



Organization Profile

D.I.V.A. Inc

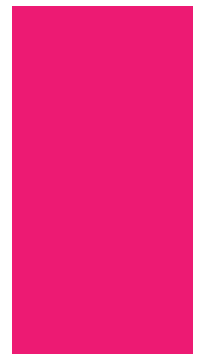
Divine, Intelligent, Versatile Artists

The Society for Women in the Arts.

Washington, DC

www.ladiesofdivainc.org

DEDICATED TO THE ENRICHMENT, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND FULLFILMENT OF WOMEN OF COLOR WHO HAVE CHOSEN THE ARTS AS THEIR CAREER.



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Divine Intelligent Versatile Artists, Inc. boasts over 100 members living in the United States and abroad..

Members' occupations include: Performance Artists, Lawyers, Costume Designers, Educators, Directors, Journalists, and Mothers.

The Ladies of D.I.V.A. Inc. continually strive for excellence in all areas of life while planting fertile seeds for their younger sisters considering a foray into the Arts. D.I.V.A. Inc. is committed to preserving the memory of all women of color who have paved the way through adversity, by keeping their legacies and contributions to the world of the Arts in the foreground

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On March 2, 1983 at Howard University in the College of Fine Arts in the Department of Drama, Six Women saw that there was a need for an organization for all female Fine Arts students. Thus, they decided to form the organization D.I.V.A. INC. – Divine Intelligent Versatile Artists, the Society for Women in the Arts.



History

D.I.V.A.'s basic goals are to:

- To bring unity to women of the arts by promoting finer creativity within oneself,
- To appreciate the value of fellow artists
- To promote self-confidence and an outgoing attitude with respect to one's craft
- To promote finer womanhood in every aspect of the word



History

We appreciate those who have paved the way.



Founders

Collette Taylor

ANN MARGARET



Collette hails from Clairton, PA ("A small town girl, on a Saturday night"). She received her BFA from Howard in '83 then began her career as a professional actress. Her career has taken her on regional, national, and international tours over a span of 20 years. She received her Master of Arts Education from Roosevelt University in Chicago. Her life is now dedicated to teaching the passion and craft of the theatre to young people; "and I love it!" A diva forever!!!

Carla Faye Pardo

DEBBIE ALLEN

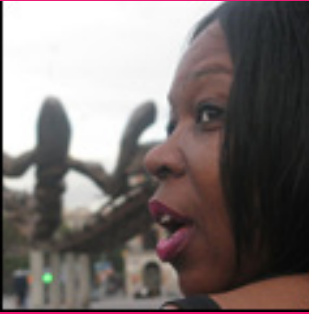


Carla earned her B.F.A. from Howard, graduating Cum Laude in 1983. She worked in the corporate world for the next 25 years, managing shared business centres. Most recently, she worked as a HR Consultant for the country's largest hedge fund. She decided to step out of the corporate world and is now pursuing certification as a Pilates instructor.

Founders

Gisele Jackson

GLADYS KNIGHT



Gisele Jackson is a vocalist and house music diva known for international club hits, including the Billboard charted # 2, "Love Commandments" (1997). The song was remixed by Danny Tenaglia and Stonebridge and found global success in Europe, reaching # 54 in the UK Singles Chart.[1]

She has appeared singing in the film *First Wives Club* and venues as The Presidential Inauguration of William Clinton and Carnegie Hall with Kid Rock. Gisele lent her voice to a worldwide commercial campaign with Martin Scorsese for Johnnie Walker.

Gisele has performed for audiences around the world - from New York to Norway, and from Morocco to Japan. She is now the voice, writer and producer of a new millennium rhythm – *Global Soul*. Her partners in this journey are Beirut producers Walid Nahaus and Yann Charaoui. Their debut CD, *MojoDriver Driving* will be available for licensing and distribution in Spring 2009. BFA - Howard University,

Founders

Danette Wills

NTOZAKE SHANGE



Sunset 8/20/2013

"Danette was an integral part of the Terrie Williams Agency family," the company said in a statement. "She was intelligent, aggressive and a driving force behind the success of each account she managed which included Ntozake Shange, Academy Award winner Mo'Nique, Michele Norris, Louis Gossett, Jr., The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and StudentsFirst to name a few.

Prior to joining the TWA, Danette was the Director of Media Relations and Publicity at BET in Washington D.C. for 12 years. There she led publicity for the company's six subsidiaries that included BET, BETJazz, BET Movies, and BET.com as well as BET's Walk of Fame for Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston. She also spearheaded BET's exclusive interviews with O.J. Simpson, Mike Tyson and Oprah Winfrey.

