

Richard Brereton
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Paul Robeson: The Power of Legacy

Paul Robeson was an African American actor, political activist, singer, athlete, scholar, and author. His father escaped slavery and became a minister and his mother was from a successful Philadelphia family. He grew up in Princeton, New Jersey. He was a star athlete and earned a scholarship to play football at Rutgers University, and there was valedictorian. He went to law school at Columbia University and became a lawyer. But because of racial issues, his career as a lawyer ended and he became a public speaker.

His gift as a public speaker, and even as an author, helped him pave the road for many aspiring African American actors. He not only acted himself, but created such a legacy that others played him in plays. He broke color barriers in many different fields: sports, music, film, and theater. Not only are people remembering his artistic talents and abilities, but also his athletic ones. In 1995, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. His efforts shattered racial barriers and open the door for American Americans to be successful in many fields. African Americans are now presidents, professional athletes, singers, performers, artists, and authors. It is not uncommon that African Americans fill all of these professions in today's society, but do so effectively and successfully. He was an influence to James Earl Jones, who like Paul Robeson, played Othello. Before Robeson, a white man played Othello in blackface. Without Robeson, James Earl Jones probably would not have had the opportunity. Today, black people, along with many other types of people, are successful actors, authors, athletes, and political figures.