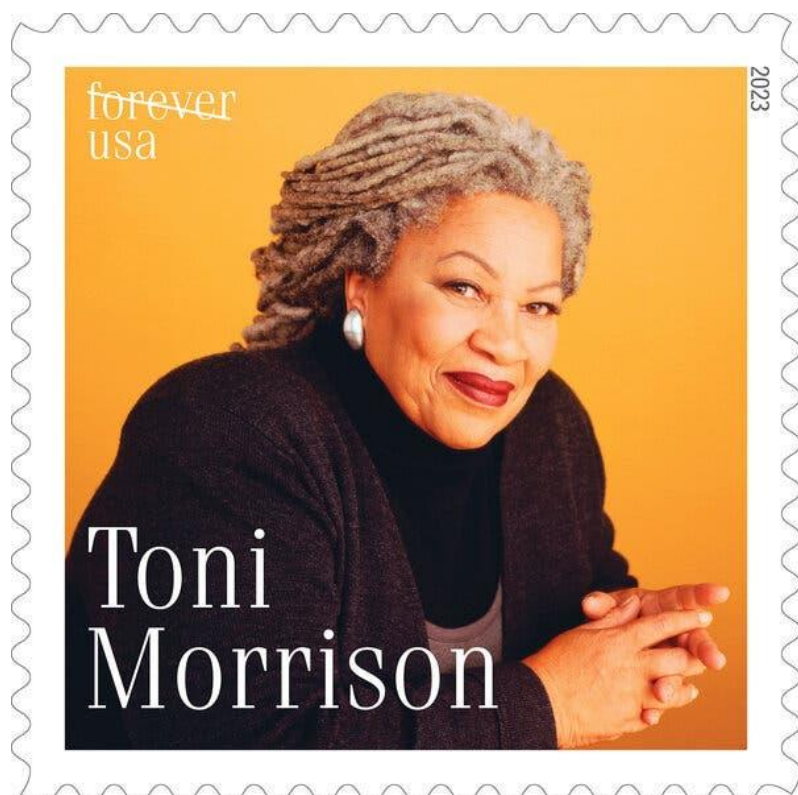


# *Toni Morrison Appears on Postal Service's Latest Forever Stamp*

Ms. Morrison, the acclaimed writer and Nobel laureate, wrote about the Black experience. The unveiling was part of a series of events honoring her work at Princeton University.



The United States Postal Service unveiled the forever stamp at a ceremony held on Tuesday. Credit...USPS, via Associated Press

By [April Rubin](#)

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Toni Morrison, the acclaimed author who became the first African American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, will be memorialized on a Forever stamp, which was unveiled Tuesday by the United States Postal Service.

The portrait featured on the stamp — with Ms. Morrison smiling, looking straight into the camera, against a yellow backdrop — was part of a 1997 photo shoot by Deborah Feingold for the cover of Time magazine.

The [United States Postal Service](#) made the announcement at a ceremony at Princeton University, where Ms. Morrison taught from 1989 to 2006. The event was part of a series throughout the 2022-23 academic year dedicated to Ms. Morrison's work,

including lectures and an exhibit of her writing, said Gene Jarrett, dean of faculty at Princeton.

In a letter read at the unveiling, former President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, the former first lady, said Ms. Morrison's writing challenges readers' consciences and brings out their empathy.

"Toni told fundamental truths about our country and the human condition, but she didn't just reflect what was true," the Obamas wrote. "She helped generations of Black Americans reimagine what was possible. That's why we return to her stories again and again, finding new meaning each time."

Oprah Winfrey, who selected four of [Ms. Morrison's books for her book club, more than any other author](#), addressed those at the event in a recorded video, and said she would always be grateful for Ms. Morrison's work.

"What she was able to do through her words was bring people from all over the country and the world together in an entirely new experience," Ms. Winfrey said.

Ms. Morrison, [who died in 2019 at 88](#), was the author of 11 novels, including "The Bluest Eye," "Song of Solomon" and [the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Beloved."](#) Her fiction told poignant stories that touched on identity, especially that of Black women. She also wrote children's books and essay collections.

Ms. Morrison published her first novel, "The Bluest Eye," in 1970 while working as an editor and raising two children. After subsequent books and recognitions, then-President Jimmy Carter appointed Ms. Morrison to the National Council on the Arts in 1980. She published "Beloved," widely considered her masterwork, in 1987.

The portrait of Ms. Morrison that was used for the stamp was one of many taken before one was selected for the Time magazine cover. More than 25 years later, Ms. Feingold recalled Ms. Morrison's focus and patience throughout the daylong shoot, taken on film before the days of digital cameras.

"Her expression for every frame was one of kindness," Ms. Feingold said.

Ms. Morrison joins other [Black trailblazers](#), including writers, who have been featured on Postal Service stamps since 1978, among them James Baldwin, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson and Ethel L. Payne.

"One of the goals of our stamp program is to raise awareness and celebrate the people who represent the very best of our nation," Pritha Mehra, chief information officer and executive vice president of the U.S.P.S., said in a statement.

Ms. Morrison's son, Harold Ford Morrison, and his family were in attendance at the unveiling of the stamp, designed by Ethel Kessler, a U.S.P.S. art director. Ms. Morrison's younger son, Slade Morrison, died of pancreatic cancer in 2010.

Featuring Ms. Morrison on a stamp is another recognition of her contributions to American literature and culture, said Carolyn Denard, the founder and board chair of the Toni Morrison Society, which supports scholarship and community outreach on her work and legacy. Dr. Denard wrote her dissertation on Ms. Morrison's writing and had an enriching relationship with her throughout the years, she said.

"What I take away from Morrison is her love for Black people" in a broad way that took into account the larger context of their lives, Dr. Denard said, adding: "To understand deeply their history, their culture, their value, the contributions that they made to this society, their resilience, their ability to be present given all that has happened to them in history. She used to say that our very presence here is remarkable."

Ms. Morrison's commemoration on the stamp comes as some of her writings, particularly "The Bluest Eye," have been targeted by book bans in K-12 schools across the United States, [fueled by conservative influence](#) in legislation and a broader push to purge books about race, gender and sexuality.

Ms. Morrison received her master's degree at Cornell in 1955, where she is an iconic figure, said Roger Gilbert, an English professor who taught a popular series of classes about her with Anne Adams, a professor emeritus.

"I plan to use her on almost all my correspondence from now on," he said. "I do have stamps with other people I admire and I don't want to neglect them, but for now at least, she will be my go-to stamp."