

ENTERTAINMENT

Players to present 'funny' play *Crimes of the Heart* in November

By Vickie Webb-Thomas

The University Players of Elizabeth City State University will open the 1989-90 season with Beth Henley's comedy, *Crimes of the Heart*, winner of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Best Play.

The play, a funhouse of rollicking misfortune, centers around the reunion of the three Magrath sisters in Hazlehurst, Mississippi. The event is brought about when Babe, one of the sisters, shoots her bigwig husband in the stomach because, as she says, "I just didn't like his stinkin' looks."

Scheduled for performances on November 1, 2, 3, and 5 (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday), *Crimes of the Heart* will be presented at 8:00 p.m. each evening in the Little Theater, located in the G.R. Little Library on the campus of Elizabeth City State University. Admission is \$3.50 for public, \$1.50 for faculty and staff and \$1.00 for students.

Shawn Smith, director of the ECSU production, has assembled a strong cast of University Players' veterans and newcomers for the play. Elizabeth L. Jones, appearing as Lenny Magrath, the older sister, was last seen on the Little Theater stage in the University Players' production of *Lysistrata*. An experienced actress and director, Jones is currently Community Center Manager for the new Community and Small Business Center at the College of the Albemarle and is a writer and performer with the professional comedy troupe "Flippin' the Channel."

The role of Meg Magrath, the middle sister, is being played by

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Marsha Lynn Williams. A former ECSU student, Williams has appeared in *The Mousetrap*, *No Place to be Somebody*, and the title role in *Lysistrata*, among other University Players' productions.

Babe, the youngest Magrath sister, will be portrayed by another veteran of the University Players, senior English/Drama major Vicki Webb-Thomas. Director of the 1989 spring production of *Godspell* at ECSU, Vicki has also appeared in *The Member of the Wedding* and *Vanities* in the Little Theater.

Ursula McMillion, last seen in the one-act play *The Incarceration of Annie*, will appear as the nosy cousin next door, Chick Boyle. McMillion, who is a sophomore English/Communications major, also appeared in last year's production of *Lysistrata*. Rodney S. Moore, a sophomore English/news media major as well as a second major in political science, will play Bab's lawyer, Barnette Lloyd. This will be Rodney's first role in a major production. The role of Doc Porter, Meg's old boyfriend, is being portrayed by new-comer Barry C. Gray. Barry, a freshman Business major,

performed in several productions in high school, including *How to Succeed in Business Without Even Trying* and *The Odd Couple*.

"I am very excited about this production," says director Smith. "*Crimes of the Heart* is a very funny play. I'm sure audiences will still be laughing long after they leave the theater."

Following *Crimes of the Heart*, The Players will produce a workshop production of the romantic comedy *The Owl and the Pussycat* in December.

Opening the spring semester will be *The Lion in Winter*, a comedy that re-unites King Henry of England with his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine at a rollicking family Christmas. *The Lion in Winter* will be presented in February, with auditions scheduled for early December.

The Players will close out the year with a One-Act Play Festival of several short plays directed by advanced theater students. The Players are calling this year's fare "a joyous season of laughter."

For additional information regarding the drama season, contact the Players' office in the Little Theater or phone 335-3436, extension 436.

