



Girls Write Now Awards

*Celebrating the Women
who Inspire Us*

May 7, 2013
632 on Hudson



GIRLS WRITE NOW

About Girls Write Now

Girls Write Now is New York's first and only organization with a writing and mentoring model exclusively for girls.

Since 1998, we've accomplished a lot!

- More than 4,500 high-need high school girls served
 - Distinguished twice by the White House in two years
 - Honored by Youth, I.N.C. as one of NYC's most innovative non-profits
 - Anthology named "Outstanding Book of the Year" by the Independent Publisher Book Awards
 - Girls won 125+ medals from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards
 - 100% of Mentoring Program seniors graduate and go to college
-

Celebrating 15 Years

Now in our 15th year of mentoring the next generation of women writers, Girls Write Now is hosting our first gala to honor women whose lives and work inspire girls every day to find their voices and tell their stories.

With the **Girls Write Now Awards**, we recognize three outstanding women who are role models for girls in their dedication to hard work and craft; commitment to honest, fearless storytelling; and creative leadership in a world where the stories of women and girls are often dismissed or invisible.

Ladies, we salute you!

PROGRAM

EMCEE

Suzzy Roche
Event Co-Chair

REMARKS

Maya Nussbaum
Girls Write Now Founder & Executive Director

HONOREES

Tamra Davis
Producer, Director & Author
Introduced by Kamy Wicoff, Girls Write Now Board Chair

Emma Cookson
Chairman, Bartle Bogle Hegarty
Introduced by Unyi Agba, Event Co-Chair & Girls Write Now Board Member

Tayari Jones
Novelist
Introduced by Lauren Cerand, Former Girls Write Now Board Chair

PERFORMANCE

“Yalla Yalla”
*Written by mentees Priscilla Guo & Najaya Royal,
with Suzzy Roche & Anusha Mehar*
Performed by Denitia Odigie, Tinderbox Music Festival

HONOREES

TAMRA DAVIS



Tamra Davis is an accomplished director and author. She launched her career directing music videos for diverse bands including N.W.A., Sonic Youth, and Hanson. Davis went on to direct nine feature films including “Guncrazy” starring Drew Barrymore, “Billy Madison” with Adam Sandler, “CB4” with Chris Rock, “Crossroads” starring Britney Spears, and “Half Baked” with Dave Chapelle, along with hit TV shows such as “Grey’s Anatomy,” “Ugly Betty,” and “My Name Is Earl.” Her 2010 documentary “Jean-Michel Basquiat—The Radiant Child” screened at Sundance and premiered on PBS’s Independent Lens Series, and her

2013 documentary “The Punk Singer” premiered at SXSW. In 2009, she published a cookbook titled *Make Me Something Good To Eat*. She is currently working on the third season of a scripted series for VH1 called “Single Ladies.”

EMMA COOKSON



The chairman of the advertising agency BBH (Bartle Bogle Hegarty) New York, **Emma Cookson** has worked in the advertising industry for her entire career. She is recognized today as one of the industry’s prominent female leaders: one of *AdAge*’s recent “100 Most Influential Women in Advertising” and *Business Insider*’s “30 Most Powerful Women in Advertising”. Cookson started at the BBH London office in 1992, transitioning to the United States in 1999 with the launch of BBH New York. Under her leadership, BBH NY was voted the American Association of Advertising Agencies’

(AAAA) mid-sized Agency of the Year for an unprecedented four consecutive years from 2007-2010, and again in 2013. In her spare time, Cookson is a supporter of and advisor to YouGottaBelieve, an adoption non-profit for teens and older children.

TAYARI JONES



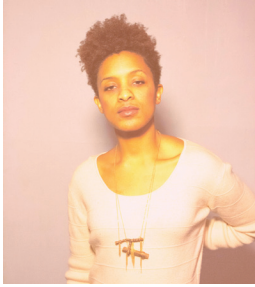
Photo credit: Marion Ettlinger

Award-winning novelist **Tayari Jones’** first novel, *Leaving Atlanta*, is a coming-of-age story set during the city’s infamous child murders of 1979-81, and received the Hurston/Wright Award for Debut Fiction. Her second novel, *The Untelling*, published in 2005, prompted *Essence* magazine to call Jones “a writer to watch.” Her third novel, *Silver Sparrow*, was published in 2011 by Algonquin Books. *Library Journal*, *O Magazine*, *Slate*, and *Salon* all selected the novel among the best of the year. A recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award in Fine Arts from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Jones is a graduate of Spelman College, the University of Iowa, and Arizona State University. Currently, she is an associate

professor in the MFA program at Rutgers-Newark University. Jones is a former Vice Chair of the Girls Write Now Board of Directors.

PERFORMANCE

DENITIA ODIGIE



Denitia is a Brooklyn-based, soul/R&B artist, songwriter, and producer. A native Texan who grew up on country music and Motown, Denitia spent almost a decade in Nashville before settling into the Brooklyn indie scene. She continues to release music independently with her solo project as well as with her new experimental R&B duo 'denitia and sene.' *Essence Magazine* featured her in the February issue in the "New and Next" section of their Grammy edition. Denitia has also quickly become an Okayplayer favorite (blog launched by ?uestlove of The Roots). Denitia is a performer with the Tinderbox Music Festival.

PRISCILLA GUO



"My name is Priscilla Guo but I have been called many other things in my life: Junior, P-Killa, Riscilla, Scilla, La, cake friend, medium short, Queen of the Desert, artist, and now *writer*. It's my third year here at Girls Write Now and it's official: I'm a girl who writes now, anything and everything. Much of my work is influenced by my surroundings. I am a New Yorker born and bred and a junior in high school. I love to make people laugh, even if they're one of those weird ones who smiles and breathes heavily instead of laughing, or one of those who's laugh actually sounds like 'hehe' or 'haha' (something to be checked out) but I write for you, too." *Priscilla's mentor Annie Reuter is a Music Journalist and Editor with CBS Radio.*

NAJAYA ROYAL



"I fell in love with poetry at the age of seven and since then I've been writing poetry and performing my work. This is my second year with Girls Write Now. I've been published in seven books, had two poems set to opera music and one performed at Carnegie Hall, but this is only a few of my many accomplishments. Even though I love poetry, music was my first real love since I was basically a baby, and it will always be that way. I plan on becoming a music journalist (this will help me combine my love of writing and my love of music) and a photographer since I love taking pictures as well. I know my mom, my mentor Anuja, and Girls Write Now can help me achieve my goals." *Najaya's mentor Anuja Madar is an Editor with Frommers.*

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*Many thanks to our amazing, hard-working
staff and interns who made this event possible.*



FROM OUR HONOREES

*To mentor someone is a special position.
My torch is bright enough to share
and to light the way for others.*
— Tamra Davis

*Advertising is a profession with
far too few female creative leaders, so I
passionately look to organizations like
Girls Write Now to help address the situation.*
— Emma Cookson

*Girls Write Now represents the coming together of
purpose, passion, art, and vision, which enriches all our
lives, our communities, our nation, and our world.*
— Tayari Jones



girls write now

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