

The Queen of Sugar Hill

Former Austin resident returns to highlight new book which gives insight into legendary actress, Hattie McDaniel

Courtesy Kim Wright | THE PARADIGM GROUP

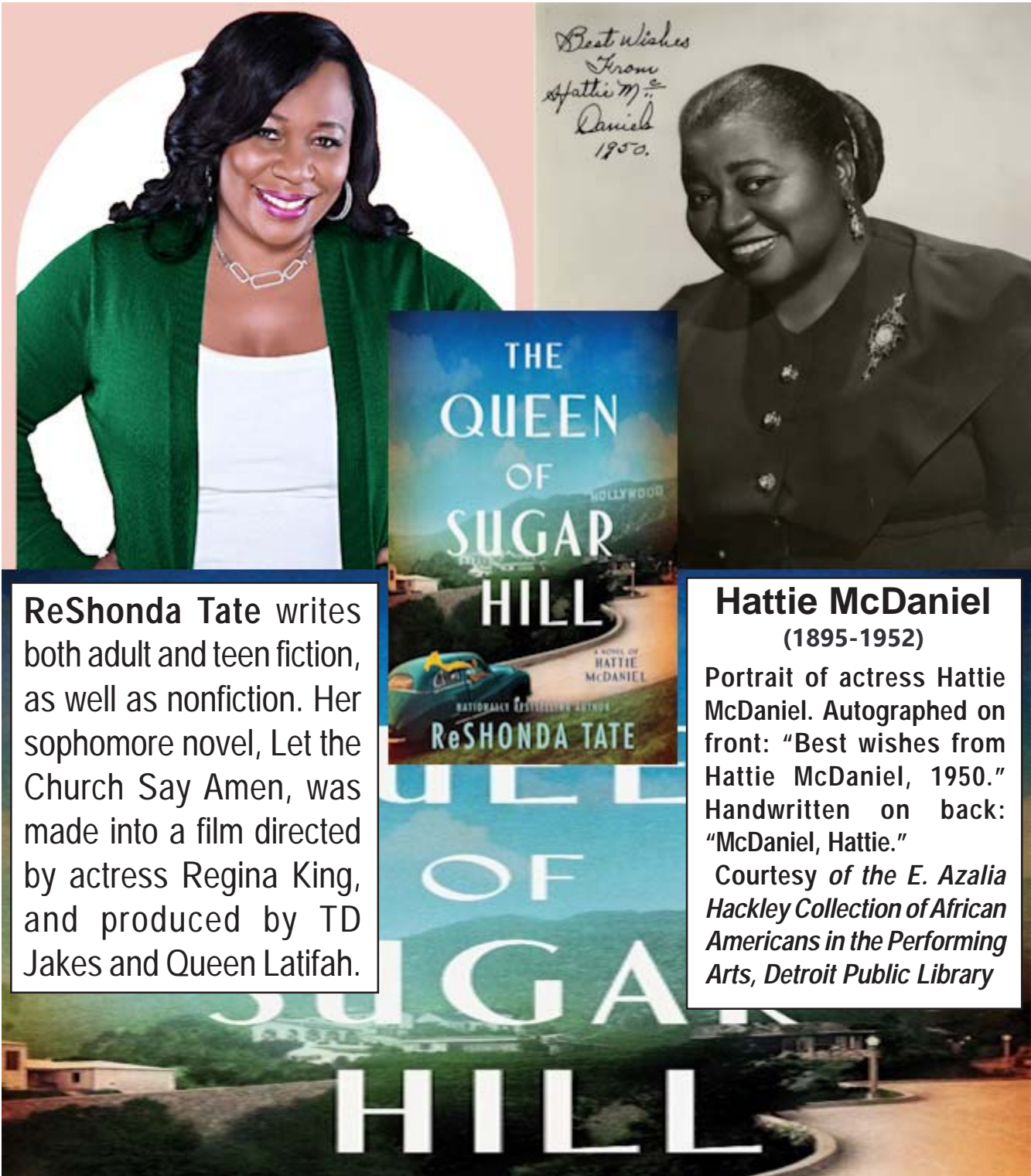
(Houston, TX) - The Academy Awards nomination of **Danielle Brooks** (The Color Purple) and **Da’Vine Joy Randolph** (The Holdovers) for Best Supporting Actress is a dream fulfilled for the first Black woman ever to hold the title. When **Hattie McDaniel** won the award in 1940 for her role as the sassy “Mammy” in the controversial movie, *Gone With the Wind*, she hoped that her win would open the door for other Black actors. The road has been long, but the nomination of Brooks and Randolph is part of the fulfillment of McDaniel’s dream.

Dreams are a big part of **THE QUEEN OF SUGAR HILL, A Novel of Hattie McDaniel**, on sale January 30, 2024, from #1 nationally bestselling author (and University of Texas grad) **ReShonda Tate**. Tate brings McDaniel’s largely untold story to life and skillfully brings new dimension to the struggles of a talented actor professionally and socially hampered by her embodiment of a dehumanizing racist caricature in one of Hollywood’s most iconic films.

Months after winning the Academy Award, not only did the Oscar curse set in where Hattie couldn’t find work, but she found herself thrust in the middle of two worlds—Black and White—and not being welcomed in either. Whites only saw her as Mammy and Blacks detested the demeaning portrayal. As the NAACP waged an all-out war against Hattie and actors like her, the emotionally conflicted performer found herself struggling daily.

Through it all, Hattie continued her fight to pave a path for other Black actors, while focusing on war efforts, fighting housing discrimination, and navigating four failed marriages. Luckily, she had a core group of friends to help her out—from **Clark Gable** to **Louise Beavers** to **Bette Davis** and **Dorothy Dandridge**.

On **October 1, 2023**, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) – the organization behind the Oscars – posthumously honored Hattie McDaniel by reinstating her missing Best Supporting Actress Academy Award. This well-deserved honor serves as a perfectly timed reminder that **Hattie McDaniel**, the actor, singer, commedi-



ReShonda Tate writes both adult and teen fiction, as well as nonfiction. Her sophomore novel, *Let the Church Say Amen*, was made into a film directed by actress Regina King, and produced by TD Jakes and Queen Latifah.

Hattie McDaniel
(1895-1952)

Portrait of actress Hattie McDaniel. Autographed on front: “Best wishes from Hattie McDaniel, 1950.” Handwritten on back: “McDaniel, Hattie.”

Courtesy of the E. Azalia Hackley Collection of African Americans in the Performing Arts, Detroit Public Library

enne, and activist, was larger than a singular role. It’s time to look beyond the inherently demeaning aspects of the “Mammy” stereotype, to embrace the scope of her talents and groundbreaking role as one of the silver screen’s first Black stars.

ReShonda will be in Austin for a book signing at the **Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex**, 1156 Hargrave Street, Saturday, January 27, at 6:30pm. The free event is open to the public and ReShonda will be discussing this amazing legend.



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