



Urban League Visionary Award Acceptance Speech

by Dr. Charles Taylor

This award was given to me by the Madison, Wisconsin Urban League in 2009. Notice how I used humor in my acceptance remarks and kept my speech short. There's a time to use humor if it's done tastefully. It can re-energize an audience. On the night that I received this award, the program was already running late. When I got up to speak I knew the audience was ready to leave. I'm happy to say that my short humorous acceptance speech was received quite well.

Thank you for that very generous introduction. As Susan Canty was introducing me I was thinking about my vision when I was in my 20's. I had a goal of being rich, famous, and a couch potato. Well now that I'm older...one out of three isn't so bad.

Let me thank Annette Miller, and the Urban League board for their generosity in making this award possible. When I first learned that I was going to receive this award I didn't believe it.

In fact the UL called me three times to accept this award. I finally relented and told the operator I would accept the charges. You gotta pay that phone bill man.

In all seriousness I'm absolutely delighted to receive this honor, and most genuinely grateful. It validates the importance of service and giving back to one's community.

Although I'm accepting this award, I'm mindful that it's really a tribute to the staff, board and friends of the UL who engage in the important work of supporting families in Dane County every day.

The Center for Economic Development may have taken a vision to dream it, but it will take the full support of you in this room to build it.

As I leave you, I would like to thank my wife Camilla for setting an example of community service and supporting my dreams no matter how impossible they may seem at the time.

If there is any advice that I would share, it's that when you support the Urban League's Center for Economic Development, everyone wins. We have a chance to rebuild lives and help transform communities.

So, thank you again for honoring me. At last I have something in common with James Brown. I feel good! Thank you.