

# Audrey's



By **AUDREY J. BERNARD**

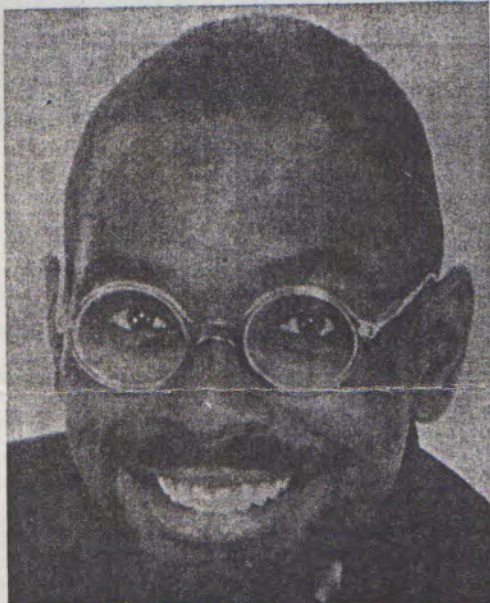
**WILLI SMITH REMEMBERED...**I was there last year at the grand Willie Smith Fundraiser thrown by his baby sister, Toukie Smith, when the then Manhattan Borough President David N. Dinkins issued a proclamation designating February 23rd of each year as Willie Smith Day. I was also there when Toukie was overwhelmed by the outpour of love and donations that made it possible for her to establish the not-for-profit Smith Family Foundation - headed by competent advocate Burt Padell - to help in the war against that dreaded "A" word. Yep, AIDS, the disease that claimed her fashion guru brother Willi Smith at the promising age of 39.

When AIDS snuffed out Willi's life, it deprived the bon tons of one of the most innovative fashion designers of this century for Willi Smith was to fashion what bubbles are to champagne. And, importantly, it robbed the latest TV series "227" star Toukie, of a warm, loving and supportive brother. Then, too, I was there when she pledged an all out war against AIDS until a cure for the horrible disease is found. And to that end, I hope I'm there when a cure for this rueful malady is finally discovered.

**THE BENEFIT...**This year's celebration will be on Sunday, March 11th, at the much ballyhooed Tribeca Grill beginning at 1:00 P.M. Some 600 guest are expected to fill the two floors of the restaurant for a retrospective fashion show, "Willi's World," and, in keeping with the idea of promoting new talent, the designs of five fashion newcomers will be featured during the show. Also included in the ticket price is a buffet lunch, dancing and a raffle. This year's lavish commemoration will benefit the Hale House (for children afflicted with AIDS), I cry (Inner City Roundtable of Youth, Inc.), Berendi Shieb (to aid children with birth defects caused by agent orange) and the City Kids Foundation (a forum for young people to speak out on issues that concern them). The fabulous buffet will be donated by the creme de la creme of Metropolis restaurants that include Caramba, Canal Bar, B. Smith's, America, Columbus, Cafe Americano, Bruxelles, Cafe Luxembourg, Jezebel, Jane's Bar and Grill, Kate's Montrachet, Tribeca Grill, Silvia Wienstock Cakes, Ltd., Fooditude, Toukie's Taste and the Operative Cake Corporation.

**HONORARY CHAIRPERSONS...**Mayor Dinkins, his lovely wife, Joyce are the honorary chairs of this year's salute with Toukie and her friend, actor Robert De Niro, serving as chairmen. Also on their roster of super co-stars are Martin Scorsese, Gregory Hines, Nickolas Ashford, Valerie Simpson, Marla Gibbs, Norma Kamali, Quincy Jones, Cicely Tyson, Donna Karan, Luther Vandross and Michael and Judy O'Neil; and committee members include Christopher Walken, Audrey Smaltz, Dianne Benson,

Lorraine Bracco, Harvey Keitel, Brian McNally, Cis Corman and Isaac Mizrahi. Tickets for the benefit are \$250 per person and are tax deductible. To purchase ticket(s) or obtain additional information call (212) 769-8070 or write the Smith Family Foundation, c/o Burt Padell at 1775 Broadway, 7th Floor, New York,



**WILLI SMITH**

NY 10019. All purchased tickets will be held at the door. This is a sure way of keeping out the deadbeats.

