

No Acting Oscar in the Last Decade Has Gone to Latino, Asian, or Native American

by **Jorge Rivas**, Sunday, February 26 2012, 5:20 PM EST

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In 2002, Halle Berry became the first African-American actress to win an Academy award for Best Actress but since then all Best Actress winners been white.

“This moment is for Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne, Diahann Carroll. It’s for the women that stand beside me - Jada Pinkett, Angela Bassett and it’s for every nameless, faceless woman of color that now has a chance because this door tonight has been opened,” Berry said in her moving acceptance speech in 2002.

But the “door” that “has been opened” that Berry spoke of has a long way to go. All Best Actress winners since her 2002 win have been white.

And no winner in any acting category during the last ten years has been Latino, Asian American, or Native American, according to a new study titled “Not Quite a Breakthrough: The Oscars and Actors of Color, 2002-2012,” that was sponsored by the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy, UC Berkeley School of Law and the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

The study begins by noting “the Oscar nominees this year include two black women who are favored to win: Viola Davis, nominated for Best Actress, and Octavia Spencer, nominated for Best Supporting Actress. Another actor of color, Demián Bichir, a Latino, was a surprise nominee for Best Actor. This scenario recalls 2002, when Halle Berry and Denzel Washington won Academy Awards for Best Actress and Best Actor in a year that also included Will Smith’s nomination for Best Actor and Sidney Poitier’s receipt of an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement.”

Some of the brief’s findings:

- All Best Actress winners since 2002 have been white.
- No winner in any acting category during the last ten years has been Latino, Asian American, or Native American.
- Oscar winners and nominees of color make fewer movies per year after their nominations than their white peers do.
- Oscar winners and nominees of color are more likely than their white peers to work in television, which is considered lower-status work.
- Oscar winners and nominees of color are less likely than their white peers to receive subsequent nominations.
- The Best Supporting Actress category is the most diverse, with women of color constituting 32 percent of the nominees, according to the report.

Despite the depressing findings things are improving. Little by little.

From 1990 through 2000, about 9 percent of the Oscar nominees in the top categories were people of color. From 2002 through 2012, almost 20 percent of nominees were people of color, which is a notable increase.

A recent LA Times investigation found **94% of Academy voters are white.**

[\[http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/02/who_picks_the_oscars_94_of_academy_voters_are_white_77_male.html\]](http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/02/who_picks_the_oscars_94_of_academy_voters_are_white_77_male.html)

A catalyst to increasing the diversity of Oscar nominees would be to increase the diversity in itself.

The report is embedded below.

[CSRC Latino Policy and Issues Brief March2012 \[http://www.scribd.com/doc/82840623/CSRC-Latino-Policy-and-Issues-Brief-March2012\]](http://www.scribd.com/doc/82840623/CSRC-Latino-Policy-and-Issues-Brief-March2012)

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