

Co-star says 'Chappelle's Show' effectively finished

NEW YORK (AP) - Time to face the facts: Dave Chappelle's hit Comedy Central series isn't coming back, says one of its stars. "'Chappelle's Show' is over, man. Done," comic Charlie Murphy told TV Guide. "It took me a long time to be able to say those words, but I can say it pretty easy now, because it's the truth."

Chappelle's sudden "spiritual retreat" to South Africa on the eve of his show's third season has left the series in limbo since May. About half of a new season had been filmed before

Chappelle left, Murphy said.

"I'm disappointed it ended the way it did, but I'm not angry with anybody," he said. "'Chappelle's Show' was like the Tupac of TV shows. It came out, it got everybody's attention, it was a bright shining star, but it burned out and for some strange reason, it burned out quick."

Comedy Central has always said the door is open for Chappelle to return, spokeswoman Aileen Budow said Wednesday.

Network chief Doug Herzog met with Chappelle

on June 3, but that has been their last communication, she said.

Murphy, the older brother of comic Eddie Murphy said his two seasons with Chappelle made him a star.

"Now I can go out and do stand-up," he said. "I'm getting movie offers. It's off the hook. Me getting to the next level or whatever's going to happen is going to come from the next things I do, but 'Chappelle's Show' served its purpose, and I'll always be grateful."

Pryor's wife: Having MS spared husband's life

PEORIA, Ill. (AP) - Instead of packed arenas, comedian Richard Pryor now tours medical clinics. Instead of applause, he gets eight checkups a month in what his wife jokingly calls "the round robin of doctors."

Still, Jennifer Lee Pryor says her husband's crippling multiple sclerosis is a blessing that stripped away his taste for the drugs and alcohol she was convinced would have left him dead. Today, he's just months shy of his 65th birthday.

Nearly two decades with the disease has left Pryor in a wheelchair and out of the public eye, long after his expletive-laced stand-up act spawned dozens of movies

and made the Peoria native box office magic through much of the late 1970s and early '80s. Now, Pryor — who has also suffered three heart attacks — spends most of his time at his home near Encino, Calif., with two rescued dogs and Jennifer, his fifth wife. The couple divorced after a brief marriage in the early 1980s but remarried in 2001.

Entertainers from Bob Newhart to Chris Rock cite Pryor as one of the most influential comedians ever. "As productive and brilliant as he was, he was also self-destructive," she said in a telephone interview. "He said God gave him MS to slow him down. This disease saved his life."

Met Opera's first Black singer dies

NEW YORK (AP) - Helen L. Phillips, a soprano who broke the color barrier at the Metropolitan Opera seven years before Marian Anderson's historic debut, has died at 86.

Phillips died of heart failure July 27 at New York's Isabella Geriatric Center, her nurse there said.

Although the New York opera house had no formal policy barring singers of any race from appearing on its stage, Phillips became the first Black chorister when she was hired as an extra for the 1947-48 season, said Met archivist Jeff McMillan.

She sang only a handful of performances, he said. In 1955, Marian Anderson became the first Black singer to perform a major role at the Met. Anderson, a contralto, portrayed Ulrica in Verdi's "A Masked Ball."

A native of St. Louis who graduated from Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Phillips went on to build a career as a soloist in the early 1950s. She sang at Manhattan's Town Hall in 1953, and with orchestras in Madrid, Spain, and St. Louis, where she also sang with the opera company.

In 1954, Phillips sang the part of Queenie in a production of "Show Boat" at New York's City Center.

She also performed more than 500 times as part of a State Department entertainment tour of Austria and West Germany.

Phillips later became a schoolteacher and vocal coach.

The first Black singer to sign a full-time contract with the Met chorus was Elinor Harper, who made her debut in 1962.

Mentoring

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they will be."

Dickerson said, "The national organization touched more than 125,000 kids last year."

There are 103 chapters of 100 Black Men around the world. Each chapter functions independently.

"The National 100 Black Men of America was founded in 1963 and mentoring has always been a cornerstone of the organization," Dickerson said.

"Mentoring the 100 Way is a training and certification program for mentors. Don't commit unless you can commit," Dickerson continues. "Kids know when you're faking... they need consistency."

Mobley said, "Mentors can be family, community members, professors, teachers. I'm from a small town in Georgia and my professors at FAMU (Florida A&M University) helped me with image and everything else I needed to know for the career I wanted and now have."

"Black men need to get involved, because it's going to take Black men to bridge the gap into manhood... their involvement could save this generation," Dickerson said.

That places a lot of responsibility on the mentor and the person being mentored. "Mentoring is a lot more than a feel good experience, it's work," Mobley explained. "It's a job, not for fun. Kids are depending on you, so take it seriously. It's not show and tell; it's 365 days of involvement."

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