

**Slowhand Releasing
In Association With
Dinosaurs Of The Future
Presents**

THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT

The Amazing Story Of An Inner City School

**A Documentary By
Rollin Binzer**

Executive Producer, Julie Esch Hurvis
Producer, Tom Hurvis and Rollin Binzer

2009 Omaha Film Festival - Best Documentary
2009 Seattle True Independent Film Festival - Most Inspirational Documentary
Lake County Illinois Film Festival - Audience Choice Best Documentary
2009 American Black Film Festival – Official Selection

U.S. Theatrical Release begins September 25, 2009

Running time: 92 minutes, 35mm (shot in HD) (Color, Dolby Digital, 5.1 surround sound)

Rating: PG for some mild thematic elements

Press Materials and High Resolution Photography: www.theprovideeneffect.com

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CREDITS

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PRODUCED BY	TOM HURVIS & ROLLIN BINZER
CO-PRODUCER	JOEY DEDIO
CONSULTING PRODUCER	DONALD A. JOHNSON
EDITOR	RICHARD LA PORTA
MUSIC	TOM DUMONT & TED MATSON
PRODUCTION MANAGER	MARSHA S. CLESCERI
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	ROBERT TUTMAN
CAMERA	SIOBHAN O'SULLIVAN
SOUND	JACOB COLLINS
DIRECTOR	ROLLIN BINZER

DINOSAURS OF THE FUTURE **“EDUCATION NOT EXTINCTION”**

THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT is the debut production of Dinosaurs of the Future as a feature documentary production company. The film reflects the company's focus on educational opportunities for all children and its recognition that the education of all children is in the best interest of all.

THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT is the story of an individual man, the inner city Chicago school he founded, and the student lives the school has changed and saved. The school, Providence St. Mel, has a 30-year 100% college placement record; with an “old school” approach to learning --- “Do the work.” --- and a dedicated corps of teachers and administrators, Providence St. Mel can serve as a model for revamping all of American education.

LONG SYNOPSIS:

Paul J. Adams III, an African-American man with activist roots in the 1960’s civil rights movement, came from a family of teachers. After being black listed himself as a teacher in Alabama because of his civil rights activities, he moved to Chicago, received a master’s degree in psychology, and then landed a job as guidance counselor at Providence St. Mel, an all-black parochial school on Chicago’s notorious drug-ridden, gang-ruled West Side.

A year after his arrival, Adams became principal, only to be told the following year that Chicago’s archdiocese was going to close the school. After orchestrating a fundraising campaign that received national and local media attention, funds poured in and enabled Adams to buy the school from the Sisters of Providence and convert it to a not-for-profit independent school. To ward off thieves and vandals, he literally moved into the empty nuns’ quarters of the convent inside the school.

He then set about achieving a new goal: To turn Providence St. Mel into a first rank college preparatory school, and its African-American student body into a corps of driven, disciplined, high achieving students.

That was over 30 years ago. Since then, 100% of Providence St. Mel graduates have been accepted to college, half of them, during the last seven years, to first tier and Ivy League colleges and universities.

The road from failing inner city school to a pre-K-through-12 educational system that produces graduates who attend Ivy League colleges and universities was not a smooth one. THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT traces the school’s development from a struggling shoe-string budget dream into a school and a method of teaching that produces not only inspired students, but parents, teachers and administrators dedicated to settling for nothing less than the highest expectations.

As testament to the hurdles overcome, and the efficacy of the teaching model that governs education at Providence St. Mel, THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT features interviews with alumni who share how the school re-wrote the failing, mediocre lives that had been scripted for them because of their West Side origins. The shared consensus is that the school's philosophy set them up for success because greatness was *expected* of them.

Cameras in class reveal how teachers are held to just as high and demanding a standard as is expected of the students. Administrators are dedicated to insuring that a teacher's first and only job is to teach....not to administer, not to become bogged down in red tape or hindered by a self-perpetuating bureaucracy.

In the 80s, President Reagan visited twice, remarking in the film, "This is the way it should be done." As a young organizer, President-to-be Barack Obama also visited the school.

THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT is an effect that is on the cusp of becoming viral nationally: The school's teaching method has been so successful that in 2006 another school, this time on Chicago's south side became a charter school --- appropriately named Providence Englewood --- solely in order to achieve the same results. In two short years, these students scores have gone from the 9th percentile to the 50th percentile on the Terra Nova Standardized tests. Students at Providence Englewood significantly outperform other schools within their neighborhood.

Those improved scores are...THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT.

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR, ROLLIN BINZER:

The first day I spent observing classrooms at Providence St. Mel I realized that something extraordinary was going on there.

The atmosphere at this very special place was bristling with self-confidence, achievement and success. Never in my own education, or in raising three children, had I ever experienced classrooms that were so energized about learning. Every student was engaged, paying attention and enjoying it. Teachers were actively connecting with their students in a purposeful and caring way. Paul Adams, the founder and Jeanette DiBella, the principal displayed almost parental pride and concern for all of their students. It became very obvious to me that these kids were propelling themselves out of poverty with sheer hard work and brainpower.

My constant thought was, "How can I possibly capture the essence of genuine care, learning, staff dedication and commitment on film in a way that will be truthful and meaningful to the audience?" I also knew that if we did it right, this film could ignite a positive dialogue about school reform. I really wanted to be effective in capturing all that I personally observed in order to inspire others to want the same quality of education for their own children and even their neighbors' children.

The next year and a half of my life was spent struggling to answer all of those questions, include all those elements and still end up with a film that will inspire, make you laugh and cry along the way.

STATEMENT BY THE FOUNDER, PAUL ADAMS III

My mother was a teacher, and my aunt was a teacher. My path in life kept coming back to teaching.

You can just look on the corners of our cities and see the devastation. Unemployment is so high in the inner cities because education institutions are not training our children. We're just inviting poverty to come in, just come in and have a seat. But it doesn't have to be this way.

We are headed down a road toward disaster. I don't know what it takes to enlighten our leaders to the fact that we are headed down this road. Unless we make some drastic changes about changing the culture of education in this country, we are headed for ruin.

Latino and African-American babies being born today have a three hundred percent greater chance that they will be living in poverty than white children. These kids need help. The whole purpose of education is to break the cycle of poverty. Shouldn't a poor child have the same opportunity to receive a good education as one whose family has all the resources? Why not give them the opportunity to enjoy a piece of that American pie?

This is what Providence St. Mel is all about: Giving children a chance who would not otherwise have an opportunity to go to some of the best schools in the country.

I believe in the children of Providence-St. Mel School. This institution has been my main focus since 1971.

I believe in the education of children across this world as a solution to the chaos we face.

This I believe.

**STATEMENT BY PROVIDENCE ST. MEL ALUMNUS MAJOR
GREGORY L. CANTY, ARMY WHITE HOUSE SOCIAL AIDE**

There are two events that helped shape, guide and direct me to achieve the place in life that I hold today. One is joining and serving my country as an officer in the United States Army, and the other is receiving a quality, college preparatory education from Providence St. Mel!

In high school, while reciting the mission statement, "At Providence-St. Mel, we believe..." emotions stirred within me that I still carry with me today; with focus, commitment, and discipline, I could make my mark on this world. The first step in making that mark was getting a college education. Attending a school dedicated to providing a challenging curriculum, in order to compete at the college level, gave me the confidence that everyone who wants to attend an institution of higher learning needs.

Paul Adams was the guiding force who steered the students, faculty, and staff to make education within the walls of Providence St. Mel the paramount focus --- second to nothing else. His sacrifice, commitment, and passion for children to receive a quality education were the driving forces behind our day-to-day existence at the school.

His display of confidence in the face of adversity is an image I keep in my mind when I am faced with a challenging situation. His mentorship made a remarkable impact on my life.

I was told once that the only time "success" comes before "work" is in a dictionary. Well, at Providence St. Mel I learned that early on. I also learned that true success is not identified by what you buy, but by the character that defines who you are. Material things can be lost, damaged, and stripped away, but a good education, and the means to receive it, will always stand the test of time!

STATEMENT BY PROVIDENCE ST. MEL ALUMNUS JOHN W. FOUNTAIN, PROFESSOR,

Amid the brokenness and despair, the crime, poverty and pain that as a child ran through my Chicago West Side neighborhood like a river, I found an island of hope.

