

Entertainment Briefs

QUEEN LATIFAH GETS JAZZIER
WITH NEW ALBUM

DENVER (AP) - Queen Latifah is getting a little jazzier. Five albums and 15 years after her hard-hitting hip-hop debut "All Hail the Queen," Queen Latifah is poised to release the jazz-obsessed "The Dana Owens Album" in which she sings standards. "This is definitely not a one-shot deal," the singer, whose real name is Dana Owens, told The Denver Post in Sunday's editions. "Hopefully, with the success of it, I'll be in it till I'm dead. I've always looked at singing as something I can do forever. I don't know if I can rap forever. I don't know that I can stay as hot as the hottest girl in the game." It was her experience in the 1998 feature film "Living Out Loud," co-starring alongside Holly Hunter and Danny DeVito, that led to her new album. She played nightclub singer Liz Bailey and sang a couple of jazz standards. "The Dana Owens Album" is released this week. The new album, where she tackles songs by Al Green and The Mamas & the Papas, is something of a departure for an artist whose last record was "Order in the Court," one of 1998's better efforts at combining R&B and hip-hop. But she said she has a fully formed and finished hip-hop album in her back pocket just waiting for the right label.

MUSIC PATRIARCH ELLIS
MARSALIS JR. DIES AT 96

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - Ellis L. Marsalis Sr., the patriarch of a family of world famous jazz musicians, including grandson Wynton Marsalis, has died. He was 96. Marsalis' son, Ellis Jr., is a prominent New Orleans pianist and music professor who mentored crooner Harry Connick Jr. as well as four musician sons: Wynton, the trumpeter; saxophonist Branford; trombonist Delfeayo and drummer Jason. Ellis Sr., who died Sunday, was involved in the civil rights movement through ownership of a motel in suburban New Orleans whose guests included the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., New York congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr., future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and musician Ray Charles. He was born in Summit, Miss., and had lived in New Orleans since 1921. In 1936, he became the first Black manager of an Esso service station in the city. Marsalis opened the Marsalis Motel near the Mississippi River in 1943, a converted barn that featured a restaurant, lounge and swimming pool. He is survived by his son, a daughter and seven grandchildren.

OPRAH WINFREY VISITS
PREGNANT MILITARY WIVES

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. (AP) - Earlier this year, it was the 20,000 troops of the 101st Airborne Division who were welcomed here. On Sept. 21, it was Oprah Winfrey, who came to congratulate the soldiers' wives expecting babies between September and December - all 640 of them. Each became pregnant after their husband returned from Iraq. "This is incredible. This is the biggest blessing. It's unbelievable," said Holly Munster, a military spouse. Oprah gave gifts to the women. Supermodel Cindy Crawford along with country singers Martina McBride and Kenny Chesney also attended the taping of the show, which will air Tuesday. Winfrey said the visit was a way to thank military families who do so much for so little. "It's a way of honoring the sacrifice without doing a lot of big speeches and oh la la la. ... It's a way of saying, 'We see you. We hear you. We know what you do to make our lives safer and we thank you for it,'" Winfrey said. The 101st Airborne Division, based at Fort Campbell, returned home earlier this year after a yearlong deployment.

MC HAMMER TO PERFORM
AT HIP-HOP TRIBUTE SHOW

NEW YORK (AP) - It's Hammer Time - again. In a blast from the past, MC Hammer will perform at VH1's inaugural Hip Hop Honors next month, the cable station recently announced. The Beastie Boys, Public Enemy and others are already set to appear, as well as newly announced performances by Ice-T, Kid Rock, Fat Joe and Grandmaster Flash. Vivica A. Fox and Mos Def will host the awards show, which pays tribute to groundbreaking hip-hop artists. Among those in the first group of honorees are the Sugar Hill Gang, KRS-One, Run DMC and Tupac Shakur. The show, scheduled for taping in New York on Oct. 3, will air Oct. 12 on VH1.

Scholars study Jackson's life, music

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) - Michael Jackson, frequently savaged in the tabloid press, was picked apart by more rarified critics as scholars gathered for a conference on the pop star at Yale University.

Eighteen scholars from U.S. universities discussed sexual, racial and artistic aspects of Jackson's life and music Thursday and Friday in the first academic meeting to study him.

Jackson "in many ways is the Black male crossover artist of the 20th century," said Seth Clark Silberman, who teaches about race and gender at Yale. "He has grown up in front of us, so we have a great investment in him,

even though some people today may find his image disturbing." Other universities have hosted conferences about Madonna and other pop stars, Silberman said.

The conference avoided details of the child molestation case against Jackson in California, but it did look at how the media has reported on the case. Jackson pleaded not guilty in April to child molestation and conspiracy charges. His trial is scheduled for Jan. 31.