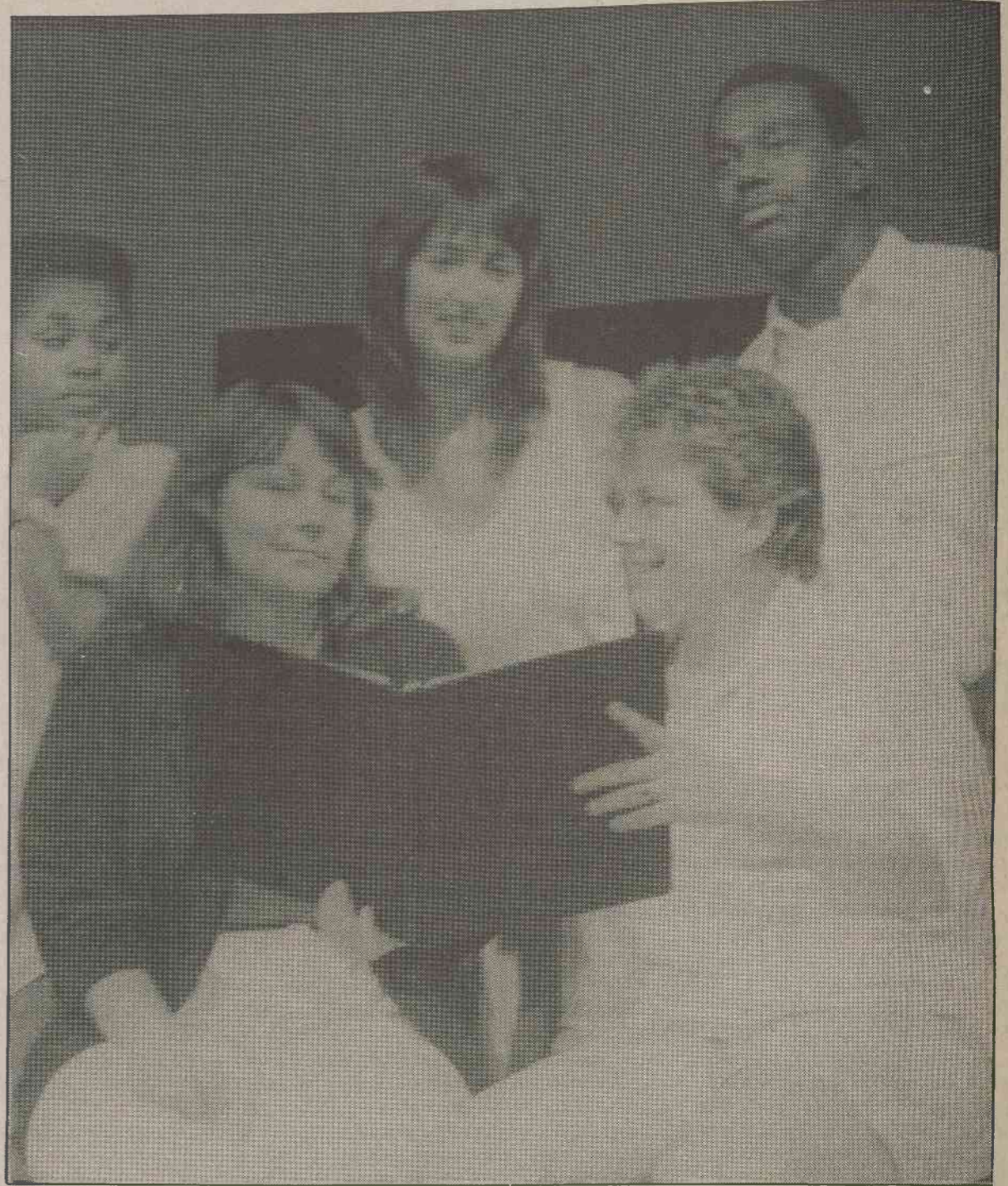


Photo by Richard McIntire

The University Players will present *Crimes of the Heart*, The Pulitzer Prize winning comedic play by Beth Henley, November first in the Little Theater. University Players Ursula McMillion, former ECSU student-Marsha Williams, Elizabeth Jones, Vickie Webb, and Barry Gray will be performing in this latest Viking thespian production.

Spike Lee's film is a hot summer hit

By Dwayne Colins

Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* was one of the hottest and most controversial movies of summer 89. Although this was not adequately reflected at the box office, the movie left many of its viewers conscious of life in the inner city, and illustrated that racial prejudices exist not only openly but subliminally. *Do The Right Thing* also provided dramatic proof that racial problems do not just exist down South, but up North as well.

The movie's setting is Brooklyn, New York, 1989, the hottest day of the summer. The main character "Mookie" portrayed by Lee, works for the neighborhood hangout Sal's Famous Pizzeria. The Italian family establishment is owned and operated by Sal (Danny Aiello) and his two sons. Mookie does deliveries.

The pizzeria is basically supported by black business and thrives solely on money from minorities in the area. Conflict develops when a black customer asks the owner Sal why there aren't any pictures of famous blacks on the "wall of fame" in the restaurant. The wall displays only famous Italian-American heroes. Sal replies that the restaurant is "his place" and that he will therefore put up any pictures he wants. The customer "Buggin' Out" (Giancarlo Esposito) organizes a boycott of Sal's Famous

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pizzeria.

Buggin' Out teams up with another interesting character "Radio Raheem" who entertains himself, as well as the whole block, with the sounds of Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" thumping from his boom box. Joined by "Smiley" who's mentally disabled and sells small photographs of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, the three enter the restaurant that hot summer evening along with "Radio Raheem's" boom box and declare that they will not leave until there are some pictures of "some brothers" on that wall.

From that moment tension builds and tempers flare. In essence, all hell breaks loose. And the appearance of the police only makes matters worse. The tension builds to a violent, and tragic, climax.

Spike Lee's character "Mookie" has the majority of the scenes in *Do The Right Thing*. Mookie, who works for "two-fifty a week" (\$250 per week) as a pizza deliveryman, lives with his

sister Jade (portrayed by real life sister Joie Lee), and shares intimate moments with love interest Tina (Rosie Perez) who bears his child, Hector. Spike Lee and cast portray real life characters with real problems. There isn't much sugar coating on these characters.

