

Suzanne de Passe

May 1994 Calendar

The journey from college dropout to television and film producer does not follow an easy or direct path. For Suzanne de Passe, however, it was a path that led her to two Emmy Awards, a Golden Globe Award and two Academy Award nominations. "In hindsight, it looks like it all fell together beautifully," she said.

De Passe began her career at Motown Records in 1968 as creative assistant to founder and president Berry Gordy. She worked for Motown for more than 20 years in various positions of prestige before establishing her own company, de Passe Entertainment Group, LLC., in 1992.

As vice president of Motown's Creative Division, de Passe was instrumental in developing artists such as Michael Jackson, The Jackson Five, The Commodores and Stephanie Mills; and in 1981, she became Motown's president.

In her role as a writer and producer, de Passe was nominated for an Academy Award for co-writing the screenplay for "Lady Sings the Blues." She won Emmy Awards as executive producer for "Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever" and "Motown Returns to the Apollo." De Passe



Pictured left to right: Barbara de Passe and Suzanne de Passe

served as executive producer of the critically acclaimed, award-winning miniseries "Lonesome Dove" and the long-running series "Sister, Sister" and "Smart Guy."

De Passe is widely recognized for her creative talent and business acumen. She was inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame in 1990, and she is the recipient of an American Women in Radio and Television Silver Satellite Award, Essence Award and Revlon Business Woman of the Year Award, among others.

For de Passe, a consistent and steady influence along her unique life journey was the love and support of her mother, Barbara de Passe. "It didn't dawn on me at the time

how much her support really mattered,” de Passe recalled. “But in subsequent years it manifested as the key element that was a constant for me; to go ahead and what I wanted to, and do my best.”