mourns the loss of renowned journalist, award-winning political reporter and author, Honorary Member Gwen Ifill. A native New Yorker, Ifill broke through barriers obstructing the advancement of African American women in journalism to become the first African American woman to host a major political talk show when she signed onto PBS’ “Washington Week” as moderator and managing editor. Ifill died November 14, 2016 at a hospice facility surrounded by family and friends. She was 61.

“The news of Gwen Ifill’s passing has sent a deep-seated heartbreak throughout our Sorority,” said Dr. Paulette C. Walker, National President of Delta Sigma Theta. “She was the epitome of integrity, the maven of grace and the example of excellence many of us, regardless of our profession, strived towards obtaining. Our prayers go out to the family and all those who share in the pain of this loss.”

Ifill was also the co-anchor and co-managing editor, with Judy Woodruff, of “PBS NewsHour.” In 2009, she authored the book, “The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama,” which highlighted the impact of President Barack Obama’s historic election and discussed the rise of young African Americans into the realm of politics.

Prior to joining PBS in 1999, Ifill was chief congressional and political correspondent for “NBC News,” White House correspondent for “The New York Times,” and political reporter for “The Washington Post.” She also worked at the “Baltimore Evening Sun” and the “Boston Herald American.”

Ifill is also recognized for her coverage of seven presidential campaigns and for serving as moderator during vice presidential debates between Dick Cheney and John Edwards in 2004 and the 2008 debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin.

Ifill used her platform to lead numerous public conversations and town halls shedding light and awareness on issues facing the country. In September 2015, she moderated “America After Charleston,” following the shooting deaths of nine African-American parishioners by a white male gunman in Charleston, South Carolina’s Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. In September 2014, she moderated “America After Ferguson,” discussing the many issues facing communities in the wake of Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson, Missouri.

She has received more than 20 honorary doctorates and serves on the boards of the News Literacy Project, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and is a fellow with the American Academy of Sciences. In 2015 she was awarded with the National Press Club’s highest honor, the Fourth Estate Award. She has also been honored for her work as a journalist by the Radio and Television News Directors Association, Harvard’s Joan Shorenstein Center, The National Association of Black Journalists, Ohio University, Boston’s Ford Hall Forum, and she was included in Ebony Magazine’s list of 150 Most Influential African Americans, among many other honors.

Ifill graduated from Simmons College in Boston. She was initiated into Delta Sigma Theta during Delta Days in the Nation’s Capital in Washington, D.C. in February 2011. She was preceded in death by her brother Oliver Ifill, Jr; survived by her brothers Roberto Ifill, of Silver Spring, Maryland and Rev. Earle Ifill of Atlanta; and a sister, Maria Philip, also of Silver Spring and a member of Delta Sigma Theta.