

Tyson will be WSSU's commencement speaker

Saturday's service is free and open to the public

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Oscar-nominated actress Cicely Tyson will deliver the address for Winston-Salem State University's 116th Spring Commencement at the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum on Saturday, May 10, at 9:45 a.m. The ceremony is free and open to the public.

Tyson was raised in Harlem, New York by devoutly religious parents from the Caribbean island of Nevis. She was discovered by a fashion editor at Ebony magazine and, with her stunning looks, she quickly rose to the top of the modeling industry. Modeling eventually led to acting.

Tyson made her stage debut in a Harlem YMCA production of "Dark of the Moon" in the 1950s. By 1957, she began acting in Off-Broadway productions. Tyson got her first real break in 1963, playing a secretary to George C. Scott on the TV series "East Side/West Side."

In 1966, Tyson signed on with the daytime soap "The Guiding Light." That same year, she made her credited screen debut starring opposite Sammy Davis Jr. in the drama "A Man Called Adam." More film, television, and stage work followed, but Tyson did not truly become a star until her Oscar-nominated performance in the Depression-era drama "Sounder" in 1972.

Tyson next hid her good looks beneath layers of old-age makeup to convincingly portray a 110-year-old former slave who tells her extraordinary life story in "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" in 1974. She was the first African-American actress to win an Emmy award for



Cicely Tyson honors the late Rosa Parks at an event last year.

Outstanding Lead Actress in a Television Movie for her performance.

Tyson subsequently had great success on television, particularly with her role in the legendary miniseries "Roots" (1977) and her work in "The Women of Brewster Place" in 1989.

Tyson's commitment to the arts extends beyond television, movies, and the stage. She co-founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem with renowned dancer and choreographer Arthur Mitchell. The Cicely Tyson High School of Performing and Fine Arts, named in her honor, is located in East Orange, N.J. Tyson lives in Atlanta.

Alcoholism

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Using a newly emerging tool to study proteins, called antibody microarray analyses, Gu and colleagues are able to measure levels of more than 500 different proteins in tissue samples. In a pilot study, they noted that beta-catenin was increased in alcoholics, so they studied it in more detail. In the current study, they evaluated levels of 17 proteins associated with the catenin signaling pathway.

"This is a powerful tool for examining the abundance of large numbers of proteins simultaneously," said Gu, an assistant professor of neurobiology and anatomy.

He cautioned that more research is needed before scientists can use the informa-

tion to develop a potential treatment. He said a next step is to study animals to determine exactly when levels of beta-catenin increase.

"If the change happens early, it may explain how the brain adapts and could be a potential treatment target," he said. "If it shows up later, it could be from the toxic effects of alcohol. We need to further define its role."

The researchers studied postmortem brain tissue samples from 14 male chronic alcoholics and 14 age-matched male individuals with no history of alcohol abuse. The samples were from the superior frontal cortex, an area of the brain associated with alcohol abuse that is a part of the brain pathway that involves feelings of desire and reward.

scholarships to study in Canada and Australia and then returned to Malawi to attend medical school. After her postdoctoral training in South Africa, she will return to Malawi again. "We practice medicine in the most difficult settings," Kanyama said. "Most of my classmates left

for developed countries, but I remain to serve the nation." UNC conducts global health activities in more than 50 countries, and recently established the Institute for Global Health and Infectious Diseases to unite and strengthen these efforts across the campus and around the globe. Carolina's work in Malawi is just one example of UNC's mission to increase its global reach in research, teaching and service.

The Gilead Foundation is a non-profit organization that seeks to improve the health and well-being of underserved communities around the world.



Hoffman

cers has any postdoctoral training in any area, said Hoffman, who is also a research associate professor in the School of Medicine's department of medicine.

With the help of UNC and funding from the Gilead Foundation, two promising young physicians from the Malawi College of Medicine in Blantyre, Malawi's largest city, will undergo three years of postdoctoral training in internal medicine at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. This will better equip them to combat Malawi's HIV epidemic, which affects 14 percent of the population.

Dr. Cecelia Kanyama, one of the UNC Project's medical officers, has been selected to be the first of these trainees. Kanyama, the ninth child of two school teachers, earned

Abbott

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sonally," she related. "There were many times when I felt left out, I felt demeaned."

Yet, Abbott dug her heels in and resolved to make the new job work.

"I was not going to go backwards; I was not going to give up," she related. "I didn't let race relations stand in the way of anything I wanted to do."

Abbott, a native of Ruffin, NC and one of seven children, says she went into nursing because, "I didn't want to be a teacher - most of my family is in education."

It wasn't long however, until she fell in love with the profession.

"When I first came here, I was so impressed - I saw everybody in the operating room working together as a team, and I wanted to be a part of that," she recalled. "I enjoyed it ... I would always volunteer for the most challenging jobs, despite what was going on around me."

Hard at work within the hospital's walls, Abbott says she and the other nurses worked side by side, as equals. Beyond the OR doors was another story.

"I remember getting stopped by police officers wanting to know what we were doing on this side of town," she said of herself and then roommate Phylis Roberts, an African American nurse she met at Kate B. Reynolds Hospital School of Nursing.

For a long time, Abbott says she was the only black nurse in the OR, and one of a precious few within the entire hospital.

"I looked around and there was nobody that looked like me," she related. "Once I began to see other, black RN's working here, it was quite a relief to me."

As the years passed by, Abbott's hard work began to pay off. Her first major achievement was landing a coveted spot on the open heart surgery team just four years into her career.

"At first they wouldn't let me near the open heart room," she said. "Back then, it was a novelty."

From there, Abbott continued to climb in her career, settling finally at the position she will retire from in June, director of the Surgical Services Academy.

"I think I owe it to my parents, especially my daddy because he was the epitome of Martin Luther King," she said of her perseverance. "It was

instilled in us to be at the top of every list there was - every good list."

A lot has changed since she began her career more than 40 years ago, Abbott says.

"This place has grown from a hospital on Hawthorne Hill to a mega organization... I have seen us (black nurses) go from not being recognized to recognition for all of our accomplishments," she said, citing several prominent national nurses' organizations that are led by black women.

Upon her retirement, Abbott says she hopes to fortify the next generation of African American nurses, imparting the wisdom of all her experience.

"I'm anxious to be a role model for black, American youth," she said. "I want to be able to help somebody and share a part of my knowledge with other young nurses. I'm hoping that my life here has been a benchmark for them to be able to live up to and surpass."

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