It was a place where the grass grew an emerald shade of green...where dreams grew tall like forest trees...where possibilities were endless and the thirst for knowledge and education, and the transformative power of hope, faith and hard work molded young minds, shaped young lives, and changed generations forever.

That is Providence-St. Mel.

Thirty years later, it remains for me a special place, an experience that has inalterably impacted my life as a citizen of the world.

Not only foundational for my academic and professional pursuits, the passion and purpose imparted by my teachers and embodied by Paul J. Adams III was the same passion and purpose that carried me as a national journalist to places like the *New York Times*, and that led me to capture across the nation the faces and voices of people seldom heard.

My story as a graduate of Providence-St. Mel is not unique. For many of us, she was our beacon, our refuge, the incubator for successful careers and lives.

One of the most difficult things I recall about growing up poor is feeling like I was nobody. And the greatest thing that I shall never forget about Providence-St. Mel is that inside her doors, I always felt like somebody.

It was a sentiment that flowed through the halls and every classroom, like a rushing mighty river.

John W. Fountain, Professor of Journalism, Roosevelt University; author of "True Vine: A Young Black Man's Journey of Faith, Hope and Clarity"; former *New*

York Times national correspondent, and former staff writer for the *Washington Post* and *Chicago Tribune*.

STATEMENT BY PROVIDENCE ST. MEL ALUMNA SYLVIA JONES

As an educational institution, Providence-St. Mel School represents a gateway to a brighter future. Most schools do. What lifts PSM above the others, however, is that it's also an instrument. Its mission serves as a compass that directs inner-city students away from generational poverty and toward self-sufficiency and economic liberty. Its teachers and staff are lamp posts that brighten the path of students who often lack positive role models. Its structure and discipline arm students with precise weapons and impenetrable shields so they are prepared to tackle any challenge that awaits them in the world.

When I was a student at Providence-St. Mel, I understood none of this. What I knew for sure was the coursework was purposely rigorous, but there was an unmistakable expectation that I would excel. Even when I didn't believe the possibility of my own success, I was surrounded by supporters who never wavered in their belief that I would attain it.

As an adult, I now appreciate the privilege of the PSM experience. I am *The Providence Effect*.

ABOUT THE EDUCATORS FEATURED IN “THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT”

PAUL J. ADAMS, III *Founder*

The school's founder, Paul Adams, is originally from Montgomery, Alabama. The son of a school teacher, Adams received his BA from Alabama State University. He grew up during the civil rights movement and participated in Dr. Martin Luther King's march from Selma to Montgomery. Because of that participation, he was blacklisted in Alabama and unable to obtain a teaching position.

Adams left Alabama and moved to Chicago, receiving a master's degree in psychology from Northeastern Illinois University. In 1971, he was hired as director of guidance for Providence St. Mel School, then a private Catholic high school. A year later, he became principal. When the Archdiocese of Chicago withdrew funding from the school in 1978, Adams spearheaded a national campaign to raise money for the school. In response to his publicity-seeking efforts and the support of the Providence St. Mel students and community, the school received local and national media attention. Donations poured in from across the country, allowing Adams to transition Providence St. Mel into a not-for-profit independent school.

At Providence St. Mel, Adams focused on developing a strong academic standard while enforcing strict disciplinary codes. To guarantee the safety of his students, he literally moved into the empty quarters of the convent inside the school to ward off thieves and vandals. His dedication became legendary and during the next two decades, Adams successfully transformed Providence St. Mel into a premier college preparatory learning institution for African-American students.

Since 1996, Adams has served as president of Providence St. Mel School, managing an annual budget in excess of \$7 million. He remains very active in planning the curriculum for the school, which has since expanded to include pre-kindergarten, elementary, and middle grades, for a full pre-K-through-12 grade span. Under his leadership, 100 percent of Providence St. Mel's graduating seniors have been accepted to four-year colleges and institutions of higher learning for over 30 years, with over 50 percent attending top-tier and Ivy League institutions for the past seven years.

