

Washington drops into 'Great Debaters' locale

MARSHALL, Texas (AP) - Denzel Washington screened "The Great Debaters" in the town that is home to the 1930s debate team portrayed in the Golden Globe-nominated film.

Walking the red carpet leading to Marshall Cinema, Washington wore a purple baseball hat with the logo of Wiley College, located in this town of 24,000 people about 140 miles east of Dallas. The 52-year-old actor stars in the film as educator and poet Melvin Tolson, who led the all-Black college's elite debate team.

"This is where it started," Washington said at the recent screening. "You can feel it. These are real people. It's a small-town story. I've done a few screenings of this movie, but this is the best one."

Washington also directed the film, which was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for best drama.

"We're here to celebrate the accomplishment of your town," he told the audience. "We're really proud of it. We're excited about bringing the film back home where it belongs."



Denzel Washington recently visited Marshall, Texas.

Earlier in the day, stars of the film Nate Parker, Jurnee Smollett and Denzel Washington held a news conference on the campus of Wiley, which has about 900 students.

"We hope people see the film and get touched by it," Smollett said. "So far, people are getting so much joy from it. That's food for our soul."

The debate team at Wiley has been defunct for years.

Washington said he'd like to see it resurrected.

"I'm pleased as punch for these young people and people that came before us as we celebrate with this town

and this school," he said. "We'll try to help the school and get the debate team back on its feet. It seems like the right thing to do. It's time for another winning streak."

At press time, Oscar winner Denzel Washington is donating \$1 million to Wiley College to reestablish its famed debate team.

School officials announced the gift by Washington, who was in Marshall recently to screen "The Great Debaters."

His film about the school's 1930s debate team has been nominated for a Golden Globe as best drama.

Winfrey celebrated by guild for social issues

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Oprah Winfrey and other producers behind the Denzel Washington and Forest Whitaker film "The Great Debaters" will receive an award from the Producers Guild of America for illuminating provocative social issues.

The film's producers will receive the 2008 Stanley Kramer Award at the PGA Awards on Feb. 2 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, the guild announced recently.

Among those who produced the film are Todd Black, Kate Forte, Joe Roth and Winfrey.

"Oprah and I are very proud of this film and honored to receive the PGA's Stanley Kramer Award," Forte said. "The Great Debaters' has been a labor of love and we are grateful to be recognized in this way."

The movie chronicles the journey of Professor Melvin Tolson, a debate



Billionaire producer/media mogul Oprah Winfrey attended the premiere of "The Great Debaters" at the Arclight Cinerama Dome in Hollywood on December 11.

team coach who helped shape a group of students from a small African-American college into an elite debate team. Tolson challenged social mores and was criticized for his teaching methods as well as his political

views. Previous recipients of the Stanley Kramer Award include "Hotel Rwanda," "An Inconvenient Truth," "Good Night, and Good Luck," "Antoine Fisher" and "I Am Sam."

Kwanzaa

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guide explains every aspect of Kwanzaa, from its African roots, to its seven principles, to the ceremony, songs and feast, including recipes. While you might be unfamiliar with many of the African dishes, which have been culled from such countries as Cameroon, Zanzibar and Senegal, the instructions seem straightforward enough that you might enjoy making something unfamiliar to your palate. Otherwise, there are traditional West Indian and Southern soul food staples to pick from, including Caribbean rice and peas, sweet potato pone, collard greens, macaroni

salad, cornbread and biscuits.

Though it might be worth the investment for that chapter alone, this is far more than a cookbook. The author's aim is not only to encourage folks to observe Kwanzaa during the seven days of the holiday's season, but also to inspire observers to keep it alive year-round by finding ways to put the seven principles (Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith) into practice on a daily basis.

A valuable resource for both novice and veteran Kwanzaa keepers!

Philly

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Lopez, Outkast and Bette Midler are some of artists who have sampled or covered the Gamble and Huff catalog.

Their tunes and influential lyrics have been used by advertising agencies, music production houses, commercials, motion pictures and television sitcoms.

They also have one of the most sought after sought after pop and soul catalogs in the world.

"We are extremely happy and appreciative of this honor," the duo said in a statement.

"We have always wanted

to be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and wholeheartedly thank the foundation for this prestigious induction.

We are especially excited about being the first inductees under the newly named Ahmet Ertegun Award. Moreover, the timing couldn't be better as we celebrate a 45-year creative vision that has impacted people and music all over the world including the music of Rock and Roll."

Their Philadelphia International Records label built a roster of signature talents including these recording artists: Patti LaBelle, The

O'Jays, Teddy Pendergrass, Lou Rawls, Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes, Archie Bell and the Drells, Billy Paul and the Three Degrees to name a few.

Its recordings often reached the top of the charts. In one nine-month period, its acts sold 10 million records, powered by the likes of Billy Paul's "Me and Mrs. Jones," a Grammy winning No. 1 pop and R&B hit; Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes' "If You Don't Know Me By Now," a popular track also covered by UK group Simply Red; The O'Jay's "Love Train" and "Backstabbers," among others.

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