



2011 Inductee
to the
South Carolina
Academy of Authors

Percival Everett was born on December 22, 1956 at Fort Gordon, GA, but spent the majority of his early life in Columbia, SC. He received his B.A. in philosophy from the University of Miami in 1977. Afterward, Everett developed a strong interest in creative writing, and was accepted into Brown University's M.F.A. program, from which he graduated in 1982.

Everett's attraction to creative writing has paid off, as he has published nearly twenty novels. *Suder* (1983), written while he was attending Brown, tells the story of a professional baseball player, Craig Suder, whose surname is German for "southerner." Suder's inability to perform inspires him to take a road trip through America's northwest in search of self-discovery.

Walk Me to the Distance (1985) follows Vietnam vet David Larson from Savannah, GA. Nothing left for him at home after his parents are killed in a car crash, Larson heads west. He finds himself in Wyoming where he confronts a host of new friends and experiences. In 1990, the book was adapted into the movie *Follow Your Heart*.

Erasure (2001), Everett's most popular novel, features Thelonius "Monk" Ellison, a failing writer whose fiction is criticized for not being "black" enough. While in a book store, he sees a poster for Juanita Mae Jenkins' best-seller *We's Lives in Da Ghetto*. This poster inspires him to write a satire based on the "black" experience entitled *Ma Pafology*, which focuses on the criminal career of Van Go Jenkins. Ironically, Ellison's novel gains him a six-figure contract from Random House.

In 2004, Everett published *A History of the African-American People [Proposed] by Strom Thurmond, as Told to Percival Everett and James Kincaid*. The satirical novel, which adopts the fictional premise that Everett and Kincaid have been hired by a Thurmond aide as ghostwriters, focuses on the senator's "contributions" to African-American society.

Everett's writing has earned many accolades. In 1994, he won the South Carolina Governor's Award in the Arts. In 2002, he received the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation Legacy Award for *Erasure*. In 2003, he was honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Percival Everett currently resides in Los Angeles, CA, where he teaches at the University of Southern California.

- Blake Bolen



Image Courtesy www.usc.edu

Percival Everett