

Sidney Poitier, Oscar-winning actor and Hollywood's first Black movie star, dies at 94

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Sidney Poitier, (born February 20, 1927, [Miami, Florida](#), U.S.—died January 6, 2022, Los Angeles, California), Bahamian American actor, director, and producer who broke the colour barrier in the U.S. [motion-picture](#) industry by becoming the first [African American](#) to win an [Academy Award](#) for best actor (for [Lilies of the Field](#) [1963]) and the first Black movie star. He also redefined roles for African Americans by rejecting parts that were based on racial stereotypes.

Poitier was born prematurely in the [United States](#) while his parents were visiting from [The Bahamas](#). While some references give his birth year as 1924, most sources, including Poitier himself, indicate that he was born in 1927. He

grew up on Cat Island, Bahamas, and returned as a teenager to the United States, where he enlisted in the U.S. Army during [World War II](#) and served a brief stint in a medical unit. Upon his discharge, he applied to the [American Negro Theatre](#) (ANT) in [New York City](#). Refused a place because of his accent, he practiced American enunciation while listening to the accents of radio voices and reapplied to ANT six months later. This time he was accepted, and he began studying [acting](#) while appearing in a series of ANT productions. In 1946 he made his [Broadway](#) debut in [Lysistrata](#).