

Features

Robert Townsend

by DAWN B. GIBSON
Staff Writer

As though he had stepped from the movie screen into the Union auditorium, Robert Townsend appeared as part of "Discovery" weekend during Black History Month.

The Black Student Movement, along with co-sponsor the Union Film Committee, featured Robert Townsend on the University's campus. Townsend, 31, is the co-writer, producer, director and star of the successful movie *Hollywood Shuffle* which was shown February 26 at 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. afterwards, Townsend spoke to and answered questions from the excited audience of students and faculty from the University and other residents of Chapel Hill.

Hollywood Shuffle focuses on the struggle black actors and actresses have in getting non-stereotypical film roles. The predominantly black cast included Anne-Marie Johnson from the television situation comedy *What's Happening Now* and other rising actors and actresses with whose careers Townsend is helping.

"What inspired you to do *Hollywood Shuffle*," asked a UNC student.

Townsend said that he noticed his nephew watching television programs such as *The A-Team* on which the main character was a white film actor, and one of the subordinating and often harsh characters is a black film actor.

"Why can't the black character be the one to take the initiative," Townsend said.

In the film, the character played by Townsend has a younger brother who looks up to him and is influenced by his actions just as Townsend's viewed the characters on television. Because of this

influence the film's main character rejects a stereotypical and negative role he gets in a movie.

"I heard a rumor that you paid for this movie on credit cards," said another voice from the audience.

"That's true," said Townsend.

Hollywood Shuffle was financed, Townsend continued, in part by the salary he received from his acting parts in the movies *Streets of Fire* and *A Soldier's Story*. When that money ran out, he used credit cards from sources including TWA, Gulf Service Station and clothing shops to finish the two year movie.

When asked if he would emphasize black love in future films, he answered yes, adding that black love is part of what it's all about.

"He was so real," said Gerda Gallop, a UNC student and staff writer for *The Black Ink*. "Instead of rushing off to catch a plane, he stayed and answered so many questions. I was really impressed by him."

Townsend not only stayed to answer questions, he also attended the dance in the Carolina Union's Great Hall on campus sponsored by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Tonya Thurman, another UNC student and secretary of the BSM for 1987-1988 talked to the filmmaker at the dance.

"You have been a great inspiration in my life, and I'm glad to have had the opportunity to meet you," Thurman said.

She said that with a sigh and a hug, Townsend expressed his feelings of enjoyment in Chapel Hill because of the friendly and polite people.

Student profile: Janet Roach

by DAWN B. GIBSON
Staff Writer

Janet Roach, a senior Public Policy Analysis and RTVMP major from High Point, is one of the many black students who has demonstrated black leadership and hard work during her years at UNC.

As a freshman, Janet was a member of the Black Student Movement and the Freshman Class Committee. During her second semester as a freshman, she was elected secretary of the BSM, a position which she held throughout her sophomore year.

Last year in January, Janet was awarded the Martin Luther King scholarship. Added to her awards and honors is the Order of the Golden Fleece for serving as secretary. Some of her other activities include BSM on-campus coordinator, former student television reporter, WXYC anchor, member of BSM Ebony Readers, Senior Class Special Projects Chairman, and coordinator of the Black Film Series of this year's Discovery.

Roach's work with Discovery brought three members of the black film industry here to Chapel Hill, including Robert Townsend, writer, producer and star of the hit movie *Hollywood Shuffle*.

The planning began in September of 1987. Roach says that she saw Reginald Hudlin, one of the members of the black film industry, and Townsend in the September 1987 issue of *Essence*. Her previous contact with Hudlin enabled her to make plans to have the film stars ap-

pear as part of Discovery.

Plans for the appearances were completed in December of last year, Janet said, and in February students filled the Union auditorium to witness the results of Janet's hard work.

Janet expressed her feelings about her years and work here by saying, "I've been through my share of ups and downs, but, for the most part, my experiences have been rewarding and definitely learning experiences. I've grown a lot."

Janet also said that she's seen a lot of things among black students on campus, but one that bothers her very much is the black apathy. "I'm hoping the recent unification over the restructuring of the Office of Student Counseling will not only carry over with that situation but with other situations as well," Janet said.

"I hope that black students will become more involved and supportive of one another."



Phi Beta Sigma Sickle Cell project

by TANYA PERSON
Features Editor

"We wanted to get involved in a program that would really benefit the black community," said Tony Blue on Phi Beta Sigma's work with the UNC Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program (CSCP).

Tony Blue, Service Projects Chairman for Phi Beta Sigma, says his fraternity has been working with the sickle cell program for five years. This year, the fraternity raised \$1,055 as a donation to the program.

"The main fundraiser was the selling of raffle tickets," said Blue.

"Our grand prize was a microwave oven and there were twenty other prizes offered."

However, selling raffle tickets wasn't the extent of Phi Beta Sigma's work with the program. According to Blue, many hours of preparation went into the fundraiser before the raffle began.

"A lot of time is spent soliciting prizes, talking to hospital administrators, and general organizing," said Blue. "The

raffle only lasted for approximately four weeks."

In all, Blue said the response to this year's fundraiser was favorable and Phi Beta Sigma will continue to stay actively involved in supporting health programs, particularly UNC's CSCP.

Dr. Orringer, Director of CSCP since 1982, says Phi Beta Sigma is the only student organization at UNC that directly donates funds to the program.

"We have received donations," says Orringer, "but never anything consistently like we do with Phi Beta Sigma."

Orringer stated that the money raised by the fraternity is donated to the Burroughs Welcome Fund, a gift trust fund within the program. Money is also used to help patients meet personal needs such as funeral bills, light bills, and other related expenses.

"Well, that's the main focus of our fundraiser," Blue commented. "To help on a general and individual basis."

Orringer stated that the purpose of CSCP was to provide not only medical services to sickle cell victims, but psychological services to its patients as well.

"You've got to take a personal in-

terest in their health," added Orringer. "If you show a patient you care, you'll see some dramatic improvements."

According to Orringer, CSCP conducts research on the disease with other sickle cell programs at Duke University and also works with drug companies and disease investigators around the country.

"By advancing in our research, we can provide educational activities," Orringer said. "Community activity will promote community awareness of the disease."

Although this comprehensive program may be beneficial to almost 300 adult and pediatric patients with sickle cell disease, there are those who aren't able to participate and cannot receive such aid.

DeJarvis Duckett, a sophomore at UNC and victim of sickle cell anemia, said she isn't eligible to receive funds from the program because she isn't 21 years old. In addition, a victim must be independent, a full-time student, and attend UNC university.

"I raised all kinds of hell last year but they said there was nothing they could do," exclaimed Duckett. "I guess if I was 21 years old they'd help me out."

Duckett, the only student at UNC

with sickle cell anemia, said she first discovered she was sick in the first grade while participating in a running activity. It was then that she experienced her first 'pain crisis.' This occurs when the sickle-shaped blood cells turn sideways to get through narrow vein passageways. When other red blood cells cannot get through, blockage occurs — a build-up of red blood cells. The result is severe pain in the bone joints, legs, and back.

"My parents and I ignored the pain at first," Duckett said. "But after my first 'crisis,' we knew that I was really sick."

Sickle cell anemia patients can also experience a 'platelet crisis' when the bone marrow stops producing red blood cells. Whereas treatment for a 'pain crisis' may be a prescriptive pain killer, treatment for a 'platelet crisis' is more serious and may result in inter-muscular injections or blood transfusions.

"In all, I've only had two blood transfusions," says Duckett. "But I know either 'crisis' can occur at any time."

Sickle cell disease also changes the chemical structure of red blood cells

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