

Television

New soap promotes interracial understanding

By **BILLY STOCKARD**
Staff Writer

March 27 was a red-letter day for daytime TV. On that day, "Generations" debuted, marking the first time in soap opera history that one of the chief families in a soap is black. In the past, blacks were virtually excluded from television altogether; then things started to change.

Black actors and actresses were hired for roles on all sorts of shows, but unfortunately were typecast as maids, criminals or prostitutes. Only in the past two decades have we seen blacks portray doctors, lawyers and other respectable professions. Now, viewers can see a core black family sharing the spotlight with a white family on a show that hopes to make a name for itself on daytime TV.

"Generations" is about the Marshalls, who are black, and the Whitmores, who are white. The Marshalls are led by matriarch Vivian Potter (Lynn Hamilton), who was once a housekeeper for the family of Whitmore matriarch Rebecca Whitmore (Pat Crowley).

Both Vivian and Rebecca have gone on to raise families of their own, but maintain a longstanding friendship. This spirit of interracial understanding dominates "Generations" — one of the reasons the program is so original.

In an interview with Soap Opera Digest, head writer and creator Sally Sussman stressed how hard it was to integrate one or two blacks into storylines on soaps that have been going on for years. Sussman said: "We're starting off with a specific intention: we want to tell the story of three generations of two families." The head writer went on to mention that these black actors are indeed in major roles. She added, "They will

always have the credibility that comes with being a main family. It's a different approach and one which I think will surprise people."

The show started off with both Rebecca Whitmore and Ruth Marshall (Joan Pringle), who is also Vivian Potter's daughter, hoping to buy Rebecca's old house. While Rebecca wants to get back what was once in her family, Ruth wants to buy the house to make a statement. Ruth saw her mother work for the Whitmores while she was a little girl, and she resented not being able to experience the life of the rich. She married Henry Marshall (Taurean Blacque), and from there began the Marshall clan.

Interestingly enough, Rebecca Whitmore helped Henry Marshall start his career. Henry is the owner of several ice cream stores in the Chicago area, another unique aspect of the soap. On "Dallas" there's oil, and on "Falcon Crest" the big bucks are in wine. But on "Generations" the main business is ice cream, something we can all appreciate. Also, by setting the soap in Chicago, the characters can draw on a realistic locale known for its large populations of both races. With the exception of "The Bold and the Beautiful," which is set in Los Angeles, this is the only soap centered in a non-fictitious metropolitan area.

"Generations" not only features successful older characters, but also college students of both races. What's more, the friendships that exist between them are a tribute to the battle against prejudice that future generations must fight. As Kristoff St. John told Jet magazine, his character of Adam is a precedent-setting role to play.

"I feel very proud to be representing a young, 22-year-old Black

man on the screen having something different for a change than selling drugs, being on the wrong track."

The program is not even a month old, yet it's getting a lot of media attention. Sussman said that one of the first questions people asked was whether there would be interracial romance featured. She responded, "To tell you the truth, we're not really interested in that. I think it can

be very exploitive. We're writing about the reality of life. Reality of life in Chicago includes black families."

Probably one of the realities that has crossed Sussman's mind is the competition. With ABC's "Loving" and CBS' top-rated "The Young and the Restless" airing at the same time, the new show may take a while to find an audience. But Sussman doesn't sound discouraged about the show's future.

"I tell people this is a soap for the 1990s," she explains. "This is about people. I think it's the next step in soaps."

"Generations" airs weekdays at 12:30 p.m. on NBC. The newborn baby of soapdom would like 30 minutes of your time — time the show assures will be well-spent. It's always been said that soaps are great for escapism. But who said you couldn't have a little reality with the fantasy?



Just A Taste!

RESTAURANT GUIDE



GREEK

Mariakakis Restaurant and Bakery

Famous in Chapel Hill since 1963, offers a variety of famous Greek pastries and breads made fresh daily in its on-premises bakery. Pizza is the restaurant's trademark but many authentic Greek dishes are offered along with sandwiches, homemade barbecue, chicken, seafood and 60 brands of domestic and imported beers and 25 wines.

casual lunch or delightful dinner. The average price of our 100-item dinner menu is about \$8.00.

Il Palio Ristorante

There is no spectacle in all of Europe like The Palio in Siena, Italy. In Chapel Hill there is no finer dining than that at The Siena Hotel. Il Palio serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Its highly trained chefs prepare magnificent Italian cuisine that is served by attentive staff in an elegant setting.

CAFE

Colonel Chutney's

When it's time to relax! Serving gourmet burgers, super salads, fresh seafood, prime rib, grilled steaks and chicken, homemade desserts and lots of fun. The best late night menu available seven nights a week until one a.m. at reasonable prices. PATIO NOW OPEN! Just a block from campus, 300 W. Rosemary St. 942-7575.

Marathon Restaurant

Offers a variety of delicious foods at low prices: Try our pizzas, subs, salads or our authentic Greek specialties including gyros, souvlaki and Aegean grilled cheese. We're located at 708 W. Rosemary, so come in and enjoy a tasty meal or call and order - WE DELIVER in limited areas. 933-0590.

INTERNATIONAL

Marco Polo International Restaurant.

Chefs from Italy and China prepare fabulous dishes from the finest provinni veal, stuffed clams, to szechuan shrimp. Thailand chicken and spicy Indian curried dishes, pleasing the most critical palate. Come for a

OUTDOORS

La Residence

Enjoy supper under the stars on the Church Street deck or inside at the bar. La Residence has created a light, moderately priced menu for casual diners. No need to dress up or make reservations for the cafe. Open nightly, 6-9:30 except Mondays. All credit cards accepted.



Saturdays 7 am-12 noon
Roberson St., Carrboro
Tuesdays 7-11 am
Cedar Falls Park, Weaver Dairy Rd., Chapel Hill

On sale will be spinach, garden rocket arugala, spring onions, organic vegetables, fresh baked goods, goat cheese, eggs, herb vinegars, honey, jams, jellies, pickles, periwinkle ground cover, bedding plants, garden art, and other crafts. As always all products are locally grown and made by participating vendors. So visit the Farmers' Market to buy or browse. Bring a friend or meet a new one.
RAIN OR SHINE
Some items not available on Tuesday.



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
Tonight

DEXTER ROMWEBER

Featuring
Jazz and Rockabilly

Starts at 7:30 pm
310 W. Franklin St.
933-3767