

William Henry Cosby Jr.
Doctor of Laws

Bill Cosby is a unique blend of a talented entertainer whose phenomenal success makes him one of America's best-loved personalities and an intellectual who is deeply committed to the importance of education.

Cosby's entertainment career began with the TV shows "I Spy" (1965-68) and "The Bill Cosby Show" (1969-71). A long line of TV shows and TV movies followed, as well as films, albums, and books such as "The Wit and Wisdom of Fat Albert" (1973). Along the way, Bill Cosby garnered four Emmy awards and eight Grammy awards. In 1986, he set the concert attendance record at Radio City Music Hall.

In the midst of his early TV career, Bill Cosby enrolled in the University of Massachusetts where he earned his Doctor of Education degree in 1977. Calling himself a "late bloomer," Cosby says he did not realize the value of a formal education until after the first four days of boot camp in the U.S. Navy. Four years later, when he completed his tour of duty, "I hit the ground running from Norfolk, Virginia, and immediately enrolled in Temple University in Philadelphia," he said.

Well known for his commitment to education, Bill Cosby believes that a satisfying and rewarding life begins with knowledge and is fulfilled with continually challenging oneself. He keeps working, he says, because life is about "accepting the challenges of one's own ideas, clarifying the unanswered questions, and pursuing the excitement of discovery."

A native of Philadelphia, Bill Cosby is married to Camille Hanks Cosby, who is equally passionate about the importance of education and also has earned a Doctor of Education degree. Together, they have worked to promote educational excellence and have donated funds to a wide range of universities. Bill Cosby's personal motto is "rationem educationis tuae reddere debeas," which can be translated as "one must render an account of one's education."

In appreciation of his warmth and humor, and in recognition of his lifelong commitment to education, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on William Henry Cosby Jr. the degree of Doctor of Laws.