

Fred Pinkard

Brian Kavanaugh

Fred Pinkard, the son of a farmer, was born January 25, 1920 in Shreveport, Louisiana. In his early 20s he moved to Chicago and worked as a dining car waiter for Pullman. He also began taking acting classes at Columbia College and completed his studies at the University of Minnesota.

After serving in the Navy during World War II, Pinkard returned to Chicago and began his acting career. He, along with Oscar Brown Jr., joined the Black-run theater company the Chicago Negro Theater, and both worked on Richard Durham's radio series *Destination Freedom* on WMAQ 1948-1950. They were reunited in 1999, along with fellow *Destination Freedom* veteran Studs Terkel, in Denver to recreate the episode "Poet of Bronzeville – the Story of Gwendolyn Brooks" in a revival of the series by Donnie L. Betts.

Pinkard left Chicago in the 1950s to pursue a successful stage career, working in New York, Los Angeles and across the country. He also wrote and starred in some one-man plays, including *Thurgood Marshall: Justice, Lift Every Voice*, and *Rehearsal for the Gods*.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1970, Pinkard began appearing in several smaller roles on television and in the movies. Among his credits include the *Mod Squad*, the original *Bill Cosby Show* as Cosby's father, *Seinfeld*, *ER*, *Mad About You*, *NYPD Blue*, *Roc*, *Roots: The Next Generations*, *Rocky II* and many others.

Fred Pinkard died in Los Angeles from a heart attack August 2, 2004. He was survived by his daughter Rita, son Douglas and two grandchildren.

References:

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