

Doctor focus of sterling biopic

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

World-renowned Dr. Ben Carson has long been considered by his colleagues as the best pediatric neurosurgeon around, so it's no surprise that he remains in such great demand. Besides being stationed at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore where he performs over 300 operations on children each year, the peripatetic physician also crisscrosses the entire planet to share his miraculous talents with less fortunate folks in developing countries who might not otherwise be able to afford his services.

Dr. Carson is particularly famous for his seminal work separating Siamese twins joined at the head, such as the 50-member medical team he led during a 28-hour operation on a couple of nine month-old Zambian babies in 1997. Despite being the recipient of countless accolades including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, the humble doctor has never let his success go to his head. Instead, this devoted family man and devout Christian is quick to credit the Lord for his bounty of blessings.

Unless you've read his autobiography, "Gifted Hands," you probably have no idea how many hardships Dr. Carson encountered en route to reaching the pinnacle of his profession. For he and his brother, Curtis (Tajh Bellow) were raised in the slums of Detroit by an overwhelmed, divorced single-mom (Kimberly Elise) who juggled numerous jobs as a housekeeper and babysitter just to keep a roof over their heads.

Furthermore, because she couldn't read, Sonya Carson wasn't able to help her sons with their homework. Still, she emphasized both religion and education, sensing that



"Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story" is slated to air on Turner Network Television.

that combination offered their best chance of avoiding the pitfalls of the ghetto.

Yet, Bennie fell far behind in grammar school where he was being mercilessly teased and regarded as bordering on mentally-retarded. His fortunes began to change soon after his mother recognized that he needed eyeglasses. Then, relying on a combination of faith in God and a dedication to hard work, the

youngster rededicated himself to academics, determined to show those who had labeled him dumb that he could set his sights high and become a doctor.

Now, thanks to corporate sponsor Johnson & Johnson, "Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story" has been adapted into a movie starring Cuba Gooding, Jr. in his best role in years. This inspirational bio-pic recounts all of

the above and much more and is set to premiere on TNT on Saturday, February 7, at 8 p.m. (ET/PT).

A moving tribute to a real African-American role model with a powerful message for impressionable young minds that they can overcome any obstacles standing in the way of their dreams.

Excellent movie overall (4 stars). Rated: TV-PG.

Book hails Black fatherhood

Daughters of Men: Portraits of African-American Women and Their Fathers

Edited by Rachel Vassel; Photography by Derek Blanks; Foreword by Michael Eric Dyson; Amistad; Paperback; \$15.99; 192 pages ISBN: 978-0-06-135036-8

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

"Good Black fathers are far more plentiful than either the media or warped social science would have us believe... The moral beauty of a Black father's determined embrace of his female offspring pays off in startling



dividends.

The book you hold in your hand is a portable testimonial to the majestic grip of Black father love. In the stories of women whose names appear in lights and those whose lives are lit by the sweet joy of their fathers'

quiet heroism, you'll trace the elegant and unmistakable influence of Black men on the daughters they have reared.

To be sure, bringing up their daughters was a labor of love; this book is a small gesture of gratitude for the mighty task of shaping the souls of sisters who sail beyond narrow horizons and artificial limits." — Excerpted from the Foreword by Dr. Michael Eric Dyson (pages xv-xvi)

There's an old saying, "Behind every successful man is a woman." But nobody ever asks who's behind every successful woman? (See Book Review, Page 10)

Festival

(Continued from Page 6) as fine art shows, panels, workshops, a festival for students and children, a spoken-word fest and a comedy night.

Filmmaker Stafford Bailey, who with his wife Judy entered their critically acclaimed documentary, "Blacks Without Borders: Chasing the American Dream in South Africa," complained they were only "just notified" the film didn't make the cut. Bailey also

pointed out that the film program schedule is still not up on the festival's Web site.

Although the screening dates and times were provided to *The Wave* through another filmmaker, at press time the online screening guide only provides a multimedia guide to events.

The festival's executive director Ayuko Babu, did not return several calls and an e-mail by press time.

"For whatever reason, the economy or something else,

they can't get their act together," Bailey said. "We entered the film last August/September and were told we would hear something by November, then December, then by Jan. 1."

He continued: "We only found out last Friday. I called the festival office and that's when I learned it was moving to Culver City. I spoke to a volunteer and asked how they could do that and [said] it's being poorly run. She replied that we could submit it

next year. But I said there won't be a next year."

Another producer who has a film entered into the festival, but asked that he not be identified, also pointed to a lack of notification. "We found out last Saturday about the change of venue," he said. "I think they are trying to rescue it. People are coming from all over the world. Not having the film schedule posted is a no-no."

Olu Alemoru writes for the Los Angeles WAVE.

Bits 'n' Pieces

TAYLOR MEDIA SERVICES

Poll finds Denzel Washington is America's favorite movie star

For the third consecutive year, Denzel Washington has emerged as America's favorite movie star. Returning to the list this year at number two, after a one year absence, is Clint Eastwood. The perennial favorite, John Wayne, who died 30 years ago, is tied with Will Smith at number three.



Denzel Washington

The results came from a nationwide Harris Poll of 2,388 U.S. adults surveyed online between December 9 and 15, 2008. Other findings included Harrison Ford (of Indiana Jones fame) leaping from the number 10 spot in 2006, to off the list last year, to number 5 this year. Rounding out the top ten is Julia Roberts at number 6 (down from No. 4 last year), Tom Hanks at number 7 (down from number 2), Johnny Depp at number 8 (down from 3 last year), and two new additions to the list tied at number 9 — Angelina Jolie and another Black star Morgan Freeman.

Spike Lee wants Wesley Snipes for lead role in James Brown movie



Spike Lee

Maverick producer Spike Lee has reportedly settled on popular actor Wesley Snipes for the lead role in an upcoming film about the life of soul music star James Brown. Lee made his decision even though Snipes is currently awaiting appeal of a three year sentence for tax evasion. The movie will reportedly feature Brown's voice dubbed over Snipes' vocals. Lee is undertaking the venture with Paramount Pictures. The two acquired the rights to a movie about Brown shortly after he died of heart failure in December 2006.

Lee is undertaking the venture with Paramount Pictures. The two acquired the rights to a movie about Brown shortly after he died of heart failure in December 2006.

"Amateur Night at the Apollo" celebrates 75 years of performances

Harlem, New York's world famous Apollo Theater recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of its signature and sometimes controversial segment known as "Amateur Night at the Apollo." The segment normally involves amateur entertainers showcasing their talents and being applauded or booed from the stage. Historically, one of the first winners of the contest was jazz songstress Ella Fitzgerald in 1934. Ironically, the famous theater was first built in 1914 and the owners did not allow Blacks to attend some of the shows. Its original name was Hurtig and Seamons New Burlesque Theatre and it catered to Whites who wanted to go "slumming" in predominantly Black Harlem.



Michael Jackson's "Thriller" could be headed to Broadway



Michael Jackson

Producer James Nedarlander revealed last week that he had acquired the stage rights to what is widely considered the most influential music video ever made — Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Jackson spokesman Tohme confirmed the acquisition saying, "The Nedarlanders and Michael Jackson represent live theater and musical excellence, so let the music begin." There was no indication as to when the play will hit the Broadway stage.
