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## Local film garners award at L.A. festival

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The local film "Pip and Zastrow: An American Friendship" won a special award at its first film festival in Los Angeles while Zastrow himself took Hollywood by storm.

The film took home the "Target Filmmaker Award - For Inspiration to Dream in Color," which is one of four special awards given during the 12th annual American Black Film Festival. The prize, which carries a \$10,000 award, was created to recognize films that inspire "audiences of all ages to dream without boundaries."

"We are so honored that Target (the retailer) chose our film for this award," said director/producer Karin Hayes. "It shows the company's commitment to support themes such as diversity and friendship in independent film. It's exciting to have our world festival premiere in Los Angeles to start the ball rolling across the country."

The film tells the story of the friendship between former Mayor Roger "Pip" Moyer, and Joseph "Zastrow" Simms. They met playing high school basketball and their enduring relationship across racial boundaries in the '50s and '60s proved crucial to mending the city of Annapolis in 1968 as area cities burned during riots after the



Courtesy photo

Zastrow Simms one of the subjects of the documentary 'Pip and Zastrow: An American Friendship,' meets Academy Award-winner Halle Berry on opening night of the American Black Film Festival in Hollywood last weekend.

assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The film was chosen from 28 films, which were selected from more than 400 entries.

Victoria Bruce, who also was a director/producer on the film, said she was glad to see the film so well-received.

"Occasionally, while making this movie, people would tell us, 'That's just an Annapolis story ...' or, 'No one will care about this story outside of Maryland,'" she said. "This was such a validation of what we've always believed - that this is an American story that will resonate around the country."

Ms. Hayes and Ms. Bruce made the trip to Los Angeles for the weekend festival with Zastrow Simms, Co-producer Janice Hayes-Williams and Associate Producer Jerry Januszewski. Ms. Williams' daughter also attended.

But it was Zastrow who stole the show.

"Zastrow was the mac daddy of the festival," said Ms. Hayes-Williams. "His skills as a smooth operator clearly reach beyond Annapolis. He had starlet after starlet on his arm, and everyone wanted to meet him."

It was his first trip to Hollywood and he did in his usual style - purple suit and purple alligator shoes - for opening night.

"Everyone was admiring the way I was dressed," he said in an interview yesterday after landing at Dulles International Airport. "It made Annapolis the haberdashery capital of the world. I was on cloud nine. All the glitz and glamour is true, and it was better than that on this occasion ... but I could not have done any of it without the help of the Lord."

He was still walking on air after meeting actress Halle Berry on opening night.

"Oh, he met her on Day One," Ms. Hayes-Williams said. "And was never the same after that."

His one regret after all the excitement was not having his longtime friend Pip Moyer with him, he said. Mr. Moyer suffers from advanced Parkinson's disease.

"He was the architect of it all, and it made us sad he was not there to share it," Mr.

Simms said.

But the festival was good for the film.

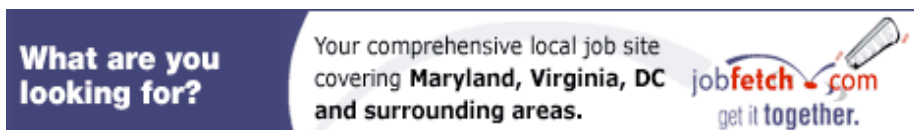
"We got an invitation to the Chicago International Film Festival, and others," Ms. Bruce said from Los Angeles this morning. "We also are working with Maryland Public Television. They are planning to show it in November."

There have apparently been some inquiries about turning the story into a feature film.

"People were talking about taking it to the big studios," Ms. Bruce said.

"The reaction could not have been better," she added. "We will see what happens next."

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