

Entertainment

BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

NEW YORK CITY — It was much ado about something when the formation committee of the Afro-American Guild of Performing Artists unveiled the intent of that organization last week. The event was hosted by AT&T in the posh Sky Lobby of its grand new Madison Avenue communication building in the hub of midtown. The affair was well catered, carefree and colorful with fascinating and versatile personalities from the world of incandescent glare as its centerpiece. Intermingled was a healthy representation of the past, the present and the future to spawn the heart and soul of the kind of group envisioned by the formation committee. This was the endearing task of Fred O'Neal, veteran actor and historic prexy of the Four-A's, Dick Campbell, "Mr. Show Biz," Ossie Davis, our "person for all reasons," Ruby Dee, the lady of the same ilk, Honi Coles, the award winning "Mr. Taps," Sir James Randolph, and a fella whose only talent is having the good sense to have observed them these many years.

The Afro-American Guild of Performing Artists will become the umbrella organization of the Black

marquee professionals. It is expected to fill the void created by the demise of the Negro Actors Guild several years ago, but without the same inner combative forces of that group which eventually caused its downfall. The major thrust of AAGPA will be addressed to the good and welfare of its members. That membership will be drawn from every branch of the profession without any restrictive age limits.

Though it was "Nam's" veterans celebration in our town, the event got its share of attention. Mayor Koch dispatched his special assistant, James Harding, with a letter of recognition. Ben Vereen braved the cross-town traffic to make it before curtain time for "Grind," the B'way show in which he's starred. Theresa Merritt and Charles Dutton, both of "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," who had just been nominated for "Tony" Awards, came in bubbling with their good news. Elvera Davis, Sammy's mom, was just as happy exhibiting a dancing photo of herself and Marion Coles in the paper which carries all the news that's fit to print. They were showing the young Apollo Rainbow chorus line how it's

danced. Mrs. Olivia Ward, wife of NY's historic top cop's enthusiasm was doubled because flick star Charles Bronson had just promised to enlarge her role in his fourth "Death Wish" sequel. Ophelia Devore Mitchell was happily accepting congrats on her presidential appointment to the Arts Comm., the Kennedy Center and introducing her talented young protegee, LaJuan Carter. Playwright Lofton Mitchell telling Maxwell Glanville, Vivian Robinson, Bruce Bozeman, A/A Guild's legal advisor, Ellsworth Wright, retired Equity official and Gail Beere, public affairs liaison AT&T, all about his off B'way play, "Star in the Morning." Diane Nicholas, social service director Actor's Fund, Fr. Thomas Dolan, Catholic Actors' Guild, Anthony LaGrande, Actors Equity, Harold Hoffman, Theatre Authority, Beryl Campbell, Robert Cole and Frederick Zollo were among the many who graced the great mable sky lobby of AT&T and this auspicious beginning of The Afro-American Guild of Performing Artists. The company was warm and the Seagram Cooler wasn't at all a bad one for the road.

WRITE REPORT — N'Rochelle's Mavis Davis is baffled by the lack of



NEW YORK CITY — There were lots of smiles backstage following a one-of-a-kind performance by Daryl Hall and John Oates at the recently re-opened Apollo Theatre in New York. Pontiac Motor Division's \$23,000 contribution allowed 700 specially-selected inner city high school students to attend the concert, which benefited the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). Shown above, from the left: Chris Edley, chief executive officer of UNCF; John Oates; former Temptations singer Eddie Kendricks, who along with David Ruffin performed some numbers with Hall and Oates; Daryl Hall; and J. Michael Losh, General Motors vice president and general manager of Pontiac.

attention given the historic first Black shuttle pilot, Fred Gregory, particularly by the Afro-American press. Shuttle Challenger took off into space back on April 29. Mavis, who is a family friend, along with other members of her space org., were in eye range of the launching pad for the blast

up. This young man is quite a story, with Harlem's own immortal Rev. Congressman Adam Clayton Powell having played a pivotal role in his life. It was he who got him into the '60 class of the Air Force Academy. In '78, with two other Blacks and six women he became one of 35 newly selected shuttle

astronauts from a list of 8000 applicants. On April 29 '85 history had another beginning... STAY LOOSE... Billy Rowe is a syndicated columnist.

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