

Dick Gregory

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Richard "Dick" Claxton Gregory, (born October 12, 1932) is an American comedian, social activist, writer and entrepreneur.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, Dick Gregory is an influential African American comic who has used his performance skills to convey to both white and black audiences his political message on civil rights. Influenced to stand up for civil rights by his early surroundings of poverty and violence, Gregory became the first comedian to successfully perform for both black and white audiences.

As a poor student who excelled at running, Gregory was aided by high school teachers at Sumner High such as Warren St. James and earned a track scholarship to Southern Illinois University Carbondale. There he set records as a half-miler and miler. His college career was interrupted by two years in the U.S. Army where he got his start in comedy, entering and winning several Army talent shows at the urging of his commanding officer, who had taken notice of his penchant for joking. After completing military service, he performed as a comedian in small, primarily black nightclubs while working for the United States Postal Service during the daytime. In 1961, while working at the Black-owned Roberts Show Bar in Chicago, he was hired by Hugh Hefner to work at the Chicago Playboy Club after Hefner heard him wow a largely-white audience with the following routine:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I understand there are a good many Southerners in the room tonight. I know the South very well. I spent twenty years there one night.

Last time I was down South I walked into this restaurant and this white waitress came up to me and said, "We don't serve colored people here." I said, "That's all right. I don't eat colored people. Bring me a whole fried chicken."

Then these three white boys came up to me and said, "Boy, we're givin' you fair warnin'. Anything you do to that chicken, we're gonna do to you." So I put down my knife and fork, I picked up that chicken and I kissed it. Then I said, "Line up, boys!" [1]

Dick Gregory



Born	Dick Gregory October 12, 1932 St. Louis, Missouri, USA
Medium	Stand-up, film, books
Nationality	 American
Years active	1956 - Present
Genres	Satire/Political satire, Observational comedy
Subject(s)	American civil rights, American politics, American culture, African-American culture, racism, race relations, vegetarianism, healthy diet
Influences	Mort Sahl
Influenced	Lenny Bruce, George Carlin, Nichols and May, Richard Pryor, Chris Rock
Notable works and roles	<i>In Living Black and White</i> <i>Nigger: An Autobiography</i> <i>Write Me In!</i>
Website	www.dickgregory.com (http://www.dickgregory.com/)