Dick Anthony Williams won't play token black character

Two-time Tony Award nominee Dick Anthony Williams had doubts about accepting a major supporting role in the 13-hour mini-series "Space," based on James A. Michener's best-selling novel about the American space program.

"I didn't want to play the token black character," Williams explained. "Although my character spans the full 30 years of the story, his scenes are scattered. However, when I read the script I realized he made an important statement."

"Space" will be broadcast in five parts starting SUNDAY, APRIL 14 at 8:00 a.m. on CBS.

In the epic drama, Williams plays Gawain Butler whom we first meet as a young sailor rescued at sea by James Garner after a World War II naval battle.

"He starts out as a sailor, a very grateful sailor," Williams said. "Then, after the war, he pulls himself up. He gets a college degree and then another degree. He becomes the principal of a high school and eventually superintendent of schools in Michigan."

When James Garner's character, Norman Grant, enters politics, Butler's testimony to his wartime heroism plays an important role in his senatorial campaigns. At first his gratitude toward Grant is motive enough for helping out in the election but in time Butler seeks a return for his favors.

"Butler develops political influence and he uses it," Williams said. "He sharply questions Grant, who plays an active role in the U.S. Space Program, why there are no black astronauts and very few black scientists, administrators or technicians involved in the program. He leans heavily on Grant to open up the program to minorities."

In Michener's novel, Butler's demands lead to the inclusion of a black astronaut in the Apollo program, a conscious anachronism on Michener's part, a statement of what should have been. The producers of "Space," however, chose to stick closer to the historical reality of the early 1970's, showing Grant still battling to have NASA accept their first black astronaut.

Williams, who previously appeared on television in major roles in "The Sophisticated Gents," and "A Woman Called Moses," among others, is a veteran of the New York stage. He was deeply involved with the New Federal Theatre and with Concept One at the Riverside Community Center, both fertile development grounds for new black productions. He was nominated for a Tony in 1974 for his performance in "What the Wine Seller Buys" and in 1975 for "The Black Picture Show." He also appeared in "Poison Tree," "We Interrupt This Program" and "Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death." He was the director and one of the writers of the original stage production of "Big Time Buck White," originating the role later played in the Broadway musical version of Muhammed Ali. According to Williams, watching the boxing celebrity take over a role he created was a strange experience.

"Ali was playing me," Williams said. "He has great charisma that came through his performance as long as he had words to speak. When he didn't, the experienced actors ran over him. He didn't know how to handle those silent moments."

His last stage appearance was in "Sisfuhs" at the Los Angeles Actors Theatre. Williams finds theatre in Los Angeles a different ballgame from New York. "One of the major problems is dealing with the constant cast changes," he said. "Sistuhs" ran for seven months but we kept losing cast members to better paying jobs in film and television. We got a little raggedy after a while so we finally threw in the towel."

Williams still gets offers to direct in New York. "But I have a family to support," he said, "it's economically difficult to do a play. Usually you start with little if any money or salary. You hope the play will move on but often it doesn't. Still, I don't want to stay away too long and probably would jump at the next theatre offer that comes my way

Soap Opera Week

By Kimberly Redmond

Q: In the film "Mommie Dearest," Diane Scarwid, the actress who portrayed Christine Crawford, was supposedly an actress on a soap opera. I'd like to know if Miss Crawford was really on a soap, or if that was just part of the movie script. — V.W., Levittown, Pa.

A: In real-life, Miss Crawford appeared as Joan Borman, a gold-digger type of character on the now defunct soap, "The Secret Storm." When Christina took ill in 1968, her dearest mommie Joan Crawford, replaced her for two days, even though the legendary star was 30 years older than the soap's character.

Q: I have a $20 bet with my friend, who says that the actress who portrays Terry Brock on "General Hospital" never appeared on the nighttime TV show "Happy Days." I think she played Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham's niece, K.C. Who's right? — J.M., Colonie, NJ.

A: Sorry, J.M., but your friend wins, "GH" star Robyn Bernard has never appeared on "Happy Days." Miss Bernard's only other professional television role was a one-shot on the nighttime series, "The Facts of Life," on which she played the teen actress, Hedda Hart.

Q: Is Todd Curtis, the actor who portrays Jordy Clegg on the CBS soap "Capitol," related to film actor Tony Curtis? They look so much alike. — N.B., Newton, N.C.

A: The resemblance is striking, but, Todd and Tony Curtis are not related. The actors only share the same last name.

Q.- I'm a fan of Lauren-Marie Taylor, the actress who plays Stacey Donovan on the ABC soap "Loving." Can you give me information about her?- N.S., Elizabeth, N.J.

