

Parks becomes first black woman to win Pulitzer for drama

NEW YORK — "Topdog/Underdog," a bruising yet often comic two-character play about sibling rivalry and dreams denied, won the Pulitzer Prize last week and made Suzan-Lori Parks the first black woman to win the drama award.



Parks

"It's a real 'us' moment right now. And not just 'us' as in African-American women playwrights, but 'us' meaning everybody who was and is involved in 'Topdog/Underdog,'" said Parks, 38. She was interviewed from the offices of the off-Broadway, nonprofit Public Theater, where "Topdog/Underdog" had its world premiere last July.

The play, a hit at the Public Theater, made its official Broadway debut on Sunday night to rave reviews. It portrays black brothers named Lincoln and Booth and their verbal and physical sparring.

Montgomery bus station to become museum honoring Freedom Riders

In an effort to preserve the story of the 1960s' Freedom Riders' travels through the segregated South, the Alabama Historical Commission is planning a museum in and around the Greyhound station where a mob attacked the first contingent of riders.

The incident in 1961 helped to push the federal government to protect African Americans' civil rights.

"It's important to commemorate what happened there 41 years ago," said Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), one of the core group of Freedom Riders. "And the best way to do that is to dramatize and show how just a few years ago it was impossible for blacks and whites to ride together on the same bus, to use the same waiting rooms and restroom facilities without being beaten or jailed."

The museum will be one of a dozen recently opened or scheduled to open over the next decade as the South prepares for 50-year anniversaries of significant civil rights campaigns.

Officials expect to restore the 51-year-old structure and facade and modify the interior to accommodate displays and exhibits. It will include exhibits on three floors of an annex and in the station. It will give visitors an understanding of what the Freedom Riders experienced.

The restoration of the bus station and annex will cost about \$10 million and the museum is scheduled to open in May 2005.

NYC comish gets 'F' from black officers

NEW YORK — Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said Monday he is surprised by the near failing marks he received from a minority police officers' group rating his first 100 days in office.

The group, 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, gave Kelly an "F" in recruitment efforts, and "Ds" for morale, promotions and assignments, enforcement and discipline. The group gave Kelly a "C-minus" for establishing community relations.

Kelly defended his record. "I think I have a record of recruitment, as far as minority recruitment, which was also attacked, that I would hold up against anyone," Kelly said.

Kelly pointed out that in 1993, during his first tenure as police commissioner, his minority recruitment campaign attracted 68,000 applicants, the highest number ever to sign up for the police exam, and the highest percentage of minorities.

So far this year, the department has more than 20,000 applications to take the next police exam in June. Kelly said 35 percent are African-American, 34 percent are Hispanic and 23 percent are white.

"I think those are very impressive statistics," Kelly said. "I don't know exactly where this (the group's report) is coming from. I'm surprised, and again, would hold my record up next to anyone's."

Adams said Kelly is deserving of the grades. "The grades that Commissioner Kelly received from our group is an indication that he lacks the creativity or desire to address those issues that the communities of color believe are important," Adams said Sunday.

Adams said Kelly's efforts to reach out to minorities have to go beyond his going to black churches on Sundays.

"It's fine to attend church on Sunday, but what are you doing on Monday?" Adams said. "He's killing us with a smile."

Justice Department OKs settlement in Cincinnati police brutality lawsuit

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft has signed off on a settlement in a racial profiling lawsuit reached between the U.S. Justice Department, community groups and the city.

The Ohio chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union was the last group to approve the settlement of the lawsuit filed in March 2001. The Cincinnati City Council, which admitted to wrong-doing in the lawsuit, and the Black United Front also have signed the agreement. Cincinnati's Fraternal Order of Police accepted the deal last Monday.

Under the settlement, the city will set up a community-oriented policing program that would address 30 years of complaints in the black community about systematic police discrimination, racial profiling and excessive use of force.

Cincinnati's Office of Municipal Investigations and a citizen review panel would be replaced by the Citizen Complaint Authority. Additionally, an independent monitor will review and report to the Justice Department on the city's efforts to correct the problems over the next five years.

