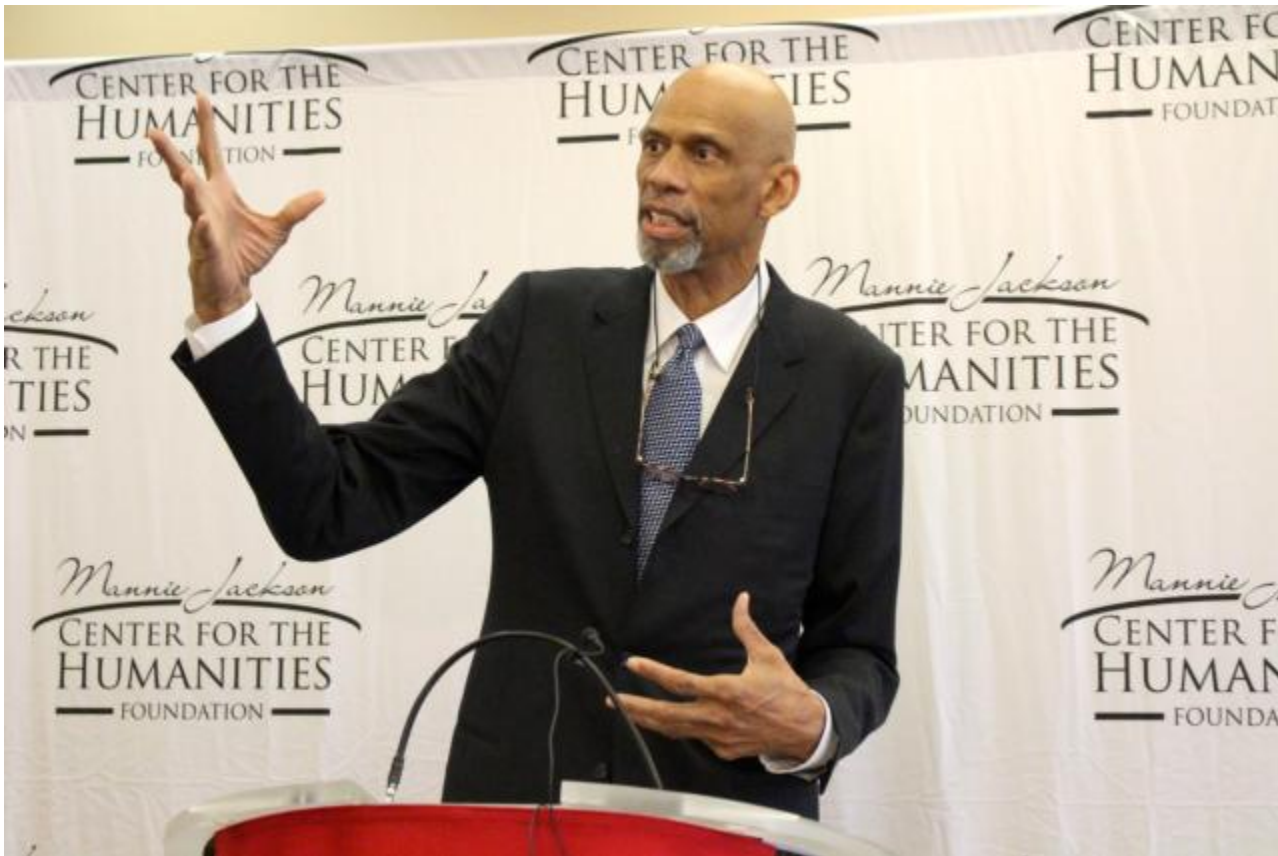
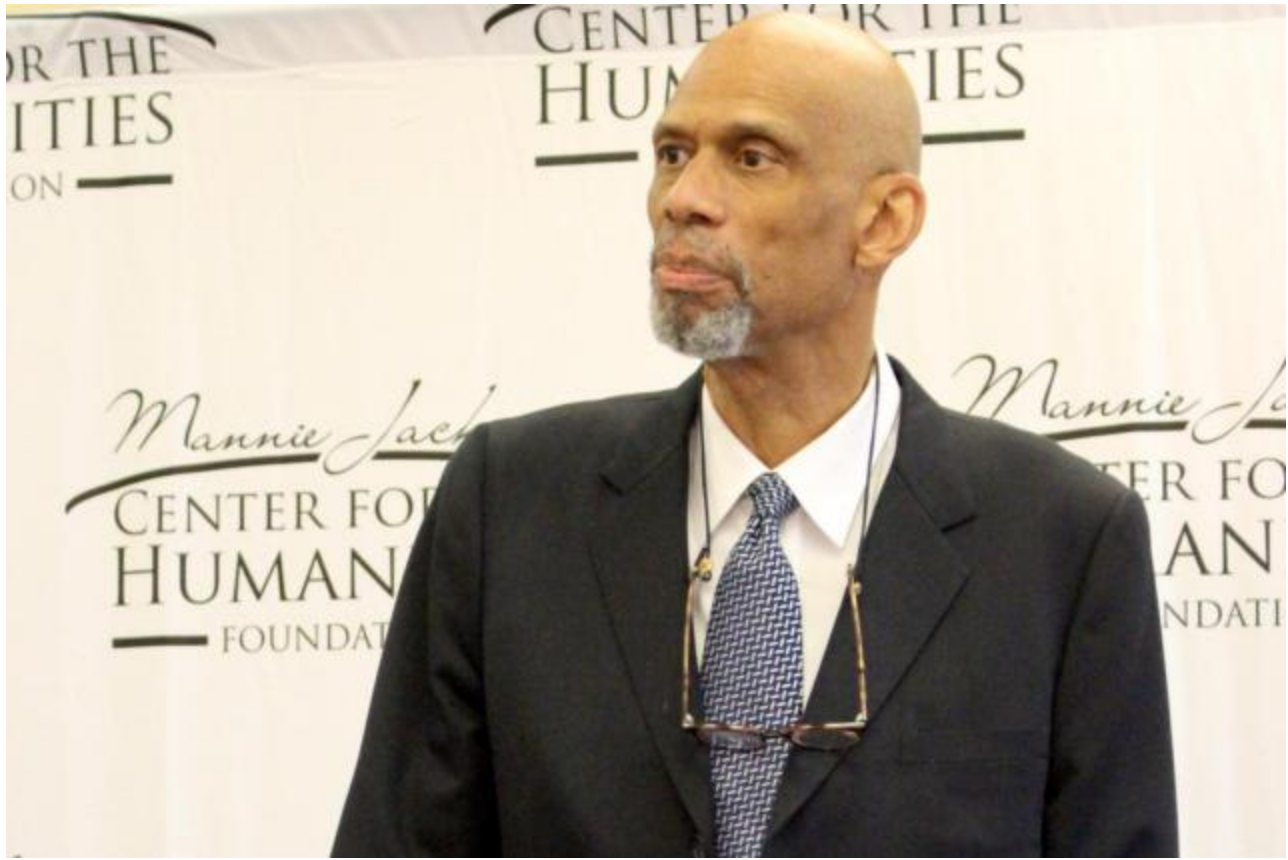


