

## Susan L. Taylor

Susan L. Taylor is editorial director of *Essence* magazine. She has been the driving force behind one of the most celebrated African American owned business success stories of the past three decades. She oversees the editorial operations of the magazine and writes the popular “In the Spirit” column each month. Through her column, her numerous public appearances and extensive international travel, she has become an inspiration to millions of people who see her as a living symbol of the award-winning magazine and the positive aspects of the community it promotes.

A fourth-generation entrepreneur, Taylor was the founder of her own company, Nequai Cosmetics, before becoming *Essence's* fashion and beauty editor and, in 1981, its editor-in-chief. She is the author of three books: *In the Spirit: The Inspirational Writings of Susan L. Taylor*, *Lessons in Living* and *Confirmation: The Spiritual Wisdom That Has Shaped Our Lives*, the latter co-authored with her husband, Khephra Burns.

In 1999 Taylor became the first African-American woman to receive The Henry Johnson Fisher Award from the Magazine Publishers of America, the magazine industry's highest honor. In 2002, she was inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors' (ASME) Hall of Fame, which celebrates the career-long records of excellence, creativity and impact of a select group of highly influential magazine journalists.

Taylor is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the American Society of Magazine Editors. She is also an avid supporter of a host of organizations dedicated to moving the Black community forward, serving as a member of the Commission on Research in Black Education, among others. She is personally committed to serving and empowering the poor and to working with disadvantaged women and teenagers to help them realize their strengths and take charge of their lives.

Taylor is currently co-chair of a capital campaign with Danny Glover to raise money to build housing in the rural areas of South Africa. She serves on the board of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, D.C. In addition, she serves on the Louisiana Recovery Authority at the request of Governor Kathleen Blanco, to aid in the state's post-Katrina rebuilding.