

# Rock on

## 'Oprah's Big Give' shines spotlight on comic's wife

By DEBORAH STARR SEIBEL

**S**HE may be the only person on reality television who doesn't want to be a star. Malaak Compton-Rock, Chris Rock's wife and one of three judges on ABC's "Oprah's Big Give," says that when Winfrey telephoned her at home in Alpine, New Jersey, to ask her to be on the show, she was ready to hand the phone to her husband.

"It was a Thursday evening," recalls Compton-Rock. "You remember these things when you get this kind of exciting call. I was putting my children to bed. I assumed that she was calling for my husband."

But Ms. Winfrey, who has turned her predilection for big and small acts of kindness into a hit reality series, wanted the missus, who had been featured on her show and in her magazine numerous times for her nonprofit work.

Compton-Rock, 38, has had a long association with UNICEF and also developed StyleWorks, a Brooklyn-based organization that helps women on welfare get back on their feet and into the workforce.

"My mother always told me, 'To whom much is given, much is required,'" says Compton-Rock. But TV hosting was not on the list of things to do.

"It was difficult because I had to conquer a fear of the unknown," she says. "And TV people talk in a different language. The camera people, the producers, they speak in acronyms. So I was constantly saying: 'Could you say that in English?'"

Still, Compton-Rock believes that "Oprah's Big Give" has given her life dimension. While in Atlanta, she spent time at a community center for the elderly.

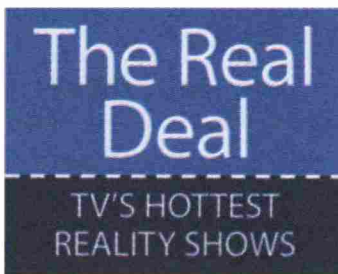
"That's one area I've never

worked with and it made a huge



Malaak Compton-Rock developed Brooklyn-based StyleWorks.

impact on me," she says. "I sat down at a table where women from the ages of 75 to 95 were making a quilt, and they started



to teach me. I was surrounded by my elders who had so much knowledge and they were trying to pass down a craft.

"I confessed to the producers when I came back from the challenge that I almost forgot I was a judge," she says.

And now, a reluctant star. Says Compton-Rock, "A child from my daughter's tennis class who's probably six or seven years old said, 'I used to think your husband was the famous one. But now, you're my hero.'"

