



# News Brief

Office of Marketing and Communications



## CAU ALUMNUS AND FILMMAKER MONTY ROSS AND SPIKE LEE HONORED BY CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

### *20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of "Do the Right Thing," Presents Opportunity to Celebrate Filmmakers' Accomplishments, Contributions to the Arts*

ATLANTA (July 12, 2009) – Filmmakers Spike Lee and Monty Ross (a 1980 graduate Clark College, a parent institution of Clark Atlanta University) were each presented with Clark Atlanta University's Certificates of Appreciation during a special screening hosted by the Atlanta Film Festival to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the critically acclaimed movie, "Do the Right Thing," on Saturday, July 11, 2009 at the Fox Theatre.

Ross was a co-producer of "Do the Right Thing," which Lee directed, produced and wrote.

Ross and Lee, a Morehouse College graduate who took all of his film courses at CAU, were presented with the certificates in recognition of their contributions to filmmaking, the arts and higher education, and were each also presented with a piece of Frabel crystal titled, "Solution." CAU continues to provide media education for numerous students in the Atlanta University Center, although those students were enrolled in and graduated from other institutions in the AU Center.

"Clark Atlanta University (then-Clark College) was the institution that nurtured Spike's and Monty's creativity in the art of filmmaking," said Aristide J. Collins, Jr., vice president for Institutional Advancement and University Relations, who made the presentations to Ross and Lee. "It was through CAU's Mass Media Arts program that they learned their craft and developed as filmmakers, producers and actors. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Do the Right Thing," presented an ideal occasion to recognize their outstanding accomplishments."

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After graduating from Clark College, Ross spent two years collaborating with fellow producers and training young filmmakers, while Lee pursued his interests in directing.

Ross later teamed up with Lee and co-produced several critically acclaimed and award-winning films including "She's Gotta Have It," "School Daze," "Do the Right Thing," "Jungle Fever," and "Malcolm-X."

"I recall Monty and Spike stood out as being very serious and extremely passionate about careers in filmmaking," said Herbert Eichelberger, interim chair of CAU's Department of Mass Media Arts and the two filmmakers' former professor. "Both wanted to make the kind of groundbreaking films that focused on issues that would leave an enduring imprint and an impact on society and they succeeded."

Both continue to be committed to mentoring aspiring filmmakers and to providing opportunities for students and new filmmakers to learn and grow as industry professionals, thus the development of 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks Institute. The organization was developed to offer aspiring filmmakers and students opportunities to learn the craft of filmmaking as well as internships.

Ross, who has won numerous awards as a producer of films, movies and documentaries, has worked diligently to outreach to aspiring filmmakers and continues to teach and mentor new professionals.

Although Lee and Ross primarily work on individual projects currently, the New York-based filmmakers continue to collaborate on common interests and projects, when possible.

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Formed in 1988 by the consolidation of two historic institutions, Atlanta University (1865) and Clark College (1869), Clark Atlanta University is the largest of the United Negro College Fund institutions with an enrollment of nearly 4,000 students. Clark Atlanta University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097: Telephone 404-679-4501) to award the Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist and Doctor's degrees. The Carnegie Classification lists CAU as a Research University – High Research Activity. CAU is listed as one of the best southeastern colleges by *The Princeton Review* and has been selected to the *Washington Monthly's* 2008 list of best colleges and universities. National business and consumer publications rank Clark Atlanta high among the best buys in American higher education.

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