Lee's character in this movie has a much more dramatic role than in his previous movies (*School Daze*, *She's Gotta Have It*). Mookie portrays the image positively by working, loving, and supporting his small family. In essence Lee's character challenges the stereotype of young black males who don't claim responsibility for the children they produce by young women or un-wed mothers (the "mama's baby, papa's maybe" syndrome).

Besides Lee, the film stars Danny Aiello, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Richard Edson, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, John Turturro and John Savage.

Danny Aiello (Sal) plays a significant role as well. Not only is he re-

sponsible for running his business, he also has to keep his sons from losing their heads to maintain his business. In many of Aiello's scenes there are subtle racial statements made behind closed doors. "I detest this place like a sickness," says Sal's eldest son Pino (Richard Edson), who does not get along with any of Sal's customers.

In another scene, Mookie explains to Pino that some of his favorite sports heroes are black. Pino attempts to explain his favorites, but puts his foot in his mouth when he says "Magic Johnson isn't really black, I mean he doesn't fit the characteristics of being authentically black."

Pino explains that this is true because Johnson is famous.

What Spike Lee conveys in this scene is, isn't it a damn shame that blacks have to be famous in order to get respect from society?

Why are ordinary blacks placed on the lower portion of the totem pole by society? Lee used these certain situations and questions to make incisive comments on racial stereotypes and attitudes in society.

This movie is Lee's best work ever. Everything ties together for the moviegoer. The movie is concise and easy to comprehend, and it leaves the viewer with a deeper comprehension of race relations and tensions in America. This is truly a movie you can't afford to miss.



Johnson makes dreams come true

By Calvin Stansbury

(*Succeeding Against The Odds*, by John H. Johnson, New York, Warner Books, Hardcover, 372 pages, \$19.95)

"I believe that the only failure is trying to try" says John H. Johnson, publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazine. In his moving autobiography, the entrepreneur rose from the welfare lines of Chicago to become a member of "Forbes 400" list of the wealthiest Americans.

Johnson was born in a tin-roofed house in Arkansas in 1918. His childhood was one of deprivation, one in which hopes for better things of life were only a mirage. His chances for educational advancement appeared to be highly unlikely because of racial prejudice against blacks in the south.

However, due to Johnson's tenacious attitude to succeed, he has become a corporate executive, owner of a cosmetics industry and a member of numerous prestigious boards. His life story is an inspiration to others with similar dreams and aspirations of reaching the top of the corporate lad-

der no matter what their obstacles.

Because there was no opportunity for Blacks to receive a high school education in Arkansas, in 1927, Mrs. Getrude Johnson traveled with her son John to Chicago in search of a better education for him. In Chicago, John excelled not only in academics, but also in sports and other extracurricular activities.

Johnson had a dream of succeeding even though diverse odds favored his failure. "Long shots do come in hard work; dedication and perseverance will overcome almost any prejudice and open almost any door," wrote Johnson, who borrowed \$500, using his mother's furniture as collateral, to begin his business in publishing.

On November 1, 1942, Johnson began publishing *Negro Digest*. Three years later saw the birth of *Ebony*, a magazine that promoted positive black images that would influence others to fulfill their potential and to be proud of being Black Americans.

On November 1, 1951, *Jet* was sent into publication. This magazine, along with *Ebony*, allowed him to go from

the welfare lines of Chicago to a lush Lake Shore Drive condominium.

Getting started was tough for this entrepreneur. Many obstacles presented themselves before him. One substantial obstacle was his color. Even though he endured prevalent prejudices, Johnson persevered in his attempt to be successful in a white man's world. He aspired to reach his fullest potential, because he did not believe in the possibility of failure. In fact, he did not use the word "failure" in his vocabulary.

Determined not to return to his former level of poverty, Johnson persisted and continued to reach greater heights in the success of Johnson Publishing Company. The circulation of his magazines boomed, due to his success, dedication, tenacity, faith and self confidence.

"My story is not a Black story or a White story. It is a Green story," wrote Johnson. His story, written in readable prose, is an inspiration to all people who aspire to free themselves from the chains of mediocrity and poverty.

ECSU's University Players will present

Winner of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Best Play

**CRIMES
OF THE
HEART**
BY BETH HENLEY

November 1, 2, 3 and 5th at 8:00 pm in the Little Theater

STARRING:

Elizabeth Jones, Marsha Lynn Williams, Vickie Webb-Thomas and Ursula McMillion

"Crimes of the Heart is a masterpiece."

--The Village Voice

ADMISSION:
Public----\$3.50
Faculty----\$1.50
Students---\$1.00