

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Statement on the Death of Sidney Poitier

January 7, 2022

Jill and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Sidney Poitier, the once-in-a-generation actor and advocate whose work carried so much dignity, power, and grace that it changed the world on and off the big screen.

Sidney was more than just one of the finest actors in our history. His iconic performances in films like "The Defiant Ones," "A Raisin in the Sun," "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," and "In the Heat of the Night" held a mirror up to America's racial attitudes in the 1950s and 1960s. With unflinching grandeur and poise—his singular warmth, depth, and stature on screen—Sidney helped open the hearts of millions and changed the way America saw itself.

The son of tomato farmers in the Bahamas, Sidney became the first Black man to win the Academy Award for Best Actor, but the trail he blazed extended leaps and bounds beyond his background or profession. He blazed a path for our Nation to follow, and a legacy that touches every part of our society today.

Jill and I send our love and prayers to Sidney's wife Joanna, his daughters, and his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May God bless Sidney Poitier.

NOTE: The statement referred to Beverly Poitier-Henderson, Pamela Poitier, Sherri Poitier, Anika Poitier, and Sydney Poitier-Heartsong, daughters of Mr. Poitier.

Categories: Statements by the President : Deaths :: Poitier, Sidney.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Poitier, Anika; Poitier, Joanna; Poitier, Pamela; Poitier, Sherri; Poitier, Sidney; Poitier-Heartsong, Sydney; Poitier-Henderson, Beverly.

Subjects: Civil rights : Racial equality; Deaths : Poitier, Sidney.

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