To further his groundbreaking approach to education, Adams waded into the public school arena by founding Providence Englewood Charter School. During the 2006 -2007 school year, he served as principal while, as part of Providence St. Mel's Leadership Development Program, he and Jeanette DiBella trained the designated, incoming, permanent school principal.

According to Adams, "I learned early on that without a proper education, a person is doomed. If I could provide the right environment, our children could enter these doors and feel free to learn and prosper."

Adams has received numerous awards for his accomplishments, including the McDonald's Education Achievement Award, the African-American Male Image Award, the Rozell R. Nesbitt Community Education Award, and five honorary doctorates. Adams was named an American Hero in Education by *Reader's Digest* and was voted Man of the Year by the Chicago Urban League. He also was chosen by Michigan State University as a distinguished Crystal Apple Award winner. Most recently, the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago has selected Adams as one of Chicago's 2009 Heroes, individuals chosen because they embody the guiding principles of the Red Cross, serve the community with dedication, and inspire others to do well.

JEANETTE M. DIBELLA
Principal, Providence St. Mel School
Chief Education Officer, Providence Englewood Charter School

Jeanette DiBella joined Paul Adams at Providence St. Mel in 1996. In July, 2000, DiBella assumed the position of principal of Providence St. Mel School. An education professional with more than two decades of administrative and teaching experience in Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois, Ms. DiBella oversees the day-to-day operations of Providence St. Mel, provides guidance and leadership for teachers and administrators, and coordinates a pre-K-through-12 curriculum that surpasses national standards. In addition to serving as principal at Providence St. Mel, Ms. DiBella also serves as the chief education officer for the new K-through-7 Providence Englewood Charter School, which opened in the fall, 2006.

With the renowned education scholar, the late Michael Pressley, PhD, of Michigan State University, Ms. DiBella co-authored *Providence St. Mel School: How a School That Works for African American Students Works*, which appeared in the June 2004 *Journal of Educational Psychology*. After completing this study, Dr. Pressley hailed the school as being "a model for urban education." Because of her experience, knowledge, and skill, the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Education invited Ms. DiBella to teach as adjunct faculty member in its doctoral program in Urban Education Leadership in 2004-2006.

Consistently recognized for her contributions to effective education, Ms. DiBella has garnered awards and accolades over the years, including the Crystal Apple Award, given by the Michigan State University College of Education to recognize only the most outstanding educators in the country. In 2008, the MMI Preparatory School in Freeland, Pennsylvania, honored Ms. DiBella as a distinguished alumna, inducting her into its Wall of Fame. An innovative educator, consummate administrator, and inspirational leader, Ms. DiBella is dedicated to ensuring that students and teachers continue to achieve academic excellence at the highest level.

ANGELA JOHNSON-WILLIAMS
Principal, Providence Englewood Charter School

Angela Johnson-Williams is the principal of Providence Englewood Charter School. She received her undergraduate degree, a Bachelors of Arts in Education with a concentration in Mathematics, from DePaul University and her graduate degree, a Masters of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction, from Olivet Nazarene University.

Angela graduated from Providence St. Mel School in 1989 and has been deeply rooted in its mission since her graduation day. She pledged to return to Providence St. Mel and give back to the school that taught her how to set and achieve goals. Angela entered DePaul University under a program that would make her a better educator, the Golden Apple Scholars program. She returned to PSM to student teach Algebra 2, Pre-calculus and Calculus. A few months later she became a fulltime math teacher, a position she held for 12 years, serving as math department chairman for ten years. Being department chairman provided her the training she would need in preparation for becoming a school principal. She arrived at Providence Englewood Charter School in January 2007 as the Administrator in Charge and was named principal the following year.

Mrs. Johnson-Williams is married to Earnest Williams. Mr. Williams works for the Chicago Board of Education and coaches football, basketball and track. They are the proud parents of an eleven-year-old son who is a sixth grader in Providence St. Mel's middle school. Angela enrolled her son there so he could experience the "Providence Effect," receive the best education possible, and make his mark on the world.

Providence St. Mel taught her that by setting goals and working hard, dreams can be achieved. She chose to return to work at Providence St. Mel and now Providence Englewood to make her contribution to bettering the world.

