**AWARDS SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JUNE HARRIS**

Hello everyone and thank you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for that kind introduction. (**Thank the hosts and the members of the committee for selecting you for this award**). I’d also like to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for considering and selecting me for this award. I want to offer sincere congratulations to my three colleagues who share this podium (**spotlight??**) with me tonight. It’s an honor to stand with you all. In many ways, this is a homecoming for me, and has been an opportunity to look back on what we’ve all been through and how, together, we have worked to overcome the injustices of the past. The good news… **NOT REALLY**!!!! … is that there’s so much more to do… gatherings and acknowledgements like this one, remind us of what we have endured….. and tonight, in particular, we honor the work of Reverend James Walker Hood (**please use correct title-he was a minister so this should be okay**), who dedicated his life as a staunch abolitionist, ministering to those determined to fight for the rights and freedoms of our people. Let’s remember the words of Vernon Jordan, who said, “I’m here because I stand on many, many shoulders, and that’s true of every black person I know that has achieved.”

I hope that I do not come off as boastful when I say this: I have received awards from all over the United States in places like Grand Rapids, Michigan, St. Louis, Missouri, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Baltimore Maryland, Los Angeles, California…. You get it…. I’ve been **AROUND**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I also need to clarify something… although I **DO** have some mileage on me, I find it very difficult to talk about myself. I have always, personally, preferred to do the work, dig deep, make a difference, and get on to the next challenge. And not that I ever asked for praise or recognition, but for me, it’s easier to hear someone else say it. By receiving this very generous award, you have spoken and I am humbled.

I have to say, this one is so much more meaningful to me. Do you know why? Because I am at **HOME**. You all are “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, and I am so grateful to be here. This is a true full circle moment.

Sir Isaac Newton reminds us, “If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.” I am proud to stand on the shoulders of our heroes who tirelessly fought for our freedoms, and I am even more proud to offer my shoulders in encouraging insight, wisdom, and action for the future.

Thank you all!!!