

Gwen Ifill Forever Stamp Unveiled

by Eretta Morris

On January 30, 2020 the USPS unveiled a Forever stamp of Gwen Ifill, an American Journalist. The unveiling took place at her spiritual home of Metropolitan African Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. Gwen's stamp puts her in the pantheon of other black trailblazers honored on a stamp. Her stamp marks the 43rd Commemorative Forever Stamp in the Black Heritage series.



I felt so blessed and honored to be among those 500 plus individuals paying tribute to her on this day. I had never attended a stamp unveiling and was awe inspired with the grandeur in which this stamp was presented to the public. Attending the ceremony was former Attorney General Eric Holder who spoke of her accomplishments. Her work and values were also recognized by the District of Columbia's mayor Muriel Bowser, former President Bill Clinton who remarked via video and a personalized letter written to the family from former President Barack Obama. The ceremony also featured remembrances from family, friends and colleagues, including Washington Post contributing columnist Michele Norris, who served as mistress of ceremony, Ms. Ifill's NewsHour co-host Judy Woodruff, her first cousin Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Dorothy Tucker, President of the National Association of Black Journalist (NABJ) along with others who gave endearing remarks on the life and legacy of this inspiring journalist.

The ceremony was absolutely incredible and beautifully infused with the presentation of the National Guard and traditional African American spirituals which also included the Black National Anthem. This historic church, built in 1886, just 21 years after the Civil War, championed the cause of anti-slavery by sheltering runaway slaves at stations on the Underground Railroad and led the way in protest, as well as racially uplifting its members.

It was so fitting to honor this American icon in this historic church, where she grew up and attended regularly. She was the daughter of Urcille Ifill, a Panamanian immigrant who migrated to DC to become pastor of this church. Her mother Eleanor was from Barbados. According to Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman who officiated the dedication, "Gwen was truly a national treasure and so richly deserving of today's honor". He spoke of her involvements within the church and how she never allowed her celebrity to interfere with her faith. He unveiled a giant size postage stamp in her likeness bearing that infectious and incredible smile, (as was highly regarded) and dressed in her favorite color purple. He also noted that the Richard Allen stamp had been dedicated four years earlier in this same church. I shall never ever forget my first unveiling and will treasure that moment forever. My understanding and appreciation of history was enhanced and enriched through this experience. This is the beautiful "takeaway" when you attend an unveiling. Regardless of where it is held, I will not miss another one.

Gwen Ifill, the first African American and first woman to moderate a major television news-analysis show. She died at the age of 61 in 2016 after a diagnosis of endometrial cancer. She was among the first African Americans to hold prominent positions in both broadcast and print journalism. After graduating from college in 1977, Ifill worked at The Boston Herald, The Baltimore Evening Sun, The Washington Post and The New York Times. In 1994, she took a broadcast job at NBC, where she covered politics in the DC bureau. Five years later, in 1999 she became the first woman of African descent to host a nationally televised US public affairs

program with Washington Week in Review. She was the moderator and managing editor of Washington Week and co-author and co-managing editor on the PBS NewsHour, both of which aired on PBS. Ifill was a political analyst and moderator for the 2004 and 2008 presidential debates. She authored the best-seller book *The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in The Age of Obama*. She received numerous awards and over 21 honorary degrees. Among Ifill's honors were the Radio Television Digital News Foundation's Leonard Zeidenberg First Amendment Award (2006), Harvard's Joan Shorenstein Center's Goldsmith Career Award for Excellence in Journalism (2009) and induction into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame (2012). In 2015, she was awarded the Fourth Estate Award by the National Press Club. She received numerous honorary degrees and served on the boards of the News Literacy Project and the Committee to Protect Journalists, which renamed its Press Freedom Award in her honor. The 2016 John Chancellor Award was awarded to Ifill by the Columbia Journalism School. In 2017, the Washington Press Club Foundation and the "PBS NewsHour" created a journalism fellowship named for Ifill following her death. Her alma mater, Simmons University, opened the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts and Humanities in 2018.

Now, four years after her passing, it is highly unusual that a stamp dedicated to an individual has ever occurred in such a short time period. She is regarded as one of the most respected reporters of all times and someone who pushed the bar for woman of color in journalism. Now she is on a stamp. For her long dedication and contribution to American journalism, she will be remembered "Forever" as I will remember forever this moment.

[Editor's note, Eretta is an active member of the CFSC and of ESPER.]

Really Dumb eBay

by Francis Ferguson

The listing reads: "U.S: MINT #804 BLOCK/4 WITH FULL GUTTER TOP AND BOTTOM, HINGE REINFORCED GUM AS SEEN IN THE PHOTO, 2 PAIRS FROM DIFFERENT SHEETS PUT TOGETHER TO MAKE AN INTERESTING EXHIBIT ITEM." Price of \$75 with \$3.50 shipping.



This listing is just out right fakery – that the seller admits to! Oddly enough this is a longtime eBay seller who I have done business with over the years – but never have I seen or purchased anything from him like this.

As a long-time collector of Prexie EFO material I was briefly intrigued with the item when I first saw it about six weeks ago. In a hot minute -- it dawned on me that it was impossible.

There is absolutely no way this piece could exist in the production environment of the time period – or any other for that matter. The sheets of four hundred stamps are divided into quarters; upper left, upper right, lower left and lower right. In between the panes of 100 there is a vertical and horizontal gutter where the cuts are made to create the Post Office ready pane we are all familiar with.

This is a misleading item at best. If this item would be included in a competitive exhibit -- no judge worth their salt would ever pass this item without caustic comments.