

## Anthony Anderson hosts NAACP Image Awards

Written by Kam Williams

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Accomplished actor Anthony Anderson has appeared in over 20 films, and his stellar work on NBC's "Law & Order" earned him three of his eight NAACP Image Award nominations. Prior to launching his acting career, Anthony grew up in Los Angeles and attended the High School for the Performing Arts, where he earned first place in the NAACP's ACTSO Awards with his performance of a classic monologue from "The Great White Hope." That performance, along with his dedication to his craft, earned him an arts scholarship to Howard University. He first gained national attention as one of Jim Carrey's sons in "Me, Myself, & Irene." Over the years, Anthony has displayed his range of talent in everything from "Transformers" to Martin Scorsese's Best Oscar Oscar-winning feature film, "The Departed."

His additional feature films include "Scary Movie 3," "Barbershop," "Kangaroo Jack," "Exit Wounds," "Cradle 2 the Grave," "Two Can Play That Game" and "Malibu's Most Wanted." He starred opposite Eddie Griffin and Michael Imperioli in "My Baby's Daddy," alongside Frankie Muniz in "Agent Cody Banks 2" and enjoyed a cameo in "Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle."

Anthony brought his talent and humor to the small screen in his own sitcom, "All about the Andersons," which was loosely based on his life. He appeared in the police-drama television series, "The Shield," opposite Michael Chiklis and Glenn Close, and starred in the New Orleans-based drama "K-ville."

Anthony is currently starring on three TV series, "Guys with Kids," "Treme" and "Golf in America," and lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Alvina, and their two children. Here he talks about hosting the United Negro College Fund's 34th Annual "An Evening of Stars."

Kam Williams: How ya' been, Anthony? It's great to have another opportunity to speak with you.  
Anthony Anderson: Hey, Kam. I'm alright.

KW: I wanted to say congratulations on your eighth NAACP Image Award nomination, this time for Outstanding Actor in a Comedy TV Series for "Guys with Kids." You got my vote again, as a member of the nominating committee.

AA: Thank you. Maybe one day I'll win one.

KW: What interested you in hosting the UNCF's Evening of Stars?

AA: You know what, they reached out to me to host, and I couldn't turn them down. I'd grown up watching the show with my parents every year back when it was hosted by Lou Rawls. We didn't have much money at all, but my folks always found a way to give a little. And now, here I am 30 years later with a \$25,000 United Negro College Fund scholarship in my name. That's something that interested me as well.

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KW: Will that scholarship specifically go to a student at your alma mater, Howard University?

AA: No, I didn't want them to think I was biased, even though I am. I haven't figured out whether we're going to give it all to a single student, or break it and give it to five different students.

KW: What did attending Howard University meant to you?

AA: It meant everything. This is the sort of creative energy you could find on campus when I was a student there: Paula Jai Parker, Wendy Raquel Robinson, Wendy Davis, Carl Anthony Payne, Sean P. Diddy Combs, Ananda Lewis, Laz Alonso, Lance Gross, the music of the group Shai, and the list goes on and on. We were all there at the same time. For all of us to then go off in our respective fields independently of one another and become successes can't even be quantified.

KW: What are the major challenges facing the Historically Black Colleges and Universities today? Is there any truth to the rumor that they are having a hard time finding black male students?

AA: I would assume so, and I say that because only about 5% of African-Americans who graduate from high school are college ready. And only 28% of that 5% eventually graduate from college with a bachelor's degree. You asked specifically about African-American males. When I was in college, the ratio was 7 females for every male on campus. So, that's been the case for a long time, but I don't know what the reason is for that drastic difference.

KW: You're currently starring on the series "Guys with Kids" and "Treme," as well as hosting "Golf in America." How do you manage to juggle all that?

AA: They all shoot in different locations but at different times, fortunately. So, I've been able to work everything out.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

AA: No. Why do you have one in mind?

KW: Nope.

AA: Let me think... Nobody's ever asked me, "If you could have a superpower, which would you choose?" I'd like to have the ability to make money whenever I need it. [Laughs] What I'd really like is to be able to fly because I love freedom, and being able to do what I want to do when I want to do it.

KW: The Michael Ealy question: If you could meet any historical figure, who would it be?

AA: Hmm, that's a good one! Dr. Martin Luther King and Abraham Lincoln.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

AA: Another good one! Happiness is a state of mind. Most people automatically assume that we're happy because we're famous and some of us are rich. But material things don't make you happy. And the more success you achieve only amplifies who you are as a person. If you're miserable, you're just going to be miserable and rich and famous. I know people like that. I have friends who are that way.

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KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

AA: Late night Taco Bell.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

AA: 50 Shades of Grey.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/034580404X/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What was the last song you listened to?

AA: "My Life Would Suck without You" by Kelly Clarkson.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B0031W598C/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

AA: That's hard for me to say, because I'm a chef. I'm going to have to say Oxtail Stew.

Cooking is one of my passions. I'm a judge on the Food Network's "Iron Chef America," and I'm competing on "Chopped" next month.

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

AA: Woody Wilson. He's my personal tailor.

KW: Dante Lee, author of "Black Business Secrets," asks: What was the best business decision you ever made?

AA: To buy my first home.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

AA: It's interesting that you should ask that question because I've been staring at myself in this dressing room mirror as we have this conversation with one another. Here's the things that have been running through my mind: both success and failure, because I couldn't appreciate the success that I'm enjoying now without the failures that I experienced before them.

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

AA: To end world hunger.

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

AA: Being fed by my grandmother as an infant.

KW: The Jamie Foxx question: If you only had 24 hours to live, what would you do? Would you do the bad stuff, you never got a chance to do, or would you do good stuff to make sure you make it into heaven?

AA: Wow! [Whispers] I've done a lot of bad, Kam, and I've enjoyed doing those bad things. [Resumes normal voice] But I'm also a spiritual person and I believe I'm going to heaven anyway, because I've asked for forgiveness for my sins. So, if I only had 24 hours to live, I'd just spend it with my loved ones doing nothing yet everything.

KW: The Kerry Washington question: If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

AA: A lion.

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KW: The Pastor Alex Kendrick question: When do you feel the most content?

AA: Hmm... On my couch in my family room.

KW: The Toure question: Who is the person who led you to become the person you are today?

AA: It started with Mrs. Kpodo, my fourth grade teacher.

KW: The Judyth Piazza question: What key quality do you believe all successful people share?

AA: A passion for what it is they do.

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

AA: Never let anyone else determine your self-worth.

KW: The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?

AA: Hmm... As someone who cared, as someone who loved, and as someone who believed in others.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Anthony, and best of luck with all your endeavors.

AA: Thank you Kam, I appreciate that. Alright brother, have a good one.

The 34th Annual UNCF: An Evening of Stars premiered on BET-TV on January 27th. Check local listings for future re-airings of the program.