**MAN OF STEEL...**Afro-American sculptor, Melvin Edwards, is having his first New York Gallery showing ever at the CDS Gallery, 13 East 75 Street, New York City (212/772-9555) starting March 6th and running through March 31st, and your're in for a steel treat. The 51-year-old master artist, whose steel sculptures have been presented at the Studio Museum in Harlem; whose barbed-wired-and-chain environmental installation for the lobby gallery of the Whitney Museum of American Art is still a popular conversational piece; whose "Confirmation" steel sculpture proudly adorns the entrance of the Social Security building in Jamaica, Queens; and whose famous Lynch Fragments series of compact sculptures are currently on display in the Jamaica Arts Center in a group show organized by artist Juan Sanchez, is very excited about his Gallery debut - he's been preparing for it for a long, long time. The piece de resistance of this show will be his "Lynch Fragments." There are over 100 eclectic pieces in Mr. Edwards "Lynch Fragments" group that he's been toiling at since 1963. The series consists of the artist's introspective steel art forms which work inspired The New York Times critic Michael Breson to write, "They are inventive and masterly. The ease with which the artist manipulates seemingly unbendable steel bars is essential to a body of work that is very much about the fullest possible understanding of freedom."

**RECORD WHIRL...**The kids at Harlem's Wadleigh Junior High School are still talking about their two recent visitors, Hip Hop star Doug E. Fresh and State Senator David A. Paterson (D-Manhattan) who banned together to bring home the message that drugs and bias have no place in the heart and minds of our city's youth. Why Wadleigh? Well, according to Senator Paterson, "Wadleigh has been the focal point of much adverse publicity over the last few years because of the deplorable physical condition of the school. Now that the school community, Community School District 3, the elected officials and educators have secured the reconst-

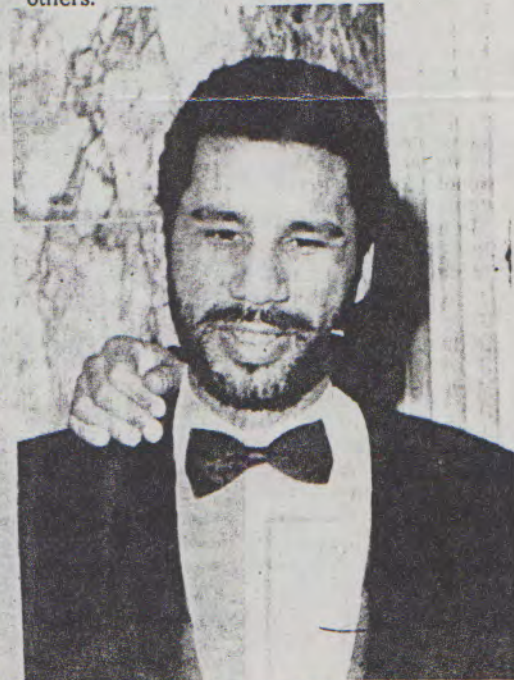


**DOUG E. FRESH**

ruction of the school commencing this summer, I believe it is time for us to reach out to the students with a message that we are concerned not just for the building where they attend classes, but that we have a grave concern for their social welfare as well."

Fresh, who's a native Harlemitite, is no stranger to the young, dynamic and might I add, handsome, Senator. They were together last year for the now historic "Rappers against Racism" rally and concert which drew 35,000 non-violent rap fans to the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building. The enormously successful event spawned a slate of anti-bias bills that the Senator presented in the New York State Legislature in response to the death of Yusef Hawkins in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn.

Fresh, who cares about what happens to the people in the community with special emphasis on the young folks, has been a proponent of a drug-free Harlem. "I believe that one of my responsibilities is to reach out to the young people and remind them that hard work and a positive attitude can equal success. Too many times drugs dealers are the only role models seen, and I feel the need to show them that there are alternatives." Fresh who's frequent guest on the pop charts feels that his music is a way to get the message across to young people to stay in school, away from drugs and to be tolerant of others.



**DAVID A. PATERSON**