

JoMarie Payton

JoMarie Payton has been a native of South Florida area since the tender age of 3 months old. Born in Albany, Georgia, her family relocated to Miami Gardens (formerly Opa-Locka) in the early 50's. Her love for arts and education started at an early age as she made her first stage appearance at the tender age of six.



All of her early and formal education was done in the Opa-Locka/Miami Gardens area where she attended Rainbow Park Elementary, Nathan B. Young Elementary, and North Dade Middle (formerly) North Dade Senior High, home of the Thunderbirds. Ms. Payton is a proud graduate of Miami Carol City Senior High School, Class of 1968. (Home of the Chiefs) She went on to attend Miami Dade College (formerly Miami Dade Community College) in the late 60's and was mentored and trained by Professor John Pryor. Ms. Payton also attended the University of Miami in the late 60's on a "Special Scholarship" under the direction of Bob Lowry. Ms. Payton also received film training through the historical Ivan Tors Studio (she was one of the first African Americans to be offered the classes).

Ms. Payton was one of the original members of the "Theatre of Afro Arts" in the early to mid-seventies, under the direction of the Late Mr. Wendell Narcisse. She performed in various Dinner Theatres, Community Theatres, the Ivan Kivets Merry-Go-Round in Coral Gables and the Famous Coconut Grove Playhouse. Ms. Payton became a professional Actor's Equity Union actress at the age of 24, later joining both SAG and AFTRA unions and has been active for 40+ years.

Ms. Payton has entertained us with memorable performances on stage, screen, and television, for over three decades and is also an accomplished singer. She is most notable for her portrayal of "**Harriette Winslow**" the no-nonsense mother on the historical, "**Family Matters**" **TV show**. The longest running African-American sitcom in television history and the ever popular character "**Suga Mama**" of Disney's award winning show "**The Proud Family**." She was

nominated for four NAACP Awards, four NAMIC Awards, and is a recipient of the prestigious "Alice" Award, just to mention a few, for her outstanding achievements in acting. Ms. Payton has been given the Keys to the City of Miami, Opa-Locka, Miramar, Chicago, Albany, Georgia and also Los Angeles where she spent most of her professional acting career and was named "Woman of the Year" and honored by the city with her own day.

Dr. Payton, as acknowledged in some circles, is the proud recipient of an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humanities, from Vincennes University. She has also been honored as an Honorary Alumni of all of the Historical Black Colleges and Universities for her commitment to education. For ten years, she raised funds for Albany State University through the "Frankie Payton Scholarship Fund" named for her mother and in conjunction with her Celebrity Volleyball Tournaments. She is also a National Black College Hall of Fame Member and has helped to send over 200 students to college on scholarships; fulfilling a promise and mission she started working on over 40 years ago.

Ms. Payton is also a proud AKA Soror and happy to be continuing the purpose of service to all. She is a Life Time NAACP Member. She has travelled five continents, including Africa, Australia, Europe, Asia, North America/Mexico and much of the Caribbean spreading charity and good will. She also served as Cultural Ambassador for the City of Miramar from 2013-2014.

Ms. Payton was spokesperson for the Sarcoidosis Network Foundation for ten years while helping, donating and supporting their efforts to find a cure. She is a committed Public Servant, Community Leader and Activist (**once referred to as "The People's Champ"**). Ms. Payton has received numerous Senate, State, and House Accommodations along with being inducted into Library numerous times.

Personally, Ms. Payton carries many titles: mother, grandmother, wife, actress, singer, teacher, producer, philanthropist, and friend. Yet, the one she cherishes most is student. She believes a commitment to learning and growing keeps you youthful, excited and hopeful about the future of this ever-changing, beautiful world. Her favorite quote is **"To LOVE Life is to LIVE Life."**