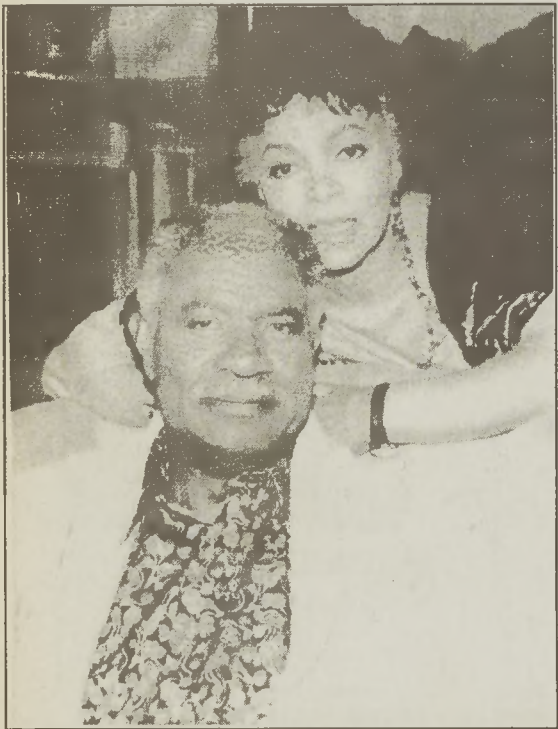


Black History MONTH

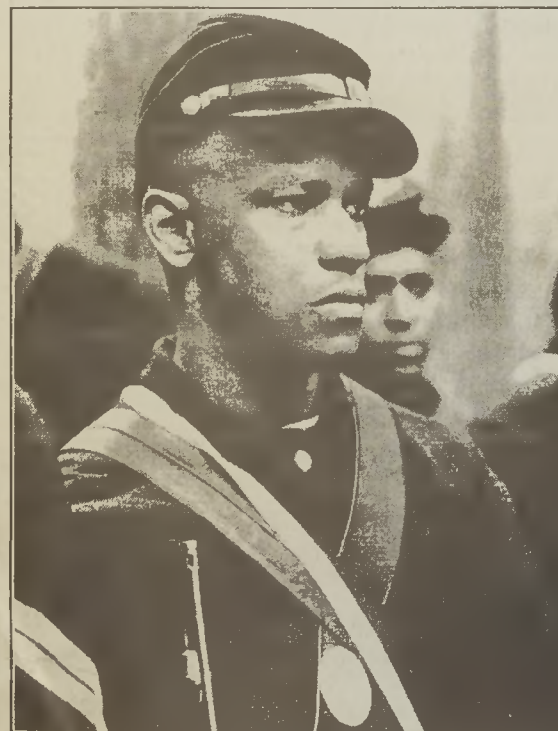
Black Actors



Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee



Sidney Poitier



Denzel Washington

Spike Lee films garner praise, criticism

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Five-foot-six Spike Lee stands as one of the giants in African American film making. His films have been some of the most talked about and con-

with equal fervor. People either love or hate his work.

Critics have mostly praised Lee's work since his stunning major theatrical debut "She's Gotta Have It." Newsweek said "Spike Lee is fresh in both senses of the word - sassy and original."



Scene from Lee's "Get on the Bus."

The New York Times called it "a touch of the classic."

In "She's Gotta Have It," Lee took on prudential sexual mores. It featured the unknown Tracy Camila Johns as a woman with three very distinct lovers. Lee played Mars Blackmon, a hustler who's love for expensive tennis shoes helped him land a contract with Nike to direct commercials.

Lee's most controversial work has been his best. "Do The Right Thing" examined race

berserk," Lee said.

No subject was taboo to Lee. His next film "School Daze" looked at intra-racial prejudice, pitting light and dark-skinned blacks against one another. The movie also questioned the black Greek system, Apartheid and the importance of black colleges and universities. The movie integrated drama, comedy and dance in a herky-jerky fashion, sometimes confusing viewer. Laurence Fishburne starred as Dap, a visionary college radical that was determined to make the student body see his point of view. The movie drew criticism from many African Americans who didn't believe in airing the race's "dirty laundry." It also got him thrown off of Morehouse College's campus. President Hugh Gloster wasn't happy about the film's content and suspended filming. Lee finished the film at Clark College.

Lee's most controversial work has been his best. "Do The Right Thing" examined race

relations. Critically acclaimed, it won best picture and director honors from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the Chicago Film Festival Critics. It was shunned by the Academy Awards, garnering two nominations, Best Supporting Actor for Danny Aiello and Best Original Screenplay. Neither won.

In many ways, "Malcolm X," is Lee's finest and most controversial work. Lee protested loudly when white director Norman Jewison was to do the film. Jewison quietly bowed out and Lee took the job. The outcome was a biopic which has no equal. USA Today called the film, the standard by which all biopics will be judged. Denzel Washington's performance was critically acclaimed and earned him an Oscar nomination for Best Actor.

"Malcolm X" drew criticism for all sides. Poet Amiri Baraka complained the film

See Spike page 16A

troversial works of the last two decades. There seems to be no middle ground when it comes to his work. All his films have been praised or condemned

"I have a lot of friends who like to talk about all the women they have but let a woman even think about having more than one man and (men) go

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