

Tavis Smiley, Dr. Cornel West Bring Poverty Tour to DSU Sept. 13

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Syndicated radio host and political commentator Tavis Smiley and internationally known Princeton professor Cornel West will bring their Poverty Tour 2.0 to the First State as they facilitate a town hall-style forum at 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 13 in the Memorial Hall Gymnasium at Delaware State University.



Dr. Cornel West

The event is free and open to the public.

Delaware is one of five states – the others being Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia – where Mr. Smiley and Dr. West will bring the Poverty Tour 2.0 to address the need to make the eradication of poverty the top priority in the United States.

“We expect that the forthcoming census data will reveal that poverty in America is not an abstraction; too many Americans are living hand to mouth,” said Cornel West. “Basic needs such as living-wage jobs, food, clothing, medicine, and shelter cannot be ignored by the major parties during the upcoming political conventions, or by their respective nominees on the campaign trail.”

The tour, which is scheduled for September 12 through the 15th will feature a number of free town hall meetings that will be broadcast live on a number of platforms including USTREAM, radio, and social media.

“We are excited that Tavis Smiley and Dr. Cornel West have chosen Delaware State University as one of the sites where they will lead a discussion on the vexing problem of poverty in this country,” said Dr. Harry L. Williams, president of Delaware State University.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, approximately 46.2 million Americans lived in poverty in 2010. This number is up from 43.6 million in 2009 and represents the fourth consecutive annual increase in this measure of poverty.

The overall poverty rate of 15.1% in 2010 represents an increase from the 14.3% level in 2009. Between 2009 and 2010, the poverty rate increased for non-Hispanic Whites (from 9.4 percent to 9.9 percent), for Blacks (from 25.8 percent to 27.4 percent), and for Hispanics (from 25.3 percent to 26.6 percent). For Asians, the 2010 poverty rate (12.1 percent) was not statistically

different from the 2009 poverty rate

“It is our intent that in the sprint from Labor Day to Election Day, poor people do not get trampled on or left behind, Mr. Smiley said.

Cornel West is a prominent and provocative democratic intellectual. He is the Class of 1943 University Professor at Princeton University. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in three years and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy at Princeton. He has taught at Union Theological Seminary, Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris. He has written 19 books and edited 13.

He is best known for his classics, *Race Matters* and *Democracy Matters*, and his new memoir, *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud*. He appears frequently on *Real Time with Bill Maher*, *The Colbert Report*, CNN, and C-SPAN, as well as on his dear brother Tavis Smiley’s PBS TV show. He is also co-host of the popular radio show *Smiley & West*, heard on Public Radio International (PRI) around the country. *Smiley & West* is a highly-acclaimed progressive program. He made his film debut in *The Matrix* — and was the DVD commentator (with Ken Wilbur) on the official trilogy, released in 2004. He also has appeared in over 25 documentaries and films including *Examined Life*, *Call & Response*, *Sidewalk*, and *STAND*.

He has made three spoken-word albums including *Never Forget*, collaborating with Prince, Jill Scott, Andre 3000, Talib Kweli, KRS-One and the late Gerald Levert. His spoken-word interludes were featured on Terence Blanchard’s *Choices* (which won the Grand Prix in France for the best jazz album of the year of 2009), The Cornel West Theory’s *Second Rome*, Raheem DeVaughn’s *Love & War: Masterpiece*, and most recently on Bootsy Collins’ *The Funk Capital of the World*. In short, Cornel West has a passion to communicate to a vast variety of publics in order to keep alive the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. — a legacy of telling the truth and bearing witness to love and justice.



Tavis Smiley

Tavis Smiley is a noted television and radio talk show host, author, as well as the president and CEO of The Smiley Group, Inc. From his celebrated conversations with world figures to his work to inspire the next generation of leaders, broadcaster, author, publisher, advocate, and philanthropist Tavis Smiley has emerged as an outstanding voice for change. Smiley is currently the host of the late-night television talk show *Tavis Smiley* on PBS as well as *The Tavis Smiley Show* and *Smiley & West* from Public Radio International (PRI).

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In addition to his radio and television work, Smiley has authored 16 books. His memoir, *What I Know for Sure: My Story of Growing Up in America*, became a *New York Times* best seller, and the book he edited, *Covenant with Black America*, became the first nonfiction book by a Black-owned publisher to reach #1 on *The New York Times*' best-sellers list.

In his latest title *The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto*, Smiley and his co-author Dr. Cornel West take on the “p” word — poverty. In this game-changing book, they challenge all Americans to re-examine their assumptions about poverty in America — what it really is and how to eradicate it.

Smiley is the presenter and creative force behind **America I AM: The African American Imprint**. This unprecedented traveling museum exhibition, which debuted in January 2009, will tour the country for four years, celebrating the extraordinary impact of African American contributions to our nation and the world, as told through rare artifacts, memorabilia, and multimedia.

Smiley's most gratifying accomplishments are rooted in his passion to inspire the next generation of leaders. The nonprofit *Tavis Smiley Foundation* was established to provide leadership training and development for youth. Since its inception, more than 6,000 young people have participated in the foundation's Youth to Leaders training workshops and conferences.

His communications company, *The Smiley Group, Inc.*, is dedicated to supporting human rights and related empowerment issues and serves as the holding company for various enterprises encompassing broadcast and print media, lectures, symposiums, and the Internet.

Smiley's achievements have earned him numerous awards and honorary doctorate degrees, including one from his alma mater, Indiana University. In 2009, Indiana University named the atrium of its School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) building “The Tavis Smiley Atrium.” Smiley is also the recipient of the prestigious Du Bois Medal from Harvard University and the 2009 Interdependence Day Prize from Demos in Istanbul, Turkey.

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