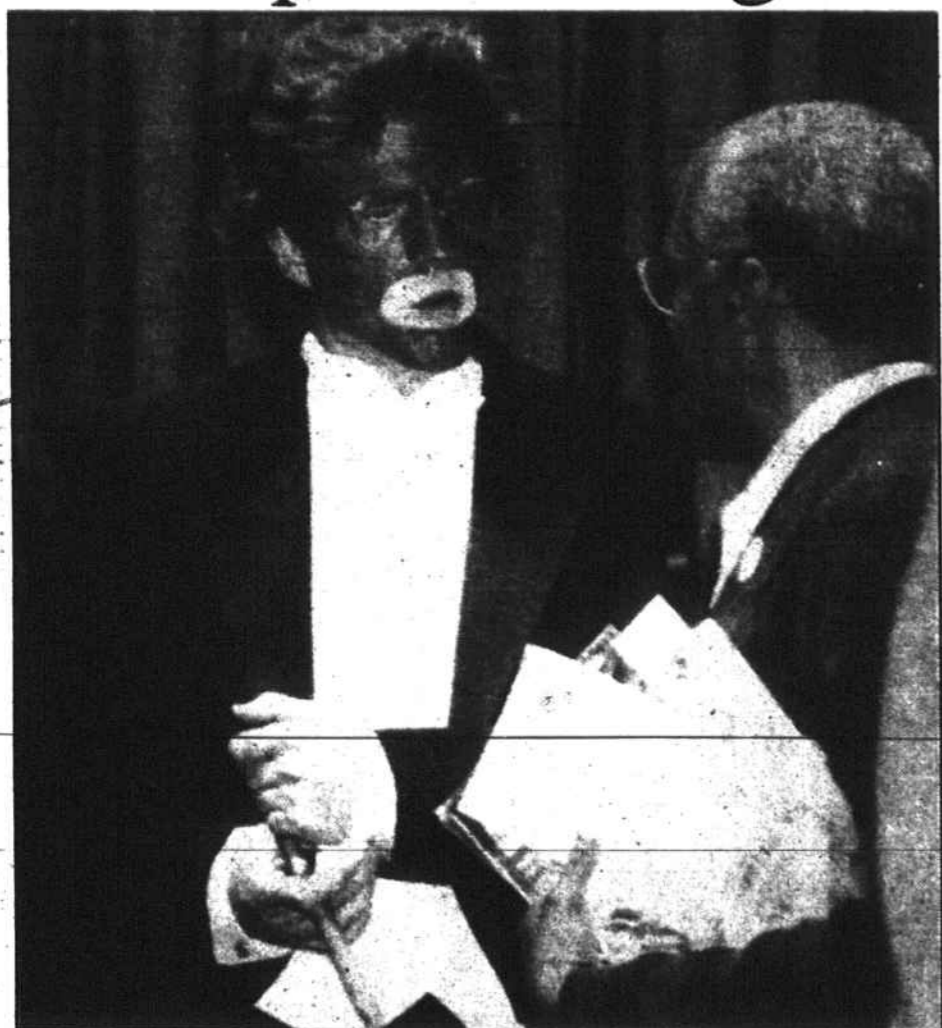


National

Whoopi Goldberg Defends Boyfriend's Appearance in Blackface



Ted Danson, left, as he appeared in blackface at a New York City event.

NEW YORK (AP) — Ted Danson's racially and sexually provocative remarks at a Friars Club roast of his girlfriend Whoopi Goldberg were "made in the tone and tenor" of the group's traditional dinners, the club's leader said Monday.

The club, which earlier apologized for the event, came to Danson's defense amid debate over his appearance Friday at the closed-door roast in New York.

The "Cheers" television star, who is white, wore blackface makeup, used the word "nigger" and joked about his sex life with Goldberg, who is black.

"Although we are saddened that some people felt the remarks directed at Whoopi Goldberg were done in a seemingly racist manner, we stand by our roast format, which is legendary and has been used throughout the 89-year history of the Friars Club," Jack L. Green, dean of the club, said in a statement.

Talk-show host Montel Williams, who walked out of the roast and sent a telegram announcing his resignation from the club,

released a statement Monday reiterating that, "Some may find this brand of so-called humor funny. I do not."

