Bill Cosby Essay, Research Paper

Bill Cosby was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 12, 1937. He was the oldest of four boys. He had three brothers, and their names were: James, Russell, and Robert. His father ran away near Christmas time when he was very young and he had to get a job to help support the family. In school he was the class clown and was sent to a special school for rowdy boys. In his new school his teacher was Mary Forchic. She saw that he was a great comedian and she put that into her lessons to make them more understandable for Bill. She made the lessons fun for him and made it easier to learn. He said that she made him what he is today.

After a couple years he went back to his old school and even though his grades were dropping he still kept it together. Bill was starting to look up to comedians on the radio and the TV. They were comedians like Sam Levenson, Sid Caesar, and Carl Reiner. Even though his grades were poor in junior high, when he took the standardized tests he was accepted to Central High School, which was a school for all the gifted children in Pennsylvania. Now being six feet, he was on the high school football team. But in the first week of football he broke his arm. Since there were few blacks in the school and he was slightly a target of biggotous remarks he went back to getting attention by clowning around in class again. He was later sent to Germantown Highschool where all his neighborhood friends went. He was back with his friends but his grades started to drop. He was left back twice. He was also too old to participate in the city track meets (which he could easily win). Bill dropped out of high school. He went to be a shoemaker=s helper, but the shoemaker didn=t like it when he nailed the ladies heels onto the mens shoes!

Then Bill decided to join the Navy. There he found discipline and no room to joke around. He spent four long years in the Navy but he says that it made him more mature and able to control himself better. He was trained as a physical therapist. Helping men who lost their legs and arms, he finally realized how lucky he was. While in the Navy Cosby, enrolled in a correspondence course. By the time his four years in the Navy were up he had a high school diploma. He left the Navy at age 22 with a high school diploma and a new attitude. He was determined to go to collage. He did not have a lot of money though and that was a problem. Cosby had an idea. Because he was a good athlete in the navy and was on their track and field team, he tried to show off for athletics coaches in order to get a scholarship. He showed all his scores to Gavin White, a coach at Temple University. White let him in on an athletes scholarship to study physical education. He was maintained a B average and he felt proud of himself.

Bill Cosby got a job working at a night club telling jokes. It was a small job but even though he did not know it, it was his first step toward fame. He soon traveled to New York to test out his real comedy skills. He landed a job at the Gaslight, it was a popular comedy club. They paid him 60 dollars a week (which was a very lot for Bill). He went to school during the day and went to New York to work at night. Cosby dropped out of collage and went on to be a professional entertainer. He was now making 175 dollars a week at the Gaslight and was hired to perform at the Gate of Horn in Chicago. There he would make 200 dollars a week!

In 1963 Bill Cosby was making 500 dollars for one live performance. He soon signed a contract with Warner Brothers to make a comedy album called, ABill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow . . . Right!@ This album was a very big success. He was in Washington for comedy, and one day he was in a bowling alley and met a girl named Camille Hanks. She was a psychology student at the university of Maryland. They fell in love. They got married fast in only a couple of months. He was now making 1,000 dollars for a single performance.

In 1964 Bill Cosby made his first appearance on Johnny Carson=s, ATonight Show.@ That was the first of many appearances he would make there. He came out with his second album which made 1,000,000 dollars. It was called, AI Started Out As a Child@ and it was very successful. Cosby was selected to play a spy on a TV show series called AI Spy.@ The producer, Sheldon Leanord, was taking great risks in having Cosby playing this part. Racial issues were stirring in the 60’s and Cosby was the first Black American to have a major role on a very popular television series.

Bill Cosby made a couple of movies too. They were not big hits and some totally crashed in the box office. They were, AMan and Boy,@ AHicky and Boggs,@ and AThe Lilies of the Field.@ There were three movies that Cosby was in that were hits. They were, AUptown Saturday Nights,@ ALets Do It Again,@ and AA Piece of the Action.@ He also went back to college at the University of Massachusetts. Then in 1984 Cosby had an idea. He would make a TV show family called the AThe Bill Cosby Show,@ staring the Huxtable family. A family with the father being a doctor, the mother a lawyer and five children like his own family. This show was a hit and it was on TV for eight years. Over many years of his success Cosby has donated money to charity and other causes and has lived a very good life.

If I were to meet Bill Cosby I would first ask him: What were your feelings when you first heard about your son=s death? I would ask this because the book is entitled, ABill Cosby Family Man,@ and his son=s death must have had a great effect on his family. I would also ask him: When you were asked to go to court about your alleged daughter, what was your reaction? What was the first thing that popped into your head? I would ask him that because it must have been a traumatizing experience for him to be accused of wrongdoing by someone he tried to help.

There are many fine qualities that I admire about Bill Cosby. Some of these things are Bill Cosby=s sense of humor the which I admire the most of all hsi good qualities. He is very funny and I want to be like him some day. I also admire that Bill Cosby kept on trying at school and never gave up. Even though he didn=t finish school the first time, he still went back until he was done. Finally I admire the fact that Bill Cosby and his wife donate money to charities and give money to schools and other organizations.

Bill Cosby has paved the way for all black American performers to do their best without racism and hatred by any other racial group. This was an important thing to do because without him there might still be prejudice of Blacks in America. He was a leader, an athlete, and a scholar. His comedy has made us laugh his tragedies have taught us a lesson. He is definitely a good role model for all people to follow.