

# NEWSCLIP

312/751-7300

CHICAGO DAILY  
DEFENDER

CHICAGO, IL

PUBL. MON-FRI  
CIRC. M-TH 17,605  
F-20,749

MARCH 21, 2002

## The magnificent three

Dear Editor: *C2*

For the first time in 30 years, three Black actors have been nominated to for Academy Awards. And for the first time in Academy Award history, two Black men will compete against each other for an Oscar for Best Actor in a Leading Role, one of the most prestigious acting awards in the film industry.

In the African American community, the nominations themselves are an amazing feat at which to marvel, but the idea of one these superb actors actually winning an award has the community buzzing with skepticism.

In his own right, Denzel Washington is a leader in the acting industry and he is no stranger to the Academy Awards. In 1989, he was awarded an Oscar for the his supporting role in "Glory" and 13 years since his award, he has yet to receive another, although he has surpassed excellence in many leading roles.

In 1992, he was nominated for Best Actor in a Leading Role for his extraordinary performance in "Malcolm X" and in 1999 he was again nominated for a leading role Academy Award for his phenomenal portrayal of Rubio "Hurricane" Carter in "The Hurricane."

Although Halle Berry and Will Smith are household names when it comes to the entertainment industry, this is their first Academy Award nomination.

It is no secret that Hollywood continues to exemplify a huge disregard when it comes to the acknowledgement of Black actors and actresses. Many Black actors and actresses have made surmountable contributions to this industry.

However, many of them fail to gain the recognition they deserve. It would be acrimonious to assume that

every Black actor or actress deserves an Academy Award, but it would even more acrimonious to have this year's Academy Awards ceremony come and go without at least one of the three actors mentioned above awarded.

Please don't take this the wrong way. The implementation of an affirmative action process during the Academy Awards is not what should be suggested. What is to be assumed is that actors and actresses, regardless of their race, color or creed, will be diligently awarded for their performance and contributions to the film industry. No one wants to see an Oscar given charitably, but everyone wants to see an Oscar given deservedly.

The competition for Best Actor in a Leading Role is still this year. Russell Crowe's performance in a "Beautiful Mind" was phenomenal and contrary to skeptics, Will Smith stunned critics by pulling off Muhammad Ali in "Ali." However, Halle Berry's performance in the critically acclaimed box office hit, "Monster Ball" was extraordinary.

Her portrayal of Leticia Hargrove, a mother grieving at the loss of her son and the recent execution of her husband, has already garnered her a Golden Globe nomination and the National Board of Review Award for Best Actress.

Hands down, Halle should be able to pull off the victory with ease. Nevertheless, congratulations to all the nominees and may the best man or woman win.

Sincerely,

*Valerie Reynolds,  
Roosevelt U.  
journalism student*