Kareem Abdul-Jabbar highlights lifelong success at Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities fundraiser

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Legendary UCLA and Los Angeles Lakers’ player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar received a warm welcome to the campus of **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**.

The basketball superstar was featured as the guest of honor at Thursday’s highly anticipated fundraiser for **The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities**.

Among the distinguished list of attendees were the center’s namesake and chairman /owner of the Harlem Globetrotters **Mannie Jackson**, MJCH Executive Director **Ed Hightower**, as well as East St. Louis native and retired Olympic track and field superstar **Jackie Joyner-Kersey**.

His athleticism and 7-foot-2 stature is not the only thing that allows Jabbar to stand out in the history of the sport; he has acted in several films, coached the sport he loved, and became a best-selling author. In 2016, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom from **President Barack Obama**.

The following quotations are Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s responses to several questions asked during a press junket before the fundraiser dinner at SIUE:

On speaking as the guest of honor at the fundraiser:

“Mannie has seen some of the things I had written, and he thought it would be good for me to come here this evening.”

On education:

“Education is the key. Getting a complete education and being able to follow through on a career path is the key for anyone to be successful. I always emphasize that because for people who are disadvantaged, especially minorities, this can serve as a way out.”

“A lot of students don’t understand that their stories can make a difference, just like my story made a difference. By trying to stick to it and be successful, I managed to do something with my life. It’s a path everybody goes through and you just have to learn how to go through it.”

On receiving his Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama:

“It was a big thrill. It was very nice to be honored by President Obama. Despite all the hostility and resistance he had toward his presidency, he did an awesome job and I’m proud of the work he did.”

On his activism and building a positive dialogue amidst disagreements:

"When you encounter something that makes you angry, your anger is not unjustified. Bad things will make you angry, but you have to talk about those things and be concerned and let people know your concerns and not the depth of your angers. Intelligent conversations with people who can help you can, and will, change things."