A.—Miss Taylor, who grew up in the Bronx, N.Y. and graduated from Loyola School in Manhattan, has done television commercials and appeared in the fright flick, "Friday, the 13th—Part II." She studied at New York's prestigious Circle-in-the-Square Theater School, which led to her role in John Belushi's last film, "Neighbors." The actress has also appeared in several theatrical productions, including "Album," "Godspell" and "The Mikado," Miss Taylor is an accomplished competitor in long-distance runs, including the 1981 and 1982 New York City Marathon, which she completed both years. She's married to actor-songwriter John Didrichsen.

Q.—My mother and I have a running agrument about whether or not the actor who portrays Mason on "Santa Barbara" is the same actor who portrayed Maggie's doctor on "Days of Our Lives" about two years ago. I say he is. What's your expert opinion?—S.S., Campbellsberg, Ill.

A.—You win! Lane Davies, who portrays Mason Capwell on "Santa Barbara," did portray Dr. Evan Wheyland on "Days." The devious Dr. Wheyland was killed in a car crash several months after the birth of Maggie's daughter, Sarah, who was fathered by Wheyland via artificial insemination.

Q.—Can you tell me whether the actor who plays Zach on "All My Children" is the man who has been appearing in the Wrangler Jeans TV Commercials?—A.H., Newburg, Mo.

A.—No. Robert Lupone is the actor who portrays Zach Grayson on "AMC." Sam Behrens, who portrays Jake Meyer on "General Hospital," is the actor appearing in the clothes commercials, which are patterned after the adventure films, "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

(Have a question about soap operas? Write Kimberly Redmond at 200 Park Ave., Room 602, New York, NY 10166. Questions cannot be answered personally but those of general interest will be answered in future columns.)

From the Carl Matthews Book Of Lists

THE "WORLD" OF MUSIC

The World Is A Ghetto — War (1972)

My World Is Empty Without You — The Supremes (1966)

We Are The World — USA For Africa (1985)

Outta The World — Ashford And Simpson (1985)

My World — The Bee Gees (1972)

This World — The Staple Singers (1972)

Joy To The World — Three Dog Night (1971)

Spirits In The Material World — The Police (1982)

The End Of The World — Skeeter Davis (1963)

A World Without Love — Peter And Gordon (1964).

My Whole World Ended (The Moment You Left Me) — David Ruffin (1969)

Ben Vereen plays the Circus—And loves every spangled second

The question wasn't asked, but it's a safe bet that Ben Vereen was tickled pink to be in such Broadway musicals as "Sweet Charity" and "Pippin" (he won a Tony for that one). Or television shows like "Roots" or the Network mini-series "Ellis Island" or movies like "Funny Lady" and "All That Jazz."

The question was asked, however, how Ben liked hosting a preview of the 115th edition of "Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus," MONDAY, APRIL 15 at 8 p.m. on CBS.

"It's been wonderful," beams Ben. "Circus people are known to be quite insular. But I've been accepted very warmly. Like family. They realize that I'm a stranger in a new land and they've treated me with kid gloves."

As host, Vereen goes into a colorful history of the circus from the first pachyderm—her name was "Old Bet"—to hit the road as a touring show (and she WAS the show) to America's first animal trainer (his name was Issac Van Amburgh). Vereen also gives us a glimpse of backstage life as well taking his licks in a clown gag.

And he loved every minute of it. "We think," he says, "of the magic of circus as the flash and the glitter. But the magic is the hard work. The sweat. That's the magic. When you see those guys working up there on a tightrope. On the teeterboarders at work. You know that that didn't take place overnight. That took time. And that's the magic."

A native of Brooklyn, Ben recalls seeing the circus at Madison Square Garden. "I still remember it," he says. "The color, the magic, the mystery of it all. The circus never loses its magic - even as you grow older."

Vereen is plain enamored with performers like animal trainder Gunther Gebel-Williams. "His master " says Ben, "of his animals is incredible. And these are big animals. I'm not talking about kitty-cats. And he loves those animals beyond words. The animals, on the other hand, respect him. If there ever was a man named Tarzan, then this must be the man."

