



## Queen Latifah: The Hidden Side of the Queen

*Daz Willingham*

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### ABOUT THE BOOK

True to her title, Queen Latifah has long been an influential force in the hip hop music world with a mission to empower women and the African-American community at large. When she first entered the scene as one of the more prominent emcees of the Native Tongues movement (which included A Tribe Called Quest, Dela Soul, and The Jungle Brothers), Latifah offered a powerful counter to the misogynistic images emerging in some of the hip hop albums and videos of the day. Latifah refused to use her sexuality to sell her music. She made her art into a platform that would restore dignity to women and help females to see themselves as more than physical objects. Her songs have become anthems for female empowerment and have won acclaim from major awards organizations, from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to the Grammy Association.

Latifah's rise to mega-stardom began when she crossed over from music to acting, starting with small parts that quickly led to a successful stint on a TV sitcom, then larger, more impressive cinematic roles. Her performance in *Set It Off*, in particular, impressed a number of film studio executives and opened doors to meatier roles for the actress. She began to claim coveted leads that were originally written for very different character "types."

### EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Latifah was a perfect fit. Her uplifting Afrocentrism, unabashed androgyny (which didn't overshadow her femininity), and undeniable poise opened a door for the lyricist. There was no competition for what she brought to the table. She was signed by 1989. The release of her first album, *All Hail The Queen*, took over the streets. To this day, Hip Hop fans smile with fond memory of Queen Latifah's emergence on the scene. Her anti-sexist anthems became popular among urban women. The first of these, "Ladies First," was later recognized among only 500 other songs in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

A grammy nomination, a position on the Billboard Top 10, and a vote for "Best Female Rapper" by Rolling Stone readers made Latifah's impact on Hip Hop quite clear very early on. Queen Latifah could have stopped there, but she pushed forward and proved that she was not a one or two-hit wonder. She was also keen on investing the money she earned musically into her local community. Latifah was a hands-on business woman, and in 1991, she founded her company Flavor Unit.

By 1992, Latifah had traveled the world, but she purchased a New Jersey home for her family so she could see them more often...

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### CHAPTER OUTLINE

Biography of Queen Latifah

+ Introduction

+ Queen Latifah: Background Information

+ Queen Latifah's Major Accomplishments

+ Personal Life  
+ ...and much more

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