

# WSSU Student Reaching For The Stars

By Sam Davis

"I made a decision early in life to reach for the stars and pursue a career in the performing arts," says Percell Thomas, a senior at WSSU.

With the support of his family, that decision has proven to be a good one. Like many performers, Percell, (whose first name is actually De'master, but whose friends call him Daris) has had his ups and downs along the way. This summer should be one of those ups!

On a recent business trip to New York City, where he now calls home, he was asked to do an on-the-spot audition.

"Totally unprepared, but knowing that opportunity was knocking, I performed an excerpt from a play titled Love Letters To My Lady by R. Kipfer Browning," says Percell. The audition was performed before the reknown Ms. Caterina Jarboro, the first black female opera star.

The audition was successful. A couple of days later, Percell was referred to director/playwright, Steven Taylor whose play

"You" is scheduled to open off-broadway around mid-July.

"After several conversations with Mr. Taylor, I was considered for the positons of stage manager and assistant choreographer," he says. Percell has worked in both positions on other productions.

His past credits include productions of Ain't Misbehavin, with the Sounds In Action Dance Theatre Company of Winston-Salem, and West Side Story and Purple with the Manhattan Eastside Theatre of New York. He has been seen, on campus.

As the frenchman in 'Twelve Angry Men' and George The Junkie in 'What The Wine Sellers Buy.'

We asked Percell what he attributed his success to and what does he hope to achieve? He says, "not only my success, but, I also credit God for my failures, as well. Without him I'd never make it, and without failures, I'd never learn to improve myself. My goals..are to perform on Broadway and to perfrom in Paris."

Perhaps, he'll make it. Until then, we say, "Good luck and break a leg."

## Prominent Attorney Visits

By Melvin Barrino

How would you feel if you were offered a contract that paid you \$800,000 a year for doing something you enjoyed?

Other than thoughts of how you would spend that much money, you would probably have other questions, such as: What do I have to do? What are the clauses? Is it legitimate? Who else will get some of the money? Would the majority of the money go to me? Is it tax free? And most importantly, would you know how to manage it?

Mr. Reginald Turner an attorney from Los Angeles, California, recently took the time to answer these questions and others on the WSSU campus.

Turner is accustomed to counseling talented individuals who have been offered big money contracts. His motto is: "It's not how much money you make but how much you keep." His clients include: Tony Dorsett, star running back for the Dallas Cowboys, world-class sprinter Evelyn Ashford, Phoenix Suns basketball player James Edwards, Jarvis Redwine a Minnesota Vikings football player, Rod Higinis a rookie basketball player for the Chicago Bulls, and David Hill a singer, musician, and WSSU graduate.

Turner has also worked with famed band leader Quincy Jones. He negotiated contracts with Jones proteges Patti Austin and James Ingram. Turner and Quincy Jones are also in the process of finalizing negotiations for a musical tour.

At age 29, Turner is considered one of the finest sports and entertainment lawyers in the business. Currently, Turner is touring the country promoting sports and entertainment law. He says, "in order to become a successful sports and entertainment lawyer, one must stay in contact with a great deal of people and have the ability to make money for his clients and himself."

Naturally, he must gain the trust and confidence of his clients. Jarvis Redwine, was approached by many agents but chose Reggie because he treated him like a friend and family member. Turner says that a person needs a certain amount of mentality to survive in the sports and entertainment world. In pursuing clients, Turner looks for genuine, consistent talent.

Turner's wife Chris, who he met in law school has seen him grow from just a hard working student to a bonafide attorney. She says Reggie is a very nice man who cares about people and enjoys what he's doing.

"I'm the last of the original nice guys in my line of work" says Turner. "My tactics and negotiations are pretty basic."

Turner has a staff of 15 people which consists of lawyers, accountants, talent recruiters, financial analysts, and a clerical unit. This may not seem like much for a management group but it lets them spend more personal time with their clients.

Turner negotiates a lot with well-known sports and entertainment stars who have ego problems. However, if they want to do business with him they have to abide by his rules and standards or either take their crying elsewhere.

Turner is a native of Palo Altos, California and received his bachelors degree from Stanford University where he also excelled in collegiate basketball and football. Mr. Turner received his law degree at Georgetown University.

When asked what made him decide on his field of work Turner said, "I enjoyed sports and I didn't see a pro career in the future, so I decided that sports law would keep me in contact with what I like best. This gave me the opportunity to help talented individuals become financially secure."

## Young Editor

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"I advise people with the ability to communicate effectively through writing to consider a career in the field of journalism," he says. "While we need blacks at daily newspapers, we need even more young, talented blacks in the black-owned press. We also need more owners of newspapers," he states. "We haven't made our final impact in the print media yet, but we're still moving toward it."

As far as advice for a prospective journalist, Johnson says, "make sure you have a firm foundation in writing and

grammar. Secondly, I'd advise that you read as much as you can in order to be as well rounded as possible." He says that editors and reporters alike need to be knowledgeable on a multiplicity of subjects.

Johnson also says that an aspiring journalist needs to get things published before applying to a newspaper. "What's important to an employer is seeing what you've done," he says. "That's how you sell yourself when you go in for an interview with an employer."

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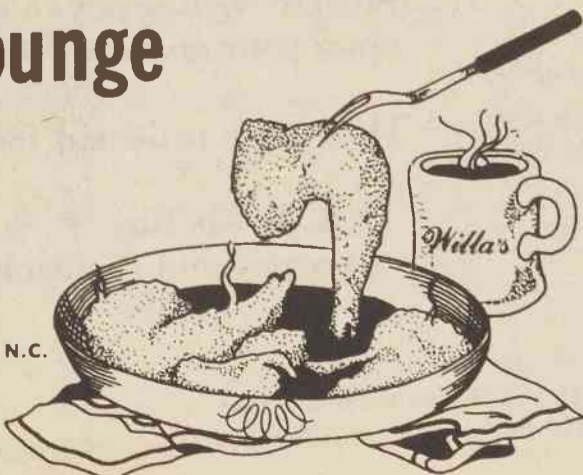
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