The Tube

TV program guide for Baltimore/Washington
Friday, April 12, 1985 to Thursday, April 18, 1985

WEEKDAY DAYTIME REGULARS

DAYTIME

MORNING

—5:00—
5 CMESAT (FRI)
11 CHARLIE'S ANGELS (WED-FRI)

—5:10—
(HBO) HBO COMING ATTRACTIONS (TUE)

—5:15—
(HBO) LITTLE RIVER BAND IN AUSTRALIA (FRI)

—5:45—
11 DEVOTIONS

—5:55—
20 JIM BAKKER

—6:00—
2 20 MINUTE WORKOUT
4 11 MORNING STRETCH
5 PANORAMA
7 ABC NEWS THIS MORNING
9 CBS EARLY MORNING NEWS
11 LEARNING TO READ (MON, WED, FRI)
11 LEARNING TO DO (TUE, THU)
13 JIMMY SWAGGART
(HBO) ANIMALYMPICS (MON)
(HBO) BEST OF BRAINGAMES (TUE)
(HBO) MOVIE (WED)
(HBO) HBO COMING ATTRACTIONS (THU)

—6:30—
2 4 NBC NEWS AT SUNRISE
9 13 NEWS
11 CBS EARLY MORNING NEWS
13 GREAT SPACE COASTER
19 FARM DAY
(HBO) THE WILD PONY (THU, FRI)
(HBO) MOVIE (TUE)

—6:45—
4 NEWS
13 A.M. WEATHER

—7:00—
2 4 TODAY
5 GREAT SPACE COASTER
7 11 GOOD MORNING AMERICA
9 11 CBS MORNING NEWS
20 BUGS BUNNY AND FRIENDS (FRI)
20 BUGS BUNNY (MON-THU)
13 INSPECTOR GADGET
19 MARKETING PERSPECTIVES (FRI)
19 INTRODUCTION TO MATHEMATICS (MON, WED)
19 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT SURVEY (TUE, THU)

—7:30—
5 POPEYE AND FRIENDS
26 LILIAS, YOGA AND YOU
45 VOLTRON, DEFENDER OF THE UNIVERSE
79 SESAME STREET
(HBO) MOVIE (MON)
(HBO) FRAGGLE ROCK (WED)

—8:00—
5 FLINTSTONES
20 WOODY WOODPECKER
26 MACNEIL / LEHRER NEWSHOUR
45 FAT ALBERT
(HBO) MOVIE (WED-FRI)

—8:30—
5 TOM AND JERRY
20 POPEYE
45 FLINTSTONES
49 MISTER ROGERS (R)
(HBO) MOVIE (TUE)

—9:00—
2 9 DONAHUE
4 FANTASY ISLAND
5 I LOVE LUCY
7 TIC TAC DOUGH
11 LOVE CONNECTION
13 PEOPLE ARE TALKING
20 W.O.W.!
26 SESAME STREET
35 JAGAEROBICS
35 ERNEST ANGLEY
41 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

—9:30—
4 SUPER PASSWORD
5 LEAVE IT TO BEAVER
7 JOKERS WILD
11 BODY LANGUAGE
20 ROMPER ROOM
41 TODAY'S SPECIAL
(HBO) NOT NECESSARILY SNIGLETS (THU, FRI)
(HBO) HBO COMING ATTRACTIONS (MON)

—10:00—
2 ALICE
4 TIME MACHINE
5 ANDY GRIFFITH
7 LET'S MAKE A DEAL
9 MORNING BREAK
11 $26,000 PYRAMID
13 HOUR MAGAZINE
20 45 700 CLUB
26 SESAME STREET
32 ELECTRIC COMPANY (R)
(HBO) MOVIE

—10:30—
2 LAVERNE & SHIRLEY
4 SALE OF THE CENTURY
5 BEWITCHED
7 FAMILY FEUD
11 LET'S MAKE A DEAL
32 3-2-1 CONTACT (R)

—11:00—
2 4 WHEEL OF FORTUNE
5 MERV GRIFFIN (FRI)
5 CAROL BURNETT AND FRIENDS (MON-THU)
7 11 ALL-STAR BLITZ
9 11 PRICE IS RIGHT
26 35 MISTER ROGERS (R)

—11:30—
2 4 SCRABBLE
5 RHODA (MON-THU)
7 RYAN'S HOPE
11 FAMILY FEUD
20 13 INDEPENDENT NEWS
26 3-2-1 CONTACT (R)
35 VEGETABLE SOUP
(HBO) VIDEO JUKEBOX (FRI)
(HBO) MOVIE (TUE, THU)

AFTERNOON

—12:00—
2 4 7 9 11 13 NEWS
5 PANORAMA
20 FAMILY
26 WRITE COURSE (WED, FRI)
26 FRUGAL GOURMET (MON)
26 PERSONAL FINANCE (TUE, THU)
26 MACNEIL / LEHRER NEWSHOUR
35 BIG VALLEY
79 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING
(HBO) MOVIE (MON, WED, FRI)

