

A group of approximately 15 Black men are posed in front of a large, illuminated 'SAG' sign. The men are dressed in formal attire, including suits, tuxedos, and a white shirt with a hat. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a dark, wood-paneled wall with a door and some framed photos.

# BLACK MEN IN HOLLYWOOD

THESE BELOVED BROTHERS HAVE GIVEN US SOME OF OUR PROUDEST MOMENTS, BOTH ON-SCREEN AND BEHIND THE CAMERA. HERE WE SAY "THANK YOU" FOR REPRESENTING US ALL SO WELL

BY CORI MURRAY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KWAKU ALSTON



**O**ne rainy night last February a few notable men gathered at a private house high in the Hollywood Hills filled with every white flower imaginable. The occasion? The Black Men in Hollywood dinner. It was a first for ESSENCE—a celebration of 2013’s cinematic achievements by our gifted brothers. Tyler Perry, our gracious host, welcomed everyone like family. The honorees, in addition to Perry, were Ryan Coogler, Lee Daniels, Malcolm D. Lee, Spike Lee, Steve McQueen,

Forest Whitaker and Sidney Poitier. The first Black man to win an Oscar, Poitier received a special Legends Award. In his acceptance speech the 87-year-old icon focused not on his own career but on the work of the Black actors and actresses who had come before him. “We owe them so much more than we can pay,” Poitier eloquently noted.

The Hollywood influencers and entertainment leaders in attendance were visibly moved, from groundbreaking directors John Singleton and Salim Akil to critically acclaimed actors David Oyelowo and Isaiah Washington to

rising stars Jacob Latimore and Terrence Jenkins to rainmakers Charles King and Reginald Hudlin. Although this affair was historic, the evening’s message was clear: Continue the progress. Keep fighting for our stories to be told; keep pushing for our voices to be heard. And, as Perry remarked, drawing from personal experience: “If being the only Black person in the room isn’t good enough, well, make moves to own that room.”

**For the names of the men in this picture, see page 130.**

**▶ TABLET EXTRAS** Watch video from our Black Men in Hollywood event.