

News



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Simmons College to Name Newly Formed College of Media, Arts, and Humanities After Late Gwen Ifill, Class of '77

Boston, MA –Simmons College announced today that its new College of Media, Arts, and Humanities will be named in remembrance and honor of the late journalist Gwen Ifill, one of the College’s most distinguished alumnae.

With the announcement of the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities, Simmons also is previewing a significant redesign of its academic structure. The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities will be one of four newly-reconstituted colleges of study under the Simmons academic umbrella that will be launched in 2018.

Ifill graduated from Simmons in 1977 with a bachelor's degree in communications, and went on to become one of the nation's most respected journalists. At the time of her passing last November, she was co-anchor of the "PBS NewsHour" and moderator of the network's "Washington Week."

“For over 100 years, our mission at Simmons has been to prepare our students to lead meaningful lives and build successful careers. Gwen’s example stands tall in that mission,” said Helen Drinan, President of Simmons College. “The kind of unimpeded curiosity Gwen brought to her work, coupled with her warmth, integrity and commitment to truth-telling, is something all of our students aspire to – no matter what field of study they pursue. We are extraordinarily proud of her and so pleased to formalize her legacy at Simmons this way.”

“Simmons was a launching pad for Gwen and prepared her well,” said Roberto Ifill, Gwen’s brother. “My sister leveraged her education to excel as a liberally educated, consummate professional. She graduated thoroughly grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, and well-prepared professionally to embark on her journalism career, and it all started at Simmons.”

Gwen's death one year ago launched a wave of moving tributes, including from President Obama, and from her peers across the media. As a Peabody Award-winning journalist, she broke new ground as the first African-American woman to host a nationally televised U.S. public affairs program, "Washington Week". She went on to moderate the 2004 and 2008 Vice-Presidential debates, and joined Judy Woodruff to become the first all-female anchors of a nationally televised news program on "PBS Newshour". At the time of her death, she had been awarded 41 honorary degrees, including one from her alma mater.

The four new colleges in the Simmons academic structure will build on the signature strengths Simmons is known for, including its graduate studies in nursing and health sciences, social work, library and information science, and business. Simmons will continue to be a women's college for undergraduate education with a women-centered approach, the only one of its kind in Boston. Graduate programs will continue to be open to all. In addition to the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities, Simmons will be composed of the College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice; the College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences, and the College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences.

A formal launch of the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities is being planned for fall 2018.

To see Simmons's video tribute to Gwen Ifill, please visit:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQ1HaMi_Exk

About Simmons College

Simmons College (www.simmons.edu) is a nationally recognized private university located in the heart of Boston, and is the preeminent authority on women's leadership. Founded in 1899, Simmons is the only undergraduate women's college in Boston, and maintains a history of visionary thinking and a focus on social responsibility. The College offers world-class coeducational graduate programs in nursing and health sciences, including physical therapy and nutrition; liberal arts; education; behavior analysis; library and information science; business; and social work. Follow Simmons on Twitter at [@SimmonsCollege](https://twitter.com/SimmonsCollege) and [@SimmonsNews](https://twitter.com/SimmonsNews).