ABOUT TOM DUMONT AND THE SCORE OF THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT

Early in the project director Binzer had talked with his son-in-law and lead guitar-player in the band No Doubt, Tom Dumont, about composing and performing the music for the soundtrack.

Long interested in composing film scores, Dumont and his musical partner Ted Matson had already posted a substantial body of film score type music on their website www.invincableoverlords.com .

Several songs from the site ended up on the film's final sound track to complement the original musical segments they composed based on such themes as graduation, math class, civil rights march, and science fair.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS OF “THE PROVIDENCE EFFECT”:

ROLLIN BINZER

Director and Producer

Rollin Binzer began his career as a documentary filmmaker when he directed and co-produced the classic concert film “Ladies & Gentlemen: The Rolling Stones.” He later went on to direct numerous television documentary specials, including the series “American Profiles” (featuring such internationally known figures as heart surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey, attorney F. Lee Bailey, and Bill Lear, founder of the Lear Jet Corporation); and a 13-part NBC news documentary series “Escape Velocity” on the history of the space program.

Binzer received more than 300 awards of excellence, gold medals and citations from The National Society of Illustrators, *CA Magazine*, *Graphics Magazine* and the Art Directors Clubs of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Dallas, San Francisco and Detroit.

Three of his poster designs are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian Institute, and he is a three-time winner of the American Association of Printing Industries for “Package of the Year” award.

TOM HURVIS

Producer

Tom Hurvis is co-founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Old World Industries, Inc. Nicknamed, “The Quiet Giant,” Old World is content to allow their name brand products get the limelight – Peak antifreeze and windshield wash, Herculiner pick-up bed liner, Peak electronics among them.

As a businessman, Hurvis has long been concerned about the state of American education, especially for those mired in poverty. Over the years, he has sponsored scholarships and internships for inner city youth. When he discovered Providence St. Mel School and witnessed their results, he was extremely impressed.

Mr. Hurvis believes that this country is approaching an educational crisis that must be resolved in order for the country to remain a world leader. He decided to make a documentary about Providence St. Mel to spread the word about their success and to also provide a platform for a conversation about improving education in America.

Mr. Hurvis graduated from Lawrence University and received his MBA from University of California-Berkeley in 1962. Mr. Hurvis founded Hurvis Binzer and Churchill in 1965, a successful advertising firm in Chicago, Illinois.

JULIE ESCH HURVIS

Executive Producer

As a former teacher, Julie Esch Hurvis has been interested in education for many years. She is a graduate of Lawrence University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. With her interest in art and music, she has made contributions to many children's cultural activities. She has also supported early childhood education and after school programs for inner city children.

JOEY DEDIO

Co-Producer

Joey Dedio is an American film, television, and theatre actor. He is also a producer and screenwriter. In 2004 he starred in and was associate producer of *Bomb the System*. His first screenplay titled *Downtown: A Street Tale*, a story of the lives of a group of young adults living in an abandoned building in New York City, was completed in 2006. Dedio has long been interested in movies which touch the human condition.

DON JOHNSON

Consulting Producer

Don Johnson is a Chicago journalist and a writer/producer of documentary films. He is the former Director of Community Affairs and Editorial Director at WBBM-TV (CBS) in Chicago where he won Emmy awards both as a producer and editorial writer. His experience includes service as a domestic and foreign correspondent for Newsweek Magazine, and as a reporter for the Boston Globe.

RICHARD LAPORTA

Editor

Richard LaPorta was born in Pittsburgh and raised in San Diego. He has made Chicago his home for the past 22 years. LaPorta studied filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1997, he wrote and directed the 16mm short film "Man and Wife in Bed" which premiered at the Telluride Film Festival in the Filmmakers of Tomorrow program. In 2002 he wrote, directed and edited his first feature film, "One Man's Ceiling," which premiered at the inaugural Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

TOM DUMONT AND TED MATSON

Composers

Tom Dumont is the lead guitarist for third wave ska band No Doubt and is one of the band's primary songwriters. Dumont and his partner, Ted Matson, founded Invincible Overlord. They have produced one album, The Living Album, which is

available for download through the band's website. Some songs from Invincible Overlord are included in the movies final sound track.