—12:30—
2 4 SEARCH FOR TOMORROW
7 11 LOVING
9 11 YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS
26 NEW LITERACY: AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS (WED, FRI)
26 NEW YORK'S MASTER CHEFS (MON)
26 CONGRESS: WE THE PEOPLE (TUE, THU)

—1:00—
2 DAYS OF OUR LIVES (MON, WED-FRI)
27 GOOD TIMES (TUE)
4 DAYS OF OUR LIVES
5 11 MOVIE
7 11 ALL MY CHILDREN
20 HOGAN'S HEROES
26 WHY IN THE WORLD? (FRI)
26 JUSTIN WILSON'S LOUISIANA COOKIN' (MON)
26 MYSTERY! (TUE)
26 FIRING LINE (WED)
26 FDR: AN AMERICAN HERO (THU)
35 EVENING EXCHANGE

—1:30—
2 26 BASEBALL (TUE)
9 11 AS THE WORLD TURNS
20 GILLIGAN'S ISLAND (MON, WED-FRI)
26 ALL ABOUT TV (FRI)
26 THE OLD HOUSE (MON)
(HBO) MOVIE (TUE, FRI)
(HBO) HBO COMING ATTRACTIONS (THU)

—2:00—
2 ANOTHER WORLD (MON, WED-FRI)
4 ANOTHER WORLD
7 11 ONE LIFE TO LIVE
26 EYE ON WASHINGTON (MON, WED-FRI)
26 ANCIENT LIVES (FRI)
26 SNEAK PREVIEWS (MON)
26 MASTERPIECE THEATRE (TUE)
26 THE LIVING PLANET: A PORTRAIT OF THE EARTH (WED)
26 OPEN MIND (THU)
32 BLACK FORUM (FRI)
32 JUST FOR YOU (MON)
32 HOWARD PERSPECTIVES (TUE)
32 COMMON CENTS (WED)
32 TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL (THU)
(HBO) MOVIE (MON, WED, THU)

—2:30—
5 INSIGHT (FRI)
9 11 CAPITOL
26 KIDS INCORPORATED (FRI)
26 KID'S BREAK (MON, WED, THU)
26 NEW TECH TIMES (MON)
26 PRESENTE (THU)
32 CONSULTATION (FRI)
32 HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH (MON)
32 HOW TO BUILD OUTDOOR FURNITURE (TUE)
32 MOTORWEEK (WED)
32 ROD AND REEL (THU)

—3:00—
2 SANTA BARBARA (MON, WED-FRI)
4 SANTA BARBARA
5 INSPECTOR GADGET (FRI)
5 35 THE BEGINNING OF RAINBOW LAND (MON, TUE)
5 35 PERIL IN THE PITS (WED)
5 35 THE MIGHTY MONSTROMURK MENACE (THU)
7 11 GENERAL HOSPITAL
9 11 GUIDING LIGHT
20 SUPERFRIENDS (MON, WED-FRI)
26 MISTER ROGERS (R)
32 TODAY'S SPECIAL (FRI)
32 COMMON CENTS (MON)
32 MAGIC OF OIL PAINTING (TUE)
32 MAGIC OF WATERCOLORS (WED)
32 MAGIC OF ANIMAL PAINTING (THU)
35 FAT ALBERT (FRI)
35 TEACHING WRITING (FRI)
32 GED (MON, WED)
32 BEGINNINGS (TUE, THU)

—3:30—
5 FAT ALBERT
20 HEATHCLIFF (MON, WED-FRI)
26 ELECTRIC COMPANY (R)
32 13 MISTER ROGERS (R)
45 VOLTRON, DEFENDER OF THE UNIVERSE
(HBO) NOT NECESSARILY SNIGLETS (FRI)
(HBO) WARNING: MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH (MON)
(HBO) BEST OF BRAINGAMES (TUE)

—4:00—
2 TIC TAC DOUGH (MON, WED-FRI)
4 JEOPARDY
5 35 HE-MAN AND MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE
7 LOVE CONNECTION
9 HOUR MAGAZINE
13 SANFORD AND SON
20 HAWAII FIVE-0 (MON, TUE, THU, FRI)
20 ABC AFTERSCHOOL (WED)
20 VOLTRON, DEFENDER OF THE UNIVERSE (MON, WED-FRI)
26 35 SESAME STREET
32 ELECTRIC COMPANY (R)
(HBO) BERENSTAIN BEARS' EASTER SURPRISE (FRI)
(HBO) ANIMALYMPICS (MON)
(HBO) MOVIE (TUE)
(HBO) FAWN STORY (WED)
(HBO) THE WILD PONY (THU)

