



## Simone I. Smith to Receive BIJC Rock the Jewels Award at Milestone Event *BIJC and New York City Jewelry Week Celebrate 50 Years of Hip Hop*

**New York, NY – Oct. 2, 2023** – The Black In Jewelry Coalition (BIJC) is honoring Simone I. Smith, an extraordinary entrepreneur, philanthropist, and cancer survivor, with the very first "BIJC Rock the Jewels Award" at the upcoming Rock the Jewels Event on Nov. 16, 2023 as part of New York City Jewelry Week. This award recognizes Smith's contributions to the jewelry industry, her outstanding resilience, philanthropic endeavors and her unwavering support of the Black community.

"I'm excited to be recognized by the BIJC with the first ever Rock The Jewels Award because I absolutely love rockin' jewels. My love for jewelry has allowed me to create and design pieces that make women and men feel good, look good, and build confidence. It's a blessing to lift up and shine a light on others, especially Black and Brown creatives in the jewelry industry. I believe in the power of accessories, especially a big pair of hoops!" said Simone I. Smith.

A 19-year cancer survivor, Smith's journey inspired her to launch Simone I. Smith Jewelry in 2011. The inception of her first design, her signature lollipop pendant "A Sweet Touch of Hope," came after battling stage III chondrosarcoma, a rare bone cancer. The design was inspired by the alteration of her lollipop tattoo during surgery. A full collection followed, with pieces that celebrate Simone's lifelong love of accessories, with a focus on her signature- hoop earrings. In 2018 Smith launched Sister Love, a partnership with Mary J. Blige inspired by their friendship and love of statement jewelry. Majesty for Men is the latest collection in Smith's jewelry empire, a line of men's jewelry inspired by her husband, LL COOL J, which launched earlier this year.

"Congratulations to Simone and the nominees of the inaugural BIJC Awards ceremony. It is paramount to celebrate the achievements of Black professionals and rising talent in the gem and jewelry industry," said Annie Doresca, BIJC President. "This event celebrates luminaries and visionaries whose contributions have been pivotal in our industry's evolution, while underscoring BIJC's commitment to uplift every trailblazer on their journey to success."

In addition to honoring Smith, BIJC will also present awards in four other categories:

**BIJC's Lifetime Achievement Award** recognizes an individual who's had over 20 years of significant impact on the industry and has been a supporter of BIJC.

**BIJC's Behind the Shine Award** recognizes an individual who makes significant contributions to support BIJC and its initiatives behind the scenes. The esteemed nominees for this category include:

- Grace Barretti, Senior Marketing Manager at Greenwich St. Jewelers
- Monalisa DePina, Account Executive at Reed Exhibitions USA
- Anna Samsonova, Founder of Samsonova Consulting

**BIJC's Rising Star Award** acknowledges an up-and-coming designer in the industry. The deserving nominees for this category are:



