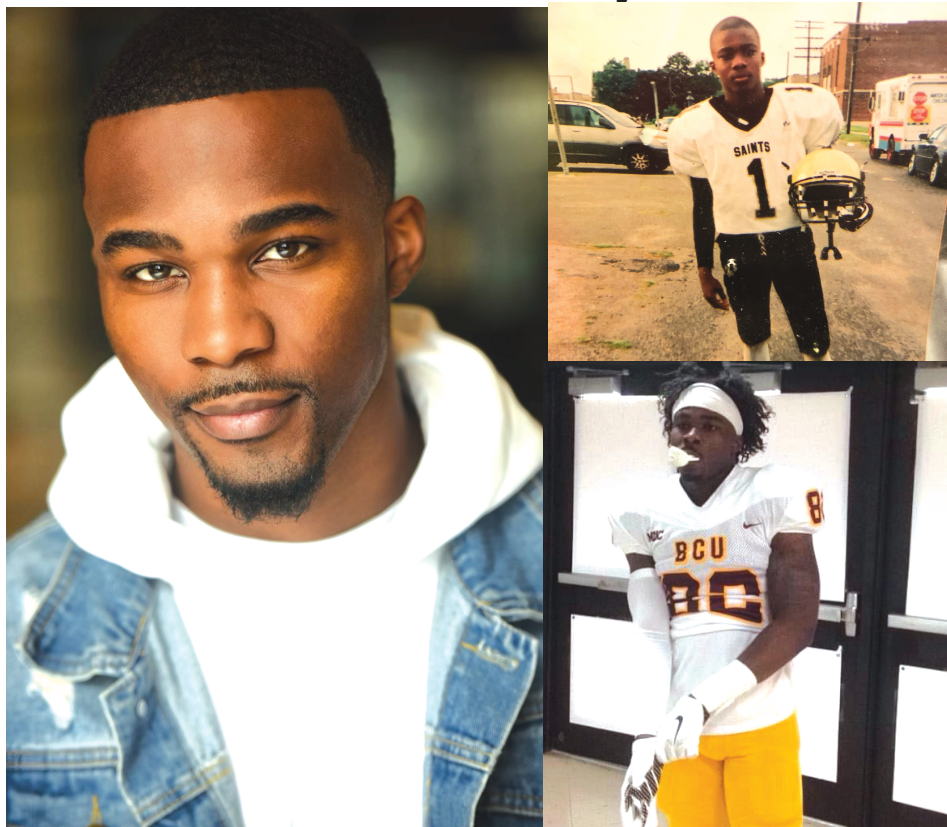


DETROIT

From the Hood to Hollywood

NATIVE SUN

Henry Ford presents From Selma to Detroit



By Valerie D. Lockhart
SUN EXECUTIVE EDITOR

When it comes to entertainment, Denzell Dandridge was literally born to act.

His career in acting was foreseen in his mother's womb. Before he was born, his mother intended to name him after her favorite actors - Denzil Washington and Westley Snipes.

Vitamins nourished his tiny veins but stardom was in his bloodline.

His family name Dandridge stems from his great aunt, Dorothy Dandridge, the Academy award nominated actress and singer, and it's no blunder that his cousin is the legendary singer Stevie Wonder.

The acting bug bit Denzell in high school drama class. But that bite didn't seriously sting until he attended Bethune Cookman University. There he blocked opponents on the football field and tackled dialogs in school plays.

"My nickname when I was playing football was Hollywood. I thought it was because I was one of those players who liked to look good; fixing myself while running a play," Dandridge said.

It didn't take long for Dandridge to adjust his playbook, changing his major from criminal justice to Speech Communications with a focus on theatre.

"I did a few student plays. During Black history month, I was a statue of Muhammad Ali," Dandridge said. "I came to life when people walked up to me and I said one of his famous lines. I was like a living wax figure."

In his film debut, *Coming of Age*, he earned \$300 playing the character Roc.

Although it was a small role, it earned him massive attention. He has since appeared in over 20 films that include *Coming of Age*,

Coming of Age 2 (2021), *Street Code Broken* (2022), *Absence of Innocence* (2022), and *#LoveGoals* (2022).

His largest role was in *Street Code Broken* playing the character Larry. The film follows two friends who go down two different paths - one chooses street life.

Dandridge describes it as "a hood faith-based film. There are thugs and gangsters with no cussing roles."

While family and friends in Detroit look forward to seeing Dandridge continue acting on the big screen, he remains humble and grounded.

"My goal is to constantly grow in my role and to work with my idols - Jaime Foxx and Denzel Washington. If I get to work with Denzel before he retires, I'll retire," he jokes. "I want to break the generational curse in my family - poverty. I still see a lot of my people now still struggling. I want to be able to leave something for future generations, and to help out those less fortunate. I want to rebuild my old neighborhood. There are only a few houses left. I remember what it's like to not have."

And, for kids playing little league sports, Dandridge sees it as laying a strong foundation.

"Stay focus and discipline," he advises. "I thank football. It gave me the thick skin I need to be able to take criticism. Find something that you love to do and stick with it. Work hard. People are always watching. Some fall short, because they're scared to go away from home. Don't put that cap on you. Stay humble and hungry. Treat every opportunity like it was a first."

And with that you're sure to go from the hood to Hollywood.

PRNewswire/ -- The Henry Ford is commemorating The Jackson House in Greenfield Village on Thursday, August 8 with public events including a site dedication in the village at 9:30 am, and *From Selma to Detroit*, a panel discussion on the incredible significance of The Jackson House in American history taking place in Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation at 7:00 pm.

The Jackson House is the Selma, Alabama home of Dr. and Mrs. Sullivan Jackson and served as a safe haven where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others worked, collaborated, strategized and planned the Selma-to-Montgomery marches in 1965.

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The Henry Ford acquired the Selma, Alabama home of Dr. Sullivan and Richie Jean Sherrod Jackson in 2023. The historic home, known as The Jackson House, served as a safe haven where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others worked, collaborated, strategized and planned the Selma-to-Montgomery marches of 1965. The marches served as protests against the systemic racist policies within the

South and raised awareness of the struggles black voters faced. Today, nearly 60 years later, as the Jackson House takes its place in Greenfield Village, it will be preserved in perpetuity so that generations of people from all over the world will have an opportunity to learn and experience this important history.

The house will open to the public in 2026.

"This house is a symbol for bringing liberty, justice and voting rights within the reach of all Americans," said Patricia Mooradian, President & CEO of The Henry Ford. "The Jackson House reminds us of the struggles people faced and the courage they had to do what was right."

Mooradian will be joined by Jawana Jackson, the only child of Dr. and Mrs. Jackson, for the site dedication Thursday morning.

Distinguished author Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Pulitzer Prize-winner Jonathan Eig, and influential filmmaker Nelson George will join Ms. Jackson and moderator Jamal Simmons, Cable News Commentator and Former Senior White House Official, for the evening program—an inspiring discussion about The Jackson House, and its legacy in the fight for basic American freedoms.

More information on the events and panelists can be found here: <https://www.thehenryford.org/current-events/calendar/the-jackson-house-from-selma-to-detroit>



Jawana Jackson, Martin Luther King Jr. and Dr. Sullivan Jackson

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