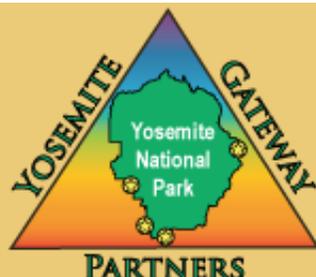


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Yosemite National Park Information

Shelton Johnson Receives Department of Interior Award for Superior Service

Shelton receives this award in recognition of his passion for connecting minorities to parks, his meticulous research that forms the basis of his innovative interpretive programs, and his superlative ability to articulate powerful messages for the National Park Service.

Park Ranger Shelton Johnson may be the National Park Service's most recognizable employee. He is particularly known for bringing the Buffalo Soldiers to life, and for his appearance in the Ken Burns' film *The National Parks*. An employee of the National Park Service since 1987, Ranger Johnson has always been a worldly and articulate advocate for minorities and national parks. His multi-ethnic background and love of national parks magnifies his effectiveness as a messenger.

Shortly after he arrived at Yosemite, Ranger Johnson uncovered the history of the Buffalo Soldiers, an African-American regiment that protected Yosemite. His research is the foundation for his portrayal of Buffalo Soldier Elizy Bowman, and was instrumental in the creation of the Charles Young Buffalo Soldier National Monument. Ranger Johnson's mastery as a storyteller is highlighted in *The National Parks*.

Wearing his park ranger uniform, he described an encounter with bison while delivering the mail one cold winter day in Yellowstone, culminating in the explicit message that experiences in national parks can make "a single moment can last forever", and the implicit message that these experience are available to people of all ethnicities. Because of his role in the film, Ranger Johnson was invited to attend a screening with President Obama.

Ranger Johnson is fearless, taking the initiative to contact Oprah Winfrey, one of the most influential African Americans in the world, and inviting her to camp in Yosemite Valley. Ms. Winfrey accepted, turning the adventure into two segments of her show. His goal was that if more people of color know about the National Parks they would be inspired to visit and thoroughly embrace these national treasures. His letter to Ms. Winfrey convinced her to make it her goal, too.

For all of these reasons, Ranger Shelton Johnson is granted the Superior Service Award of the Department of the Interior.

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