Still, panelists discussed how pedophilia allegations have fed into false stereotypes about gays. Although Jackson married twice and has children, he has long battled rumors that he is gay,

said Silberman, who is writing a book about Jackson.

Since his days as a child star, Jackson has made his image increasingly strange and contrary to sexual and racial expectations, Silberman said. Panelists discussed Jackson's plastic surgery and his skin tone change from dark to light (which Jackson says is due to a condition called vitiligo).

Todd Gray, who was Jackson's personal photographer for four years, described how Jackson asked him to retouch photos to make him appear lighter-skinned.

Record executives wanted Jackson to appear masculine in photos, while Jackson preferred pictures of himself

kissing animals or hugging the Mickey Mouse mascot at Disneyland, Gray said.

Jackson often explores racial issues in his music, noted another panelist, Nora Morrison, a graduate student from Harvard University. In the video for "Beat It," she said, Jackson breaks up a fight between a Black gang and a White gang, whose members then join in his dance moves.

Megan Burns, who is pursuing a master's degree in fine art, said she looks at Jackson as "a self-created piece of art."

"He's contributed to the national discussion of race and gender, and that is an invaluable topic for all of us to discuss," she said.

Jimi Hendrix's brother denied royalties

SEATTLE (AP) - A judge upheld a will Friday excluding the brother of late guitar legend Jimi Hendrix from the musician's posthumous releases, royalties and merchandise.

The case, the latest of several that have entangled the Hendrix estate in the last decade, concerns the last will of Jimi's father, Al Hendrix, who inherited the rights to Jimi's music when the rock star died in 1970.

Jimi's brother, Leon, says he was unfairly written out of the will at the behest of his stepsister, Janie Hendrix, who runs the company in charge of the estate, Experience Hendrix LLC, with Jimi's cousin, Robert Hendrix.

But Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Ramsdell upheld the will Friday, saying "Janie was the family member Al trusted the most."

Leon Hendrix criticized the decision outside court.

"This is the Hendrixes," he said. "This is the family right here, you know — bloodline."

His lawyer said no decision had been made on a possible appeal.

A 1996 version of Al Hendrix's will would have directed 24 percent of the estate to Leon Hendrix, 38 percent to his stepsister and the balance to other beneficiaries. But it was rewritten in 1997 to exclude Leon.

Al Hendrix died in 2002.

Janie Hendrix's attorney, John Wilson, said Al Hendrix decided on his own to write his son out of the will, but Leon Hendrix's lawyer said

the father was infirm in his old age and could not comprehend even simple legal issues.

Jimi Hendrix had released just three albums before he died at age 27, but he had an extensive catalog of unreleased tracks. For about

two decades after his death, his estate was run by a California attorney who sold many of the copyrights to other companies.

At the urging of Janie Hendrix, Al Hendrix sued the lawyer in the early 1990s to regain the rights he had sold.

That case was settled but left the company in debt.

According to Janie Hendrix, her father did not want money paid to the beneficiaries listed in his will until the debt was paid off. That is expected to happen in 2010.



By
Reg Weaver,
President,
National
Education
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Making Public Schools
Great for Every Child

My work takes me into public schools in communities all across the nation. I have seen it all. Clean, modern, and safe schools with all the latest materials and technology. Not so clean, outdated, and mostly safe schools with obsolete materials and textbooks - and too often not enough of them. I've been in predominately white schools and schools with great racial, cultural, and international diversity.

It isn't an accident that students have different levels of educational opportunity. People in affluent neighborhoods have a lot of experience and the wherewithal to make their voices heard where it counts—for example, registering and voting, getting involved in campaigns and getting to know elected officials, and making sure their children get what they need in their neighborhood public schools. The majority of people in less affluent neighborhoods have the desire and the will, but oftentimes lack the resources and familiarity with how to access the system to influence the outcomes they need for their neighborhood public schools.

The primary road to influence in making your voice heard is through the political process.

We can't wait, as individuals, as families, or as a nation, to make equal educational opportunity a reality. Unless we give all children the tools to succeed, America will have faltered on its promise and condemned its future. It's that important.

In a forum on *Brown v. Board of Education* held a decade ago, George Mason University history professor Roger Wilkins said, "Lots and lots of African-Americans in this society cannot be helped by *Brown* or any other dreams or theories or lawsuits or programs until their parents can be put to work, until their families are stable, until there is hope, not only in their households, but in their neighborhoods."

That's still true today for African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and Alaskan Natives—for all Americans. Making public schools great for every child can't just be a school reform program. It has to be a parental involvement and community empowerment effort. It has to be a political movement. It has to be a coming together as one to get each and every child in America everything he or she deserves.

Let's take a giant step together. Vote on Tuesday, November 2nd.



Great Public Schools
for Every Child