

# 'House of Payne' Filmmaker Answers Critics

## Honored for creating shows on his own terms

(AP) — Tyler Perry has gotten plenty of criticism from those who feel his popular movies like "Madea's Family Reunion" border on buffoonery and don't reflect well on the black community.

But last week, the filmmaker was honored by the Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network. The civil rights leader lashed out at Perry's black detractors, calling them "proper Negroes" who don't understand regular black folk.

"This man never apologized for who we were," said Sharpton, at his second annual Triumph Awards.

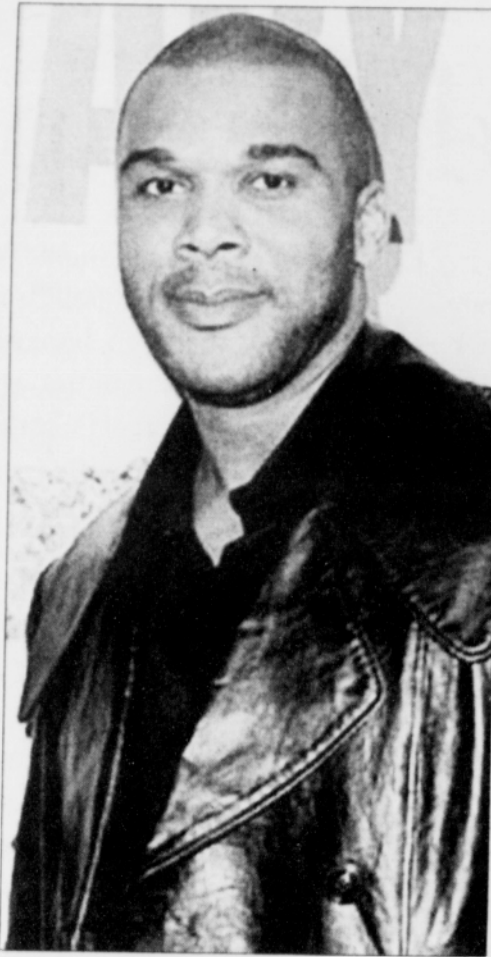
Sharpton said Perry has given work to many black actors who

have been ignored by Hollywood, and has created an empire on his own terms: "The ultimate pride is where you don't have to bend and adjust for others to accept you. ... He didn't go mainstream, he brought mainstream to us."

Perry writes, directs and produces his films and sometimes stars in them; he's best known for his Madea character, the foul-mouthed, sassy grandmother who has appeared in many of his movies.

He is also responsible for the TBS comedy show "House of Payne."

But Perry's films rarely get critical acclaim, and some in the black community have accused him of perpetuating stereotypes.



Tyler Perry

Perry acknowledged his detractors as he thanked Sharpton for the award.

"When you start out and you're doing things and you're trying to do the right things, and you find these attacks happening, and you try and figure out, 'How do you handle this? How do you deal with this? How do you go there?' So to have someone like you who has done all that you have done ... and have inspired and encouraged and fought for so many people, to stand here and to give me this award, this is really, really awesome," Perry said.

Perry said black people first gave him success, and he has sought to tell his community's stories. He accused his critics of trying to remove themselves from their roots.

"I stayed with who we are, and what I wish I could get us to understand as a people is that instead of getting your education and running from us,

you need to ground and root yourself in who we are. Every other culture in this country knows the value of us as black people but we don't know it ourselves," he said.

"Somebody said to me about the 'House of Payne,' 'Why do you have fat black people on television?' Because there are fat black people in the world. It's not a stereotype. This is who we are, we need to stop running from our parents and our grandparents and our uncles, we need to stop running from them and embrace them."

Perry said his Madea character is silly, but said his films have important messages.

After his speech, Sharpton announced that Perry had given the National Action Network a \$200,000 donation, to which Sharpton exclaimed Madea's familiar phrase: "Hallelujah!"

## Margaret Carter Building Dedicated

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land campus, greeted the audience to a "momentous occasion" in the renaming of the Technical Education Building to the Margaret Carter Technology Education Building.

As the first African-American woman elected to Oregon Legislature, Carter has remained a tireless advocate for higher education among underrepresented communities in north and northeast Portland.

Gleaming in a cerulean blue dress, the grandmother and great-grandmother listened on stage as special guests spoke to her esteemed honor.

A performance of "You raise

me up," by three former PCC students underscored the retired senator's lifelong efforts to "lift up" local residents by ensuring funds for the community college.

Rev. Dr. T. Allen Bethel began the story of her remarkable journey in 1967 as she stepped off a bus in northeast Portland from native Louisiana, fleeing an abusive relationship with five young daughters in tow.

With nowhere to stay, no friends, and no more than a hundred dollars to her name, Carter went on to graduate from Oregon State University and began a life-long relationship with PCC Cascade as an intern in 1973. She was hired a year

later as a counselor and psychology teacher.

Gov. John Kitzhaber remembered the historical session Carter was elected to the Oregon House in 1984 as one of his favorites. He commended Carter for a strong ethic that reminded lawmakers to be inclusive to all Oregonians, not just their political parties.

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer recognized the large "rainbow audience" attending the dedication, and how such a crowd could only turn out to see the woman who represents it. Many politicians cited Carter's persistent, even occasionally "annoying" advocacy to ensure legislative funding for her educa-

tion programs.

Tamiko Phillips, Carter's granddaughter and a PCC Margaret Carter Skills Center graduate, said that her grandmother was the root from which education in her family was promoted, as a path to economic and social success. As a single parent, Phillips will graduate with a Master's degree in Psychology.

When it was her turn to speak, Carter thanked family, friends, fans and the college, "I accept with grace, the grace of my mother, and education for lifting one self up," she said. "These young people are working hard and studying hard and keeping the dreams alive through

institutions like PCC."

Then, embodying the persistence admired by colleagues, Carter said the scholarship to be left in her name was a few dollars short. Like an auctioneer she enlivened the crowd with a spontaneous pledge drive, and asked for donations from everyone, from those wearing grand suits to student chaperones.

Family members, friends, business partners, church preachers, and even college students stood up and offered \$50 to \$500 as Carter's granddaughter jotted down pledges' names.

Before long, over \$10,000 dollars had been raised, "How many families do we have to care for?" asked Carter. "This will afford some of these people to go to school."



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