—4:30—
2 JOKER'S WILD
4 PEOPLE'S COURT
5 BATMAN (FRI)
5 G.I. JOE (MON-THU)
7 ANYTHING FOR MONEY
9 JEFFERSONS
20 VOLTRON, DEFENDER OF THE UNIVERSE
32 3-2-1 CONTACT (R)
35 SCOOBY DOO
(HBO) FRAGGLE ROCK (FRI)

—5:00—
2 NEWSCOPE
4 9 NEWS
5 LOVE BOAT
7 EVERY SECOND COUNTS
13 BARNEY MILLER
20 THREE'S COMPANY
20 BUGS BUNNY
20 SESAME STREET
26 ARCTIC WINDOW (FRI)
26 KUP'S SHOW (MON)
26 FIRING LINE (TUE)
26 WORKING WOMEN (WED)
26 NOVA (THU)
26 G.I. JOE (FRI)
35 FAT ALBERT (MON-THU)
32 3-2-1 CONTACT (R)
(HBO) MOVIE (FRI)
(HBO) FRAGGLE ROCK (WED)

—5:30—
2 7 11 NEWS
4 TAXI
20 LAVERNE & SHIRLEY
26 CREATIVE WOMAN (WED)
26 MORK AND MINDY
32 COLORSOUNDS
(HBO) MOVIE (MON, WED, THU)

Gary Coleman makes his dramatic television debut as a teenage arsonist in "Playing With Fire," a made-for-TV film airing Sunday, April 14 on NBC. Cicely Tyson stars as Coleman's mother.

APRIL 12, 1985

DAYTIME SPECIALS

—5:15—
(HBO) LITTLE RIVER BAND IN AUSTRALIA The popular rock group performs a selection of their hits in a concert taped in Melbourne.

—6:30—
(HBO) THE WILD PONY The growing attachment between a wild pony and a twelve-year-old boy has an amazing effect on the youngster's divided family

—8:30—
(HBO) NOT NECESSARILY SNIGLETS This special edition from the "Not Necessarily The News" comedy team explores sniglets, words not in the dictionary that describe everyday situations.

—3:30—
(HBO) NOT NECESSARILY SNIGLETS This special edition from the "Not Necessarily The News" comedy team explores sniglets, words not in the dictionary that describe everyday situations.

—4:00—
(HBO) BERENSTAIN BEARS' EASTER SURPRISE Papa Bear sets out to ask the Easter here why spring hasn't arrived and discovers that the egg deliverer has gone on strike.

—5:00—
35 ARCTIC WINDOW This documentary chronicles an expedition to Iceland to capture puffins, a species of seabird, and traces their adjustment to life in Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo.

DAYTIME CHILDREN'S SHOWS

—2:30—
20 KIDS INCORPORATED

—4:00—
(HBO) BERENSTAIN BEARS' EASTER SURPRISE Papa Bear sets out to ask the Easter here why spring hasn't arrived and discovers that the egg deliverer has gone on strike.

—4:30—
(HBO) FRAGGLE ROCK The Fraggle Storyteller tells an amazing tale about Uncle Matt, who dreamed of becoming an explorer when he was a boy.

—8:00—
(HBO) "A Rare Breed" (1982) George Kennedy, Forrest Tucker. A teen-age girl helps raise a filly, joins it in Milan for training and, after winning races in Italy and England, is kidnapped along with the horse. 'PG'

—10:00—
(HBO) "Hard To Hold" (1984) Rick Springfield, Janet Eiber .A rock 'n' roll star falls for a child psychologist and is determined to win her love. 'PG'

—12:00—
(HBO) "American Hot Wax" (1978) Tim McIntire, Laraine Newman. Nineteen-fifties disc jockey Alan Freed tries to bring the first live rock 'n' roll show to the stage of Brooklyn's Paramount Theatre despite many protests. 'PG'

—1:00—
(5) "Challenge To Lassie" (1949) Edmund Gwenn, Geraldine Brooks. Lassie finds her ownership to be a matter of dispute.
(32) "Sunset Boulevard" (1950) William Holden, Gloria Swanson. A faded movie star proves to be the downfall of a promising young writer

—1:30—
(HBO) "Running Brave" (1983) Robby Benson, Pat Hingle. Based on the real-life experience of Sioux Indian Billy Mills and the personal obstacles he overcame to become a member of the 1964 Olympic track team and the first American to ever win the 10,000 meter run. 'PG'

—6:00—
(HBO) "Romancing The Stone" (1984) Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner. A ro-