"This agreement is the best police-community relations agreement ever negotiated in the U.S. The landmark agreement would make Cincinnati the first of various race-based policing cases in the country to wrap significant restrictions on use of force with commitments to bias-free policing and adoption of a community problem oriented policing model," ACLU lawyer Scott Greenwood told reporters.

Racial incidents on campuses common

The nation was shocked and repulsed last fall when it was disclosed that white frat members at Auburn University in Alabama and the University of Mississippi had demonstrated brazen racial insensitivity. At separate parties, smiling students saw nothing wrong with walking around in blackface, mocking police brutality, or re-enacting a Ku Klux Klan lynching. Were these just isolated pranks that got out of hand? Or were the incidents indicative of deeper problems?

To answer these and other questions, NNPA Washington Correspondent Hazel Trice Edney embarked on a three-month investigation that becomes one of NNPA's NorthStar Investigative Reports. Edney uncovered some disturbing trends, even on campuses that have prided themselves on efforts to create diverse student bodies and administrations. This is the first of a three-part series on what she found.

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY
NNPA CORRESPONDENT

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. —

LaToya Carson, now a junior at Penn State University, was just a freshman when she was pelted with more than just the n-word at a party.

"There were some drunk Caucasian fellows across the street yelling through the window at me and they started making catcalls," she recounts. "And then when I wouldn't look, they said, 'Hey, are you a nigger?' And then all of a sudden a bottle, a glass bottle, crashed against the window. And they started calling me, 'Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!'"



Photo by Monica Morgan

Van Turner, right, and Dumaka Shabazz, both law students, encountered racist graffiti and nooses hung from a tree at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

That's not the kind of reception one would expect on a college campus at the beginning of the 21st century. Expected or not, it is an ugly reality. Racist incidents have been on the rise for the past three years, according to Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Education statistics.

Nowhere was that made more vivid than on the campuses of Auburn University in Alabama and the University of Mississippi, where white students in blackface simulated a KKK lynching and a police shooting of what was

depicted as a black man on his knees picking cotton.

Auburn and Ole Miss got the adverse national publicity, but by no means are they the only offenders. The Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala., has compiled a list of campus hate incidents over the past five years. Among them:

- In Fresno, Calif., a black college student was beaten with a metal pipe. A white man, said to have been a member of a skinhead group called the Peckerwoods, was convicted of the crime.
- At Stanford University in

California, racist e-mails were sent to 25,000 computer users.

• An employee at the University of Illinois at Chicago sent a poem with racial slurs to six faculty members and several students.

• A racist note was left on the dorm door of a black student at Kalamazoo College in Michigan. The student's bed was later set afire.

• At St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, a swastika and racist graffiti were scrawled on the dorm room door of an African-American student.

See College on A9

Bishop Tutu criticizes acquittal of apartheid germ warfare head

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE TOWN, South Africa —

Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu on Sunday criticized a judge's decision to acquit the head of apartheid South Africa's germ warfare program on murder, fraud and drug charges, saying the decision undermined the judicial process' credibility.

High Court Judge Willie Hartzenberg, a white judge appointed by South Africa's apartheid government, cleared Dr. Wouter Basson last Thursday on 46 charges, saying prosecutors had failed to prove he had done anything illegal.

Tutu, who is visiting the United States, said in a letter to the Sunday Times newspaper he was shocked, but not surprised at the acquittal.

"The judge made it clear from the beginning that he did not believe the prosecution had a case," Tutu wrote.

"He was quite contemptu-

ous of their efforts, which is a big blow to the judicial process," Tutu wrote.

Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his role in fighting South Africa's apartheid regime. After all-race elections in 1994, he was appointed to head the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated apartheid era abuses and offered amnesty to those who

made full disclosure of their crimes.

During Basson's trial, witnesses told how a program he headed tried to create deadly bacteria and anti-fertility drugs that would only affect blacks, poisoned opponents' clothing and stockpiled cholera, HIV and anthrax for use against "enemies."

Basson, 51, dubbed "Dr. Death" by the local media,

said he was merely following orders and never applied for amnesty.

"There is, I am sure, far greater anger and disgruntlement in the black community particularly at what has happened (in the court case) than ever happened in the amnesty process," Tutu said.

The government plans to appeal Hartzenberg's verdict.



Kelly



Tutu

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