Olympic skier Picabo Street is inducted into the American Academy of Achievement, which, each year accepts into its membership outstanding achievers in business, the arts, communications, science and other fields. (Photo Kevin Syms)

James Earl Jones, a guest of honor at the Academy event, was a magnet for young achievers. (Express photo by Willy Cook)

The Achievers

by Susan Bailey
Express Staff

Three local kids joined 150 others from around the country as the American Academy of Achievement held its annual Golden Plate dinner in Sun Valley on Saturday night.

The American Academy of Achievement each year inducts into its membership outstanding achievers in business, the arts, communications, science and other fields. This is the first time the Academy has held its meeting in Sun Valley.

Community School seniors Dan Levy and Mica Darley were honored for their achievements along with senior Britta Schernthanner of Wood River High School. They were among the 10 high school students invited from the state of Idaho.

They were able to not only listen to speeches by some of the most successful and famous figures in the nation, but to eat breakfast and lunch with them during their Thursday to Sunday stay at Sun Valley Resort. Levy said his favorite part of the weekend was "having lunch with Rosa Parks, the civil rights leader who refused to get off the bus in the Jim Crow days." He also enjoyed a meal with poet Rita Dove and actor Tom Selleck.

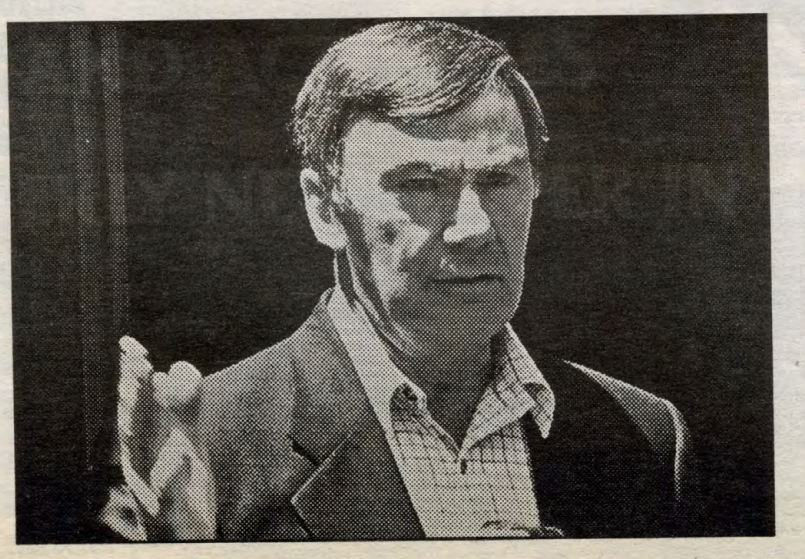
Among the people accepted into the Academy during the dinner and ceremony Saturday were entrepreneur George Argyros; "Prime Time Live" anchorman Sam Donaldson; gospel and pop singer Amy Grant; Gilbert Grosvenor, chairman of the National Geographic Society; Peter Haas, owner of Levi Strauss; figure skating champions Dorothy Hamill, Katarina Witt and Scott Hamilton; actor James Earl Jones; Olympic skier Picabo Street; Thomas W. Weisel, founder of Montgomery Securities; trial lawyer Gerry L. Spence and *Forrest Gump* film director Robert Zemeckis.

Selleck presented the awards.

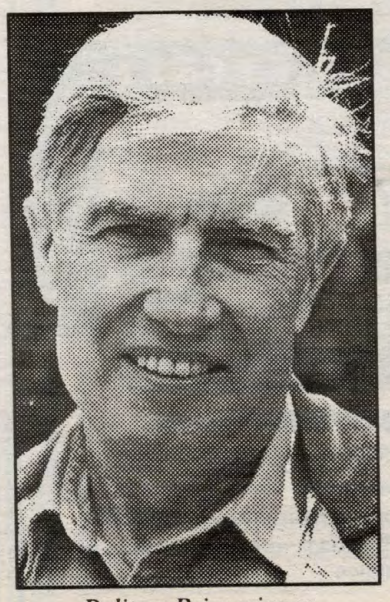
Altogether, the Sun Valley resort was filled with 750 visitors connected to the Academy as either members, almost-members, or students.

"It was really inspiring to hear the people talk to the kids," said Jack Sibbach, Sun Valley Co. spokesperson. "They were awestruck they were sitting down having lunch with these people. The kids got something they'll remember the rest of their lives."

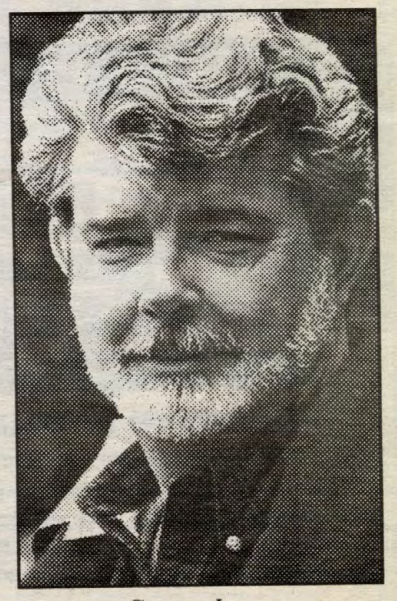
Art Buchwald and Larry King enjoy their time in Sun Valley encouraging youngsters to strive for excellence. (Express photo by Willy Cook)



Sam Donaldson speaks matter-of-factly about the news business to young achievers attending the Academy of Achievement event last week. (Express photo by Willy Cook)



Pulitzer Prize winner Neil Sheehan



George Lucas

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