

01/2008 PR - PBS "Eyes II Broadcast"

[Link to full press release](#)

Nearly two decades after its 1990 premiere, the groundbreaking second season of Eyes on the Prize returns to PBS as a special presentation of American Experience in February 2008. In honor of Black History Month, eight, one-hour episodes will air on four consecutive Sundays—February 3, 10, 17, and 24 on PBS. Two episodes will air each afternoon.

Produced by Blackside, Eyes on the Prize II documents the journey of black Americans seeking justice, power, and identity, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s and shows the profound effect this movement had on all Americans.

Through historical footage and interviews, Eyes on the Prize II examines the triumphs and failures of individuals and communities eager to give flesh to the movement's hard-won gains. The series also probes the transition to a more challenging time in America's social history.

The civil rights movement changed America forever, rewriting its laws, reinvigorating its Constitution, and inscribing a new legion of heroes and heroines in its history books. As the nature of that movement changed from a broad-based coalition to sometimes competing groups, a variety of local grassroots crusades took the movement's forward momentum and pressed on.

Eyes on the Prize II picks up where the first series left off, and takes viewers from the streets of Malcolm X's Harlem to Oakland and the birth of the Black Panthers; from the frustration of rioters in Detroit and Miami to the victory celebration for Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor; from ringside with Muhammad Ali to the Mountain Top speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the eve of his assassination.

"Eyes on the Prize II covers a divisive period in American history that is highly relevant to what is happening in the political landscape today. The series raises important issues about the nature of leadership, the meaning of equality, and how much we are willing to participate in our democracy and contribute to the common good. We hope that in this election year, Eyes II will spark a national dialogue about these issues, which continue to have a major impact on all of us," says Judi Hampton, president, Blackside, and sister of the late Henry Hampton, executive producer of the series.

The driving force behind Eyes on the Prize and Blackside, Henry Hampton (1940–1998) won numerous awards for this breakthrough series including the duPont-Columbia Gold Baton, the Peabody Award, and Academy Award nominations. He set out to share his vision of what he called "the remarkable human drama that was the Civil Rights Movement" through the Eyes on the Prize documentary and a book of the same title by Juan Williams. In recent years, a number of key figures who appear in the films (including the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, a leader of the Montgomery bus boycott; Coretta Scott King, wife of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, and an activist in her own right; Kwame Ture, also known as Stokely Carmichael, leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; and George Wallace, 1960s Alabama Governor who resisted integration) have died, making this record of their testimony all the more valuable.

"When it first aired, Eyes on the Prize created a new level of awareness and understanding of a watershed period in this nation's history," says Mark Samels, executive producer of American Experience. "We are proud to be presenting this monumental series."

The re-release of Eyes on the Prize was made possible by grants from The Ford Foundation and The Gilder Foundation. The series is a production of Blackside. Executive Producer: Henry Hampton (1940–1998). Blackside Principals: Judi Hampton, President and Veva Zimmerman, Vice President. Project Director and Legal Counsel for the Eyes on the Prize Re-Release: Sandra Forman. American Experience Executive Producer: Mark Samels.