## BLACK IN JEWELRY COALITION

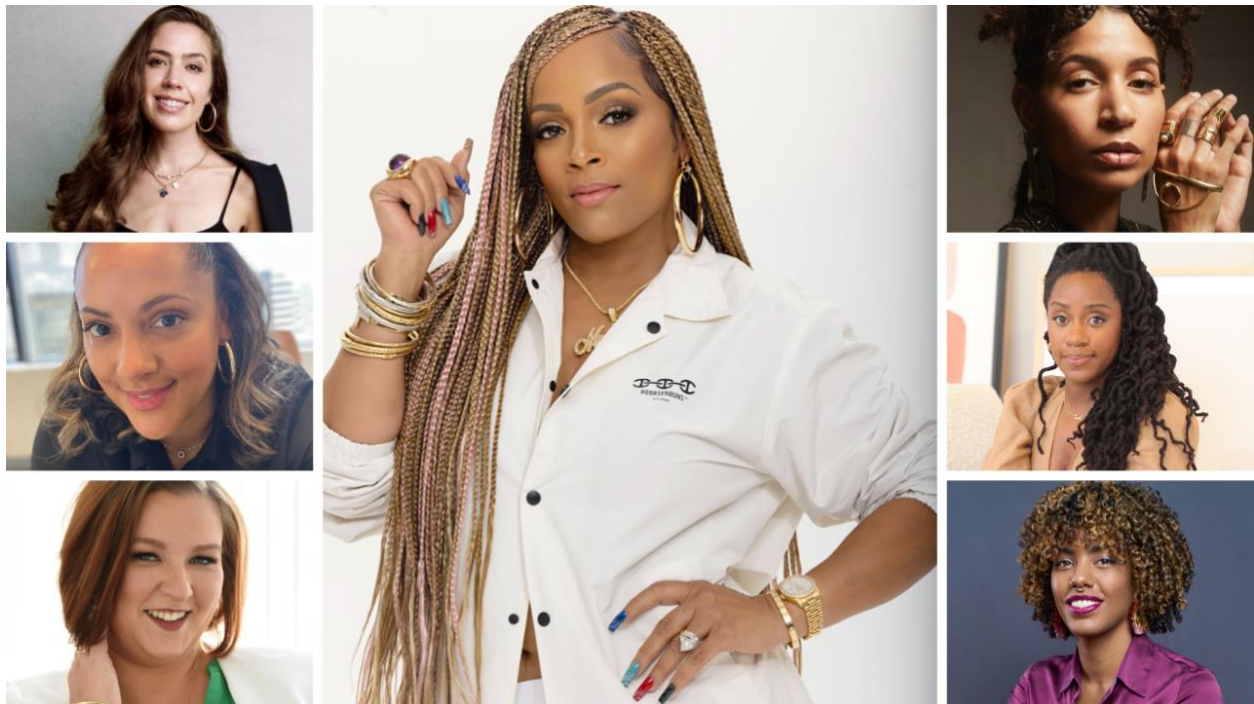
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- Ashley Alexis of Omi Woods
- Jessenia Landrum of Jevela
- Aziza-Abdullah Nicole of Aziza Handcrafted

**BIJC's Shining Together Award** celebrates allies (company and individual) committed to supporting BIJC and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the industry. The esteemed nominees are:

- Greenwich St. Jewelers
- JCK
- Signet Jewelers

The winner of each category will be announced at the event. For more information about the event and to purchase tickets, visit: [BIJCRockTheJewels.com](https://www.bijcrockthejewels.com)



BIJC's Rock the Jewels Award's celebrates luminaries and visionaries whose contributions have shaped the industry and contributed to BIJC's mission. The left column are BIJC's Behind the Shine Award nominees: Grace Barretti, Senior Marketing Manager at Greenwich St. Jewelers; Monalisa DePina, Account Executive at Reed Exhibitions USA; and Anna Samsonova, Founder of Samsonova Consulting. Center is Simone I. Smith, this year's BIJC Rock The Jewels Award recipient. The Right Column are nominees for BIJC's Rising Star Award: Ashley Alexis of Omi Woods; Jessenia Landrum of Jevela; and Aziza-Abdullah Nicole of Aziza Handcrafted. BIJC's Shining Together Award nominees are Signet; JCK; and Greenwich Street Jewelers. The winner of each category and the Lifetime achievement award will be announced at the event.

For any questions or additional information, please reach out to Nellie Barnett at [nbarnett@gia.edu](mailto:nbarnett@gia.edu).



**About BIJC**

Black in Jewelry Coalition strives for the advancement of Black professionals within the gem, jewelry, and watch industry through networking, education, representation and an abundance of resources. We promote change in our industry with the fundamental understanding that by uniting our resources and partnering with allies. We cultivate growth and create opportunities through an alliance that is for us, by us. Our strategies include providing tools and resources for professional success and growth, and increasing industry representation through heightened awareness, networking and recruiting.

**About Simone I. Smith**

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Simone I. Smith founded her eponymous jewelry collection in 2011. Inspired by her journey as a cancer survivor, her first design became her signature lollipop pendant, “A Sweet Touch of Hope,” which was followed by hoop earrings, bangles, necklaces and rings. Through her partnership with the American Cancer Society, she donates a portion of proceeds from each sale to the ongoing fight against the disease. In 2018, Smith joined forces with Grammy Award winner and Oscar nominee, Mary J. Blige to launch Sister Love, a jewelry line inspired by their friendship and love of statement jewelry. 2022 marked the launch of S.I.S. Luxe Lacquer, a 10-free nail polish collection as well as the launch of both a men’s and women’s signature collection for Walmart. Since then, Simone has expanded her men’s reach with King by Simone I. Smith, sold exclusively at Daniel’s Jewelers and Majesty by Simone I. Smith, a high end men’s line sold exclusively at [www.simoneismith.com](http://www.simoneismith.com).

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