

Bio | Henry Hampton

Born in 1940, Henry Hampton grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, where he experienced racism firsthand. As a teenager Henry contracted polio, which made him highly aware of those who are not accepted in society.

In the mid-sixties, he became involved with the Unitarian Universalist Association and the civil rights movement. As he participated in the march across the Pettus Bridge in Selma, he realized this event was history-and the idea for Eyes on the Prize was born.

In 1968, Henry Hampton founded Blackside, Inc., which became one of the nation's most successful minority-owned documentary film companies. In its 38-year history, Blackside has produced more than fifty films, media programs and companion books-and provided many emerging filmmakers with the opportunity to learn their craft. Blackside's best-known work is the 1987 series Eyes on the Prize-the definitive history of the civil rights movement. Eyes won the Dupont-Columbia Gold Baton, the Peabody Award and Academy Award nominations. Hampton also served as executive producer of The Great Depression, which won an Emmy, and other acclaimed productions.

The many honors Henry Hampton received include the Ralph Lowell Award, presented by PBS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; the first Heinz Family Foundation Award in the field of arts and humanities, the first Harold C. Fleming Award, and thirteen honorary degrees.

After a valiant battle with cancer, Henry passed away in 1998. He left a legacy of films that celebrate all of those-known and unknown-who made sacrifices for freedom in America.