

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

A Public Service Sorority Founded in 1913

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Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Mourns Honorary Member, Actress, Singer and Activist, Lena Horne

WASHINGTON—Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. mourns the loss of honorary member, Lena Horne. Soror Horne, a legendary actress, singer and activist, broke down racial barriers by changing the way African-American women were portrayed on stage, television and the big screen. She was the first African-American performer to be signed to a long-term contract by a major Hollywood studio. Soror Horne died on Sunday night at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York. She was 92.

“The members of Delta Sigma Theta are deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved soror, Lena Horne,” said Cynthia M. A. Butler-McIntyre, National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. “Soror Horne was a woman of great strength who revolutionized the way African-American women were depicted in Hollywood. She is an icon who will forever be remembered for her distinctive voice, signature style and, most importantly, for her commitment to equal rights for all people.”

Soror Horne is best known for her roles in the 1943 musicals “Cabin in the Sky” and “Stormy Weather.” In 1978 she played Glinda the Good in “The Wiz,” the film version of the all-black Broadway musical based on “The Wizard of Oz.” In 1981, Soror Horne took Broadway by storm with her one-woman show, “Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music,” which won a Tony Award. Her 1995 release, “An Evening with Lena Horne,” won the Grammy Award for best jazz vocal performance.

Soror Horne was actively involved with the Civil Rights Movement and fought to defy segregation policies at upscale hotels where she performed. She appeared at the 1963 March on Washington as part of a group of other performers and artists who met with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to insist on a more aggressive approach to desegregation. She also devoted her time to advocating fair employment and anti-lynching laws.

Soror Horne was inducted into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. as an honorary member in 1958. She was a member of the Sorority’s National Commission on Arts and Letters. Soror Horne was featured on “Roses to Revolution,” an album that celebrates the African-American experience with poetry and song. The album, which gained international acclaim, was produced by DST Telecommunications in 1975. Soror Horne gave a stellar performance at the Sorority’s Diamond Jubilee Gala held in 1988 at The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C.

“Soror Horne leaves behind an extraordinary legacy,” said Butler-McIntyre. “She is an inspiration for black women everywhere to embrace our inner beauty and celebrate our God-given strength. Delta Sigma Theta joins the world in mourning the loss of an icon.”

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded in 1913 on the campus of Howard University to promote academic excellence; to provide scholarships; to provide support to the underserved; educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy; and to highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities. Today Delta Sigma Theta Sorority has more than 900 chapters worldwide. The Sorority uses its Five-Point Programmatic Thrust of economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health, and political awareness and involvement to create its national programs.

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