

Actress Hattie McDaniel Gets Final Wish

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Description

When actress Hattie McDaniel died in 1952, segregation kept her out of the cemetery she had chosen. Over 45 years after her death, the cemetery is no longer segregated and she is getting her wish.

Keywords

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APA

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Transcript

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ANN CURRY, anchor:

Hollywood has granted a long-delayed wish to Hattie McDaniel, the first African-American to win an Oscar. It happened on Tuesday, nearly 60 years after she won the award for best supporting actress, and nearly 50 years after her death. NBC's Colleen Dominguez reports.

COLLEEN DOMINGUEZ reporting:

Hattie McDaniel, an accomplished actress from the '30s and '40s, best known for her academy award-winning role as Mammy in "Gone With the

Wind," the first African-American to win an Oscar.

Dr. TODD BOYD (USC Professor): For a black woman at that particular time to garner this, you know, prestigious award, I think it, you know, said a lot.

DOMINGUEZ: When she died from breast cancer in 1952, her final request was simple: to be buried at the Hollywood Memorial Park Cemetery, alongside the stars of her time--Rudolph Valentino, Jayne Mansfield and

John Houston. That request was denied because McDaniel was black, and non-whites were not allowed to be buried there. After 1959, owners of the cemetery changed that policy. But 40 years later, Hattie McDaniel's day would finally come. On the 47th anniversary of her death, the cemetery park honored her with a monument.

Mr. BRENT CASSIDY (Cemetery Owner): Basically, what we're trying to do here today is--is correct a wrong that was made in 1952.

DOMINGUEZ: McDaniel's great-nephew, Edgar Goff, helped organize the memorial.

Mr. EDGAR GOFF: Knowing her and how gracious she was and how tearful she could become, I'd like to thank all of you who came today.

DOMINGUEZ: A fitting tribute to a woman who once again has proven it's never too late to break a barrier.

DOMINGUEZ: Colleen Dominguez, NBC News, Los Angeles.