

Celebrity

continued from page 7

has donated generously to the NAACP. In January 2010, he pledged \$1,000,000 via The Tyler Perry Foundation to help rebuild the lives of those affected by the recent earthquakes in Haiti.

Obviously, Tyler practices what he preaches, and what he preaches has endeared him to millions of fans drawn by that unique blend of spiritual hope and down-home humor that continues to shape his inspiring life story and extraordinary body of work. Here, he talks about his new film, *Good Deeds*, a relationship drama which he wrote, directed and stars in opposite an A-list cast which includes Thandie Newton, Gabrielle Union, Phylicia Rashad, Rebecca Romijn, Jamie Kennedy, Beverly Johnson and Brian White.

Kam Williams: Hi Tyler, thanks for the interview.

Tyler Perry: No worries.

KW: Do you care to comment about the passing of Whitney Houston?

TP: [Pauses to collect himself] Kam, I can't... I'm actually just trying to find a way to get through the day today... [Hesitates] Nobody knows this, but I was very close to... [Chokes up] Sorry... I can't... No offense to you, Kam.

KW: I understand completely. I have a lot of other questions for you from fans. Harriet Pakula Teweles says: *Good Deeds* is a unique film for you in that the story revolves around an issue in your character's life. She was wondering how you came up with the idea for the story? She points out that this is a film about a "defining moment," so she's wondering whether it was inspired by such a moment in your life or career that you'd like to share?

TP: Yeah, for me, it was a question of just reflecting at 40 that I was very grateful that I had followed my own voice. So, that led me to my own path and I listened to outside influences. *Good Deeds* is a story about a guy who had always done what he was told to do but never what he wanted to do until his defining moment arrives when someone comes along who helps open his eyes. I've had a few of those moments in my own life like when during a job interview I was told, "You don't complete anything. Your appli-

cation isn't even complete." And right at that moment, I realized I had to become a finisher, and see every task through to completion.

KW: Harriet observed that there are a number of actors and actresses you've collaborated with several times in film and/or TV. Is there a Tyler Perry acting ensemble?

TP: I'd say I'm open to anybody. I'm very open to fresh talent, and I love the underdog, people who have been counted out, because they come in with a different type of hunger. For instance, nobody would give the members of the cast of *House of Payne* a shot on TV, period. Yet, here they are with already more episodes than any other sitcom in history except *Leave It to Beaver*. I'm all for the underdog, so I'd like to talk to anybody who shows up with that sort of thirst.

KW: Harriet also asks: How do you use music to advance the message, mood and momentum of the movie?

TP: Just as we do in life. There's always a soundtrack playing in the background

Live your own truth, live the life that God has put you and nobody else on this Earth to live and not what somebody might be telling you to live.

somewhere. Growing up, there was always music around, whether across the street, or on the next-door neighbor's stereo. So, as in life, music is always around, and it helps to heighten any emotion. Music is amazing.

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turnier asks: What message do you want people to take away from the film?

TP: Just that life is but a moment. Life is so precious, such a gift, and that you have to live for you. Live your own truth, live the life that God has put you and nobody else on this Earth to live and not what somebody might be telling you to live.



Wesley Deeds (Tyler Perry) and Natalie (Gabrielle Union) in "Tyler Perry's Good Deeds." Photo credit: Quantrell Colbert

KW: Film student Jamaal Green says: There are so many of us who admire what you have created and achieved and would like to follow in your footsteps. In the spirit of helping the next generation of successful African-American artists do you

pany called 34th Street Films just to filter and to look for fresh talent with new ideas. Although I have so many ideas of my own, I'm still very interested in helping to cultivate and encourage some promising new artists. But there are a lot of people and, unfortunately, a very small window.

KW: Filmmaker Kevin Williams says: I consider you to be the best example of complete persistence and belief in one's self. I always try to remind myself of what you, J.K. Rowling, Sylvester Stallone and others went through when almost no one believed in them. Many of us struggle in the start of our career with self-doubt. How did you motivate yourself in your early days before others recognized your talent and saw your potential?

TP: I would always feed myself positivity, from the Church to prayer to Gospel music to the Bible. Even to this day, I turn to anything that teaches good, that teaches strength, and that you can make it. I swear to you that those kinds of thoughts come alive in your body and in anything you touch because your energy goes into everything you touch, everything you share and everything you speak. So, it's most important that you surround yourself with positivity always, and have it in your mind at all times.

KW: Larry Greenberg says: Now that you have truly mastered the realms of theater, film and television, do you have any interest in getting into video games?

TP: Video games? That's a pretty interesting question. If you're just getting into video games at 42, that might be a little late.

have a mentoring program for aspiring young black filmmakers?

TP: Jamal, right now, we're in the process of expanding the studio from 5 soundstages to 15. Once they're done, there will be a 1200-seat theater where I intend to open up classes and courses, and even host an annual festival in Atlanta where folks can come and be inspired and encouraged and get some information about how to be in the business.

KW: Professor/director/author Hisani Dubose says: Since there are so few African-Americans of your stature in entertainment, I know you must be inundated with requests from people wanting to get their projects off the ground. I know because at least 100 people have asked me if I've sent my scripts to you. How do you handle this pressure?

TP: Respectfully, because I know I can only do as much as I can do. I started a com-

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com



The Skanner News believes that the news is an essential form of education.

To know what's happening helps you understand how current situations affects your community and neighborhood.

Learn on *The Skanner.com* how to translate the garbled language of government and politics to get to the real story.

Getting to know what's happening will make the difference between

moving forward and moving backward.

Read *The Skanner.com* to increase your knowledge and understanding and get the power.



WM GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

Hiring fair and information night



Waste Management is proposing to bring 45 greentech jobs to North Portland. Come learn about this exciting new technology.

- Applications will be accepted for supervisor and equipment operator positions
- High school diploma or GED required; associate degree in electrical or mechanical engineering preferred for some positions
- Job descriptions at wmgreentech.com
- Questions? Go to wmgreentech.com



THINK GREEN!