(From: www.insidebaltimore.com/blackhist2000.shtml)

Lillian Evanti (1890-1967)



Opera singer Lillian Evanti was born Lillian Evans in Washington, D.C. She married her vocal teacher, music professor Roy Wilfred Tibbs, and created her stage name, Evanti, by combining her family name and her married name. A lyric soprano, Evanti performed worldwide and was the first black to sing with an organized opera company in Europe. In 1932, she gave a recital at the Belasco Theater, at that time the only prestigious venue in Washington to present African American performers to desegregated audiences.

In 1934, she gave a command performance at the White House for President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1941, with Mary Cardwell Dawson, she established the National Negro Opera Company in Pittsburgh, PA to provide a venue for African Americans to perform and study opera. In 1997, Evanti's grandson, Thurlow E. Tibbs Jr., endowed the Smithsonian Institution with the collections of his grandmother along with other artifacts. The Evans-Tibbs House in Washington, D.C. is included in the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places.

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
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Thurlow Evans Tibbs Jr.
1952 - 1997

After graduating from Cardozo High School, Mr. Tibbs received the degree of Bachelor of Arts and citation as a Senior Fellow from Dartmouth College, class of 1974. At Dartmouth he was a member of Kappa Kappa Kappa and the Honors Fraternity Casque & Gauntlet.



Subsequently he took a Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from the School of Design at Harvard University, and later pledged in the graduate chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha.

After completing his education, Mr. Tibbs returned to Washington and joined the engineering firm of De Leuw, Cather/Parsons, and later the General Services Administration. While there he undertook a wide variety of vocational activities in planning, but also pursued his avocational interests in art by inaugurating a series of house exhibitions, providing a venue for promising young African-American artists. Gradually, his avocation became a full-time vocation, which resulted in the creation of the most extensive and most distinguished private collection of African-American art in the Washington area, and one of the top five in the nation.



Mr. Tibbs became renowned as an art collector, appraiser and as a tireless promoter of art. He also carefully nurtured artists and their creative visions. In this regard, one of his crowning achievements was the donation of a portion of the Evans-Tibbs Collection to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, for which he was awarded the William Wilson Corcoran Medal in 1996. Mr. Tibbs love of his native Washington emerged in numerous ways, including service on the Shaw-Cardozo Governing Board, Whitman-Walker Clinic, and the African-American Civil War Memorial Freedom Foundation. Mr. Tibbs will always be remembered for his unique legacy of creating a haven for both the artworks and the artists in his hometown of Washington, DC, while also devoting his high standards of connoisseurship to bring greater recognition to African-American artists throughout the world.



