THE
GRIFFIN AWARDS

08 APRIL 2017

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD

Presented to

PERRY HENZELL

As a pioneer in advertising, television production, film and a noted novelist, your multidimensional contributions to Jamaican cultural expression are unique and powerful. Your masterwork, The Harder They Come, is a timeless symbol of our peoples' indomitable spirit. We proudly salute you as a true Jamaican icon.

JAMAICA COLLEGE OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.

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MR. PERRY HENZEL, OJ

FILM DIRECTOR & WRITER

Perry Henzell was born in Annotto Bay, Jamaica, on 07 March 1936. He attended Jamaica College and at 14 was sent to the Shrewsbury School in England. Henzell briefly attended McGill University in Montreal before launching his career in television in London with a job shifting scenery at the BBC, where he worked his way up to floor manager.

In 1959, learning that television was about to start up in Jamaica, he returned to the island. There he set up Vista Productions, which over the next decade made hundreds of commercials, honing his directing skills.

By 1969 Henzell was ready to begin filming his first feature. Funded by friends and family The Harder They Come was not finally completed until 1972, shot at weekends or in one or two-week bursts.

After the success of "The Harder They Come," Henzell fielded directing offers from Hollywood. But he turned them down, preferring to retain complete creative control and stick with his brand of filmmaking.

During the 1980s, he worked on numerous screenplays and directed a full-scale musical on the life of Marcus Garvey to celebrate Garveyâ€™s centenary. His first novel was the political thriller Power Game, which was published in 1982. The second novel, Cane, a historical drama, was published in 2003. He also wrote the book for a musical theater version of 'The Harder They Come', which opened in London in March 2006 to critical acclaim and box-office success.

Around the same time as Henzell's cancer was first diagnosed, a forgotten print of 'No Place Like Home' [his second feature film] turned up in New York - one of the actors happened to be a young Grace Jones. After some technical corrections and a final edit, the long-lost movie premiered to a responsive audience at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2006, with a delightful Henzell in attendance.

Henzell died in Treasure Beach on 30 November 2006. The Jamaican premiere of 'No Place Like Home' was held the day after his death.