



Charles Harrison:

Thank you; it's indeed a delight and an honor to be here and to share with you this evening some insights from my perspective on LeRoy Winbush. Someone just mentioned giants in the design world, well he truly was one.

LeRoy started life in Memphis, Tennessee and that's where the mold was set for to build a wonderful individual, I'll explain more, I hope, as we go.

He went from there for a short period, I'm not sure how many years, but a few years in Detroit and then made his way to Chicago where he, ya know, lived out his career and his adult life contributing to our society as a graphic artist, primarily. Although, he had some side design activities in almost every media that we are aware of today.

I heard about and knew about LeRoy Winbush for many years before I actually became acquainted with him. When I moved to Chicago in the 50's I knew this legend was around and what he did. And what made him so popular or so well-accepted was that he opened doors for many, many, many young designers of all ethnic groups and that was a great advantage for us who had found many doors closed.

About somewhere in the 80's I actually was formally introduced to him and we became friends after that and participated in many activities together in support of a good life or better life for designers all around. Actually, I came to know him most through some activities as Senior Advisors to the Osmosis Group, which is so well supported by the AIGA and I want to thank you for that.

[applause]

Among his contributions, and there are many, I'm just gonna give you a short list of some of the things that I think stand out and he became well-known and I think he cut his teeth and was established as a art director for a chain of department stores in the heartland of America called Goldblatts Department Stores and he was -- he did everything that was required; window display, corporate logos, and all of the mailing pieces and advertisements. Also, he became a label as the person to go to when the banks, most of the large banks in the Chicago area were looking for help with window displays and you may have seen something there in the. Then among the others he also taught, he was an adjunct professor at The School of Art Institute of Chicago where he helped many of us with some direction of where to direct our art talents to as professionals.

He was selected several years running by the city of Chicago to do the holiday decor for Midway and O'Hare airports for several years. He also was a -- and near the end of his career, a Director of -- and Art Director for The DuSable Museum in Chicago, which is primarily a history museum for African Americans. So, those are a few of the things that I would like to point out as accomplishments of his. But most of all I really would like to make the point to you that he was such a wonderful individual in reaching out to help other people, particularly young designers and also older designers who had gone on before him and were his contemporaries who had, in later years, developed disabilities and had other health issues. He never forgot those people and he would spend much of his time taking them around to different events and keeping them aware of their need in the community.

Now, he was known primarily as an African American designer and he used to speak to me on occasions and he's say, "Ya know, I don't know if that's really a good description of what I want to be remembered as," and so, with your permission, I'd like to, ya know, rearrange those words a little bit, in closing, for LeRoy Winbush. I'd like to say that I think of him as an African American -- no, not that -- as an American designer who happened to be African American, and a wonderful person.

[Applause]

Charles Harrison:

So, I could probably ramble on and on about LeRoy but I'll stop there and I'd like to present this award that we have for him

[Music]

Vernon Lockhart:

Thank you Chuck. Good evening esteemed guests and you've probably figured out by now I'm not LeRoy Winbush, but I do share his passion for the design excellence in the design profession.

Mr. Winbush was my mentor, he often made the comment that he filled space with imagination and those of us who've been close to him heard that often from him. And to know Winbush you quickly learn that his imagination had no limits and no bounds.

Winbush always had time for up and coming designers, as Chuck so eloquently described, he let us use his space from time to time as young designers but we quickly discovered that Winbush was actually forcing us into his space so he could show us his scuba and diving underwater slides that he so preciously owned to the point that he would show those to us every time we met with him even young students who thought they were gonna see his design work, he would show these underwater slides.

Well, we started to learn that Winbush was actually more than a designer he was an explorer, he explored new worlds. This allowed Winbush, Mr. LeRoy Winbush to boldly and fearlessly go into other communities and show off his skills, and he gives us the courage today to do the same.

He motivated us, he inspired us, he allowed us to imagine, I'm proud and I'm humbled to accept this award on behalf of Mr. LeRoy Winbush, Winbush and Associates, Dana and Kevin Morrison, Project Osmosis, AIGA, and the design community that Winbush served. Yes, thank you for letting us tell this new story from long ago, I humbly appreciate it, thank you.

[Applause]