

# The Tube

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Disney Channel's original movie, *The Color of Friendship*, is an inspiring and hopeful story that addresses the issues of race relations and tolerance through the friendship of two teenage girls.

Congressman Ron Dellums returns home from work one day in May 1977 to yet another display by his children, 13-year-old Piper and her younger brothers Brandy and Erik.

Determined that their father should agree to host an exchange student from South Africa, they've dressed up in native African dress and play stirring recordings of African drum music. On this night, they are in for a surprise. The Congressman agrees to their request.

As the family excitedly prepares for their guest, on the other side of the world Mahree, a young South African girl, convinces her father to let her study in America for a term. She, too, excitedly looks forward to the experience, but a surprise awaits all, for Congressman Dellums and his family are black, while Mahree



is the white daughter of a South African policeman.

As she gets ready for her trip, it is

clear that more than continents and oceans separate Mahree and the Dellums.

## 'Late Show' thrives as Letterman recuperates

ASSOCIATED PRESS

David Letterman can recuperate with a smile: He just scored his first weekly ratings victory against Jay Leno in nearly five years.

The CBS "Late Show" host underwent emergency heart surgery on Jan. 14, two days after his much-anticipated interview with Hillary Rodham Clinton. The show earned Letterman his biggest audience since 1994.

The show may bring in guest hosts during Letterman's absence, said executive producer Rob Burnett. Already, he's been flooded with offers from people including Howard Stern and Regis Philbin, to whom Letterman revealed his heart problems on the air last week.

"We have a million ideas," Burnett said.

Letterman hadn't beaten Leno, host of NBC's "Tonight Show," in the ratings with first-run programming since the week of May 22, 1995. Letterman's average audience last week was 5.9 million to Leno's 5.8 million.

The victory was driven almost entirely by Mrs. Clinton's

appearance, which drew 11.2 million viewers.

Letterman's staff made a special point of noting that Mrs. Clinton's guest shot drew higher ratings than Leno's first post-arrest interview with actor Hugh Grant. The 1995 Grant interview cemented NBC's late-night dominance for the last half of the 1990s.

At first, CBS said it would run "Late Show" reruns during Letterman's absence. That's what the network has done this week, and next week the show airs the best of its "on the road" broadcasts from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, London and Indianapolis.

After that, CBS is considering several options, including more reruns, guest hosts and a mix of repeats with some live celebrity cameos.

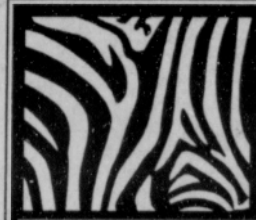
Burnett said he has talked to Letterman frequently since his surgery, but not about the show. It was unclear when Letterman will return to work.

"Obviously we can't make these huge decisions without

him, but it's still too early to go to him with questions about it," Burnett said.

# The Color of Friendship

*The Color of Friendship*, based on actual events, is an inspiring and hopeful story that addresses the issues of race relations and tolerance. In 1977, African American Congressman Ron V. Dellums and his family opened their home to a South African exchange student. Expecting a student of color, they are surprised when a white South African arrives, but no more so than the girl, a product of the Apartheid system who views black people as second-class citizens. The situation challenges them all with valuable lessons about racism and tolerance. *The Color of Friendship* world premieres on Disney Channel Saturday, February 5, 7:30 p.m. ET/PT.



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## Happy 92nd Birthday Mom!



Pearlie Paden was born January 15, 1908 in Rosston, Arkansas. Pearl married Adie J. Paden and to this union they were blessed with six children, Leonard, Geneva, Grace, Jewel, Lorene and Charlie. Pearl and her husband having lived in Arkansas for over 80 years moved to Portland in 1997. Pearl celebrated her 92nd birthday with a surprise party given by her children Saturday at Izzy's. The children and grandchildren wish her a very blessed and happy birthday.

**We love you mom**