

Sophie Frostbaum

Paul Robeson's success was defined by his parental upbringing. Having a father who was an escaped slave, and an educated mother, he became an educated scholar, who never quit on his dreams, and became a strong influence for African Americans. Robeson graduated from Rutgers as Valedictorian, and continued onto Columbia law school. He became the first African American man to play the role of Othello. This was a turning point for the African American community because although the character of Othello is supposed to be African American, he had always been played by a white man. He played the lead role in "All God's Chillun Got Wings" as well as "The Emperor Jones". He was admired by all, including Eleanor Roosevelt, and due to this, another famous African American actor, James Earl Jones, played the role of Robeson in a movie about him. Robeson's success was a cultivation of the hardship his father had to come, and his mother's education. He learned from his father that when opportunity comes, you should take it.