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# 'Precious' wins big at 41st NAACP Image Awards

LOS ANGELES: It was a winning night for "Precious" at the 41st NAACP Image Awards.

The heart-wrenching tale of an illiterate and abused teen who finds hope in a Harlem classroom was named outstanding motion picture and outstanding independent film at Friday's ceremony. Stars Mo'Nique and Gabourey Sidibe, screenwriter Geoffrey Fletcher and director Lee Daniels also won.

Daniels excitedly accepted the best-picture prize, surrounded by his cast and fellow producers.

"No one in Hollywood told me they wanted to see a movie about a 350-pound black woman with HIV," he said.

Sidibe objected, and Daniels corrected himself: "She's not 350 pounds. This was before you were hired."

The director twice told the orchestra to stop playing him off, but Daniels was ultimately cut off as gospel duo Mary Mary took the stage and the show came to a close.

Presented by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Image Awards honor diversity in the arts and outstanding achievements in film, television, music and literature.

Sidibe cried as she accepted the award for outstanding actress in a motion picture for her starring turn as Precious, the overweight, twice-pregnant teen who discovers her self-worth through reading and writing.

"It's so awesome to win! I love winning," said the Oscar nominee, who made her acting debut with this film. "I want to thank my God for ordering my steps, for everything that my life was and everything that it is now."

Fellow Oscar nominee Mo'Nique, who has swept the supporting actress prize throughout Hollywood's awards season for her moving turn as abusive mother Mary Jones, added another trophy to her collection with the Image Award for her role in "Precious."

"For all the Mary Joneses, I love you unconditionally, baby," she said. "For all the Preciouses, I love you unconditionally. Let's start loving each other again."

Other winners Friday included Keri Hilson, Maxwell, "Brothers" star Daryl "Chill" Mitchell and Chris Rock.

Hilson was named outstanding new artist, Maxwell won for male artist, Mitchell took the award for actor in a comedy series and Rock accepted the documentary award for his film "Good Hair."

Mitchell was moved to tears as he accepted his trophy.

"As long as you all got legs, I'm going to always walk," the wheelchair-bound actor said. Rock said he wasn't prepared for his documentary win.

"I made this movie just for black people," he said. "I've seen a lot of documentaries, and I said I want the blackest movie of all time."

Tyler Perry was honored with the Chairman's Award for his philanthropy and career achievements. Wyclef Jean received the Vanguard Award for raising funds and cultural awareness after the earthquake in Haiti. Human-rights activist Van Jones received the President's Award.

Music mogul Clarence Avant was inducted into the Image Awards Hall of Fame at the ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium, which was hosted by Anika Noni Rose and Hill Harper and broadcast live on Fox.