TV viewers still love Eartha Kitt as the sexy, purring Catwoman on Batman in the ‘60s. Younger moviegoers fell in love with her as the cosmetics industry mogul who in 1992 seduced Eddie Murphy’s character (“Marcus, darling”) in Boomerang. Her Christmas classic “Santa Baby” continues to be a holiday favorite. Kitt, 81, spoke out against the Vietnam War during a 1968 White House luncheon hosted by Lady Bird Johnson. For a decade, she could not find work in the U.S. and had to make a living in Europe.

**EBONY:** Have Black actresses made progress?
*Kitt:* I asked a beautiful Brown actress were things better for Black women, and she said it was very subtle, but it was not better. It is still a struggle for Black actresses. I see however, many more Black women today than I did when I was a kid or when I was in the movies in Hollywood.

**EBONY:** How do you feel about getting older?
*Kitt:* I love aging. It’s a wonderfully beautiful process in life. I also don’t believe in plastic surgery. I don’t see any reason why I should chop up my face. It’s not for me. Let nature take its course.

**EBONY:** You were diagnosed with colon cancer several years ago. How are you coming along?
*Kitt:* I am fine. We women often feel that we are too busy to have that colonoscopy, but it is absolutely necessary. Get that colonoscopy. It tells you exactly what is going on.

**EBONY:** Looking back over your life, do you have any regrets?
*Kitt:* After the luncheon at the White House, Dr. Martin Luther King called me. I don’t remember exactly what his words were, but he said, ‘I would like to recommend you for the Nobel Peace Prize.’ And I laughed and said, ‘Come on, I don’t like what you are doing.’ And I hung up the phone. And it turned out to really be Martin Luther King. I thought it was somebody playing a joke on me. I was so ashamed. I wished I could have called him back. I was crying at his funeral, not only because he was gone but also because I didn’t believe the phone call. But I do have a telegram from him that said he admires my courage.

**EBONY:** How would you like to be remembered?
*Kitt:* I stayed on my own path and did not follow the herd. I made a way for myself. —Clarence Waldron

**ABOUT EARTHA:**
**Born:** Eartha Mae Kitt was born in 1927 on a cotton plantation in South Carolina and was abandoned by her White father and Black mother.
**Big Break:** Dancer with the Katherine Dunham Dance Company in 1946.
**Passion:** Helping inner-city kids with her Kittsville Youth Foundation in Los Angeles.
**What’s Next?** “PBS television special, The HistoryMakers Presents An Evening With Eartha Kitt,” filmed in Chicago and set to air in February.