Before to her tenure at BET, she served as Director of Public Relations for the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Vienna, VA.

Danette achieved a B.F.A. from Howard University and an M.A. in Journalism & Public Affairs from American University. She was a huge basketball fan (and also played and coached), but most of all, she enjoyed her family, especially spending time with her grandchildren.

Danette is survived by two daughters , four grandchildren, her twin sister and her mother.

Founders

Crystal Jackson

LUCILLE BALL



Crystal Jackson has produced and stage managed a myriad of productions for West Coast Ensemble. She even garnered top acting awards and honors in their long-running production of "The Grapes of Wrath". She also performs with the Sketch Comedy group called Crack'd Nutz in the Los Angeles area.

Not settling for just being an actor, Ms Jackson feeds them as well as co-owner of Cafe Muse, located on Hollywood's Theatre Row. While a Drama Major at Howard University, Ms. Jackson became a founding member of D.I.V.A. Inc, an organization still growing and accomplishing 28 years later.

Harriett D. Foy

BETTE DAVIS



Harriett D. Foy Broadway: Amazing Grace, The American Plan, Mamma Mia!, Once on This Island. Off-Broadway: The Total Bent, On the Levee (AUDELCO Nomination), Crowns (AUDELCO Award), Lone Star Love (cast recording), Inside Out (cast recording) and Dinah Was. Regional: Breath & Imagination (ArtsEmerson); The House That Will Not Stand (Berkeley Rep - Theatre Bay Award; Yale Rep, CT Critics Circle nomination); LMNOP, Amazing Grace (Goodspeed); The Women of Brewster Place, Polk County (Arena Stage, Helen Hayes nominations); dance of the holy ghosts (Yale Rep); Ambassador Satch (Dubai); Film: Winter's Tale, In the Family. Television: "Orange is the New Black," "Rescue Me," "Law and Order." BFA - Howard University

Founders



Why We Are Necessary

- Sense of community for women of color working in the arts – a field that is dominated by Caucasian men
- We provide the bridge between students and the goal of using their degree in the artistic field.
- We teach how to share, support, uplift women of color
- We have members all over the US and Europe
- Many have been successful in their chosen careers
- Some have chosen different paths other than the arts and are successful
- All these journeys are important, and students should be made privy to the ups and downs of the artist journey after graduation
- Our biggest contribution to the arts is celebrating the legacy and rich history of our artist ancestors, who broke down and through barriers so that we might have these arts opportunities today.
- Our process is part history lesson, part performance workshop, part personal growth and development as an artist





Sisterhood



What We Do

- Produced several readings and plays at Howard University and in the Washington, DC community featuring works by African American writers
- Employed Howard University Fine Arts Students in Washington, DC and New York City
- Produced, performed in memorial services for the Howard University family
- Financial supporters of My Sisters Place in Washington, DC and The Dwelling Place in New York
- Produced alumni events in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, DC which include "Master Classes" and workshops covering topics such as... Film, Television, Finance and Health Awareness
- Produced a short film festival featuring work by Diva Sister Rosalind Williams of Red Wall Productions
- Established the D.I.V.A. Inc. Founder Danette Austin Wills Scholarship Tea - offering a scholarship to a Duke Ellington student for excellence in writing...



Unity

How We Give Back

- The networking/referral opportunities are numerous.
- The sisters of D.I.V.A. Inc move in many circles in the industry.. especially in New York and Los Angeles
- We currently have seven alumni working on the new television show P-Valley for the Starz network, two are members of D.I.V.A. Inc.
- We have produced Senior Acting showcases where we provided access to New York agents
- In 2019 we produced the Howard University, Division of Fine Arts, Senior Acting Showcase
- We gifted cap and gowns to 9 candidates receiving their B.F.A. in Musical Theater 2019 through the Kelsey E. Collie Scholarship Fund.
- Co-Produced the Howard University Howard Players 100th Anniversary Celebration





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Sensuality



Womanhood

What We See For The Future

The most important aspect of D.I.V.A. Inc is that any young lady who joins our organization knows that there is a sister who will have her back through the thick and thin of it. She will have a place to lay her head, clothes to wear and food to eat. The journey into the arts for a woman of color is very difficult and we as the members of D.I.V.A. Inc offer a process designed to ensure confidence, discipline, creativity, sisterhood, unity, womanhood and most of all love for one's craft, oneself and fellow artists.

