



NAOMI CAMPBELL

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

<https://youtu.be/rK9DITZ4fKA>

I said I wasn't going to cry. Thank you so much, Lee. Thank you. I love you too. God, good evening. I'm honored to receive this Fashion Icon Award tonight. Thank you, Diane. I will never forget you taking me out, 17 years old to the four seasons restaurant. Sitting me down and telling me you need to learn business. Stephen Cole and the CFTA board members.

It's really special, given the illustrious previous winners, especially Franca Sozzani, who I love and think about very often. Over the years, the CFTA foundation has helped victims of hurricane Katrina and Nepal, women in Nepal and laying down foundations for better lives.

Whilst my own charity Fashion for Relief, which is now its 13th year, which I can't believe, has grown. We've helped fashion, we've helped Ebola crisis, we've helped sufferers in Africa, recently refugees from Syria. And in our last one month ago, education, health and culture.

In August, 2005, we all saw the horrors of hurricane Katrina. And in New Orleans, because I guess New Orleans was the first state of United States I'd ever been in, I felt compelled to do something. In one week, we managed to organize an event. Terry Forsman was the head of IMG, and I called him and asked him for the tent and he gave us the biggest tent. Anna Wintour gave us the vogue closet, everything we wanted. André Leon Talley stood by my side the entire time. Ralph Lauren, you made the t-shirts in three days, and everyone came together. And this is what I love about our industry, is that when things really matter, we can all come together.

I was told many times that I couldn't do certain things because of the color of my skin, but I've never let that an excuse. I let it drive me. And of course, I'm human and I found it hard at times not to take it personally, but I stand here today as a proud woman in front of you, of color, who I will continue to push for diversity and equality in this industry.

Together with Bethann Hardison, who is my second mother, who I had the honor of standing up here three years ago, giving you your awards. I love you, ma, and you've been here for me since the day I got to New York City. And Iman, who was unable to be with us tonight, but I know she's here with us in spirit. I'm so honored to stand by both of you.

Ultimately, I'm a South London girl and I'm forever grateful that my mother allowed me to sneak out and go out for castings. Actually, she didn't let me sneak out, I used to just go out. And they told me that I would only last 11 years, but I'm here and it's been 32 years. It's a great honor and I'm extremely grateful

to you all. And many in this room have dealt with my lateness, but I've never lied. And I've grown up in front of all of you. And here I am, 32 years later, clean and sober.

And I consider you, a lot of you in this room, my extended family. You've been there for me through thick and thin, through the good times, through the rough times. Naomi it's time to grow up times, and you've kept me grounded and loyal. And for that, I thank you.

I've always loved my work and I've always loved what I do. And I've always lived hard and I played hard. And sometimes, I'll take five years off. But whenever I had that time out, you were always there to embrace me on my return. I reflect on life and I share everything I've gained and learned through this wonderful business. People say this business is fickle and that it, I think they couldn't be more wrong. It's not in my books.

It's been a very special time and a privilege to have been there in the legendary era of the fashion industry and to have shared it with a wonderful group of women, Cindy, Stephanie, Linda, Christie, Claudia and Kate. You are my sisters and without you, I don't think anyone would have ever heard of me. And I thank you for your unconditional love and support.

And I must talk about Azzedine Alaïa, when he left us, I lost my papa. I was 15 years old when he took me in under his wing. And I know he's with me here tonight. I promised to keep his legacy alive as long as I am able to do so.

Thank you to all the great photographers I've worked with, Herb Ritts, Richard Avedon, greats like Irving Penn, Horst Iguadan, Peter Lindbergh, David Bailey, god my lips are dry, sorry. Alan Vernon, Steven Meisel. Steven Meisel, from the beginning guided me and taught me. And I'm extremely grateful to him for that.

Thank you to designers Marc Jacobs, Anna Sui, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, and thank you Ralph for making my beautiful dress tonight. My mother, Valerie, thank you for showing me and giving me the strength, I needed. Thank you for letting me go through my thick and thins that every adolescent girl has to go through.

Valerie Morris, you believed in me as a three-year-old. When I wanted to be a dancer, you sacrificed everything to ensure I had the best that I could have. You gave me strength and courage. My whole being comes from you. You raised me single-handedly. You are my mother and my father, both. And lastly, I'd like to thank my agency, DNA. David Bonnouvier, Richard Hadley, Akeem Brussel and Carli. You said to me when I came to see you that this is a marriage without a divorce. And I would like to say that I am happy married, thank you. I'm feeling humble tonight. Thank you so much and congratulations to all the other recipients. Thank you.

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