Goldberg had scolded Williams for criticizing Danson's performance, saying: "Perhaps Montel's show is not doing as well as it could be and this was his way

of drawing attention."

Mayor David Dinkins, the city's first black mayor, described the jokes as "way, way over the line." Goldberg said he, too, should have known better.

She pointed to the private club's tradition of ribald roasts that include jokes about sex, religion and

race.

On Saturday, the Friars said they were "saddened by the racially offensive nature of the some of the material" and apologized to those who were offended by the remarks.

Monday's statement did not explain the change in position.

Nobel Winner Toni Morrison: Her Greatness Starts with an Open Mind

NEW YORK (AP) — The greatness of Toni Morrison can be summed up by a few words she offered at a reading last year.

"I never write about anything," she said, "that I've already made up my mind about."

For Morrison, winner last Thursday of the Nobel Prize in literature, it is not simply a matter of knowing how her books will end, but how she will get there. Like the character in search of his past in "Song of Solomon," there is a sense that her thoughts are evolving the same time as her readers'.

Morrison, 62, grew up in Ohio during the Great Depression and many of her books are set in her native state. "The Bluest Eye," her first novel, told of a young black girl who at night prays for blue eyes. "Beloved," winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize, is the story of an escaped slave who slashes the throat of her daughter and then plays mother to the child's ghost.

She writes about how her characters live, not the system that makes them live that way. Slavery and poverty are not primary subjects, but background and context.

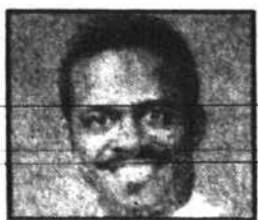
In "Sula," she begins by offering a quick history of the novel's setting. It is a black neighborhood in the hills ironically known as "The Bottom," a phrase that refers to fertile land. Many years ago, a white farmer had promised a slave freedom and good land if he performed

betrayal echoing like screams that soften but never die. Sula is the town's free-thinker. The more conventional Nel is her best friend until Sula steals her husband and then dumps him for someone else. As in all her novels, Morrison is not asking us to approve of everything her characters do, but to understand why they did them. By the end of

"Sula," with both Sula and Nel's husband dead, Nel realizes who was the person that mattered most.

"And the loss pressed down on her chest and came up into her throat. 'We was girls together,' she said as though explaining something. 'O Lord, Sula,' she cried, 'girl, girl, girl, girl, girl.'"

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RANDOM HOUSE



Toni Morrison

some difficult chores. When the slave was finished, the farmer told him he had no problems freeing him, but was concerned about the other half of the bargain.

"So he told the slave that he was very sorry that he had to give him valley land. He had hoped to give him a piece of the Bottom. The slave blinked and said he thought valley land was bottom land. The master said, 'Oh, no' See those hills? That's bottom land, rich and fertile."

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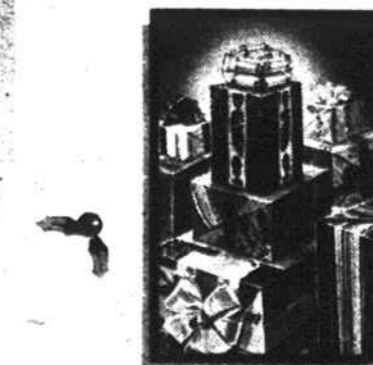
TTX9 May the miracle of love bless you this holiday season



JSX1 May the spirit of the holidays inspire everlasting unity among all people



KG54 This season, as we share in our laughter and jubilation, we celebrate the gift of good friendship. Happy Holidays



KG55 Give the gifts of truth, love, and heritage. And receive the gift of peace this holiday season



MBX5 Let the sounds of the season jazz up your holidays and fill your year with good cheer



KG52 The light of Kwanzaa reminds us of our ancient past. Like those who planted the seeds of faith, we tender and nurture the garden of spiritual growth for our children to enjoy and to share in the harvest. The gifts of life. May your year be filled with celebration



KG51 Blessed is the Miracle of the Season. The birth of hope, the celebration of love. May the spirit of the holidays be with you now and throughout the coming year



KG53 May the joy of this season be an everlasting inspiration to you and yours. Season's Greetings



JSX2 May the holiday wishes of peace, love and harmony guide us on the path to goodness in the coming year



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