Viola Davis is a critically acclaimed actress who garnered her first Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her stellar work in "Doubt," co-starring Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams. She received her second Oscar nomination, this time in the category of Best Actress in a Leading Role, for her portrayal of Aibileen, in "The Help," based on Kathryn Stockett's best-selling novel. Davis also received a Screen Actor's Guild Award and an NAACP Image Award for that powerful performance.
Next fall, Viola will be seen in the sci-fi action adventure "Ender's Game" opposite Harrison Ford, as well as in the drama "The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby," alongside Jessica Chastain, James McAvoy and William Hurt. And she is currently in production on "Prisoners," starring Hugh Jackman and Jake Gyllenhaal.

Her other feature film credits include "Won't Back Down," for which she just won another NAACP Image Award, "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close," with Tom Hanks and Sandra Bullock; "It's Kind of a Funny Story," with Emma Roberts, Lauren Graham and Zach Galifianakis; "Eat Pray Love," starring Julia Roberts; "Knight and Day," with Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz; "Law Abiding Citizen," with Jamie Foxx and Gerard Butler; "Nights in Rodanthe," based on the Nicholas Sparks novel and starring Diane Lane and Richard Gere; "Madea Goes to Jail"; "State of Play"; "Disturbia"; "The Architect"; "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," opposite 50 Cent; "Syriana," starring George Clooney; "Far from Heaven," with Dennis Quaid and Julianne Moore; and the Steven Soderbergh-directed films "Solaris," "Traffic" and "Out of Sight."

On the small screen, Viola was most recently seen in a six-episode arc on Showtime's hit series "United States of Tara." Her extensive television credits include roles on "Law & Order: SVU"; "Jesse Stone"; "Life is Not a Fairytale: The Fantasia Barrino Story"; "Traveler"; "Century City"; "Lefty"; "City of Angels"; Oprah Winfrey's "Amy and Isabelle"; and Hallmark Hall of Fame's

"Grace and Glorie."

A veteran of the stage, in 2010 Viola returned to Broadway in the highly anticipated revival of August Wilson's "Fences," alongside Denzel Washington. Her performance in the 1987 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play earned her a Tony Award, as well as the Drama Critics' Circle Award, Outer Critics Circle Award and Drama Desk Award. In 2001, she was awarded a Tony for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Play for her portrayal of Tonya in "King Hedley II."

A graduate of The Juilliard School, Davis also holds an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts Degree from her alma mater, Rhode Island College. Here, she talks about her latest outing as Amma in the screen adaptation of the romantic fantasy novel "Beautiful Creatures."

Kam Williams: Hi Viola, thanks for another opportunity to interview you.

Viola Davis: Absolutely!

KW: Congratulations on winning another NAACP Image Award. I loved your performance in Won't Back Down.

VD: Thank you very much, Kam.

KW: Do you think the movie suffered from political blowback, the way that Zero Dark Thirty has been hurt at the box office because of controversy?

VD: Yeah, I think it definitely suffered from that because we were in an election year and because education is a hotbed issue. And people have strong opinions about public school education, unions, charter schools, and parent-trigger laws. Occasionally, the timing of a movie is just bad and I think, in the case of this movie, it was probably the worst.

KW: What interested you about Beautiful Creatures?

VD: What interested me was that the character wasn't what she appeared to be. That she had different secrets to be discovered. When you first meet her, she's kind of just woven into the fabric of this family. But then you see the tribal scarification on her back, and you see her channeling spirits. And then you learn that she's the keeper of a library that's the gateway to different worlds. I like that. I like when there are different layers to peel away. It was just subtle enough to play and to craft. That's what appealed to me about the role.

KW: Have you ever made a romantic fantasy before? Is Kate & Leopold the closest you've done to something like this?

VD: I didn't think of Kate & Leopold, but yeah, I guess so. It's the only other time I've tried this genre.

KW: In this case, the film is more akin to the Twilight and Harry Potter series.

VD: I love young adult fantasies. While I say that, I have not seen all of the Twilight and Harry Potter movies. But I've read all of the books, and I love them. I love them because I enjoy being transported to a different world and having my imagination challenged. That's a huge part of what we do as actors. We have to imagine ourselves in a different world. And when you are in a young adult fantasy, it challenges you in the best way.

KW: Did you see The Hunger Games? That's another adaptation of a young adult book that targeted teens and 'tweeners.

VD: Yes, it was fabulous!

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turnier asks: Among all the characters you played, which one is closest to your personality and why?

VD: You know who? The character I played in Nights in Rodanthe, a movie I did with Diane Lane. Jean was kind of fun, and tough, sarcastic, artistic, creative, quirky and a little sexy. She was probably the closest to the real me.

KW: Patricia also points out that you'll be receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame this year. She'd like to know what that means to you.

VD: I keep forgetting about that until someone reminds me again. I kid you not. What does it mean? It's hard for me to say that I've made it, because no real actor feels that way. But it does represent a physical manifestation of my dreams coming to fruition, if that makes any sense.

KW: Professor/curator/author/documentary director Hisani DuBose says:

Please ask this beautiful woman what has been the public's response to her natural hair? I'm so glad she's working and bringing a different kind of beauty to Hollywood.

VD: The response to my natural hair has been huge, Hisani! And bigger than to anything else. I think people admire the boldness of it, and the courage of it. For me, personally, it represents my coming into who I am, not apologizing for it, and being comfortable with the way I look. I have been amazed by the testimonies coming especially from women of color who have thanked me for it.

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles says congratulations on your Image Award to add to your Tony Awards and Oscar nominations. She asks: How have these accolades affected your career and the quality of scripts you are offered?

VD: Recognition has brought me more work, because your name suddenly comes to mind when some directors are trying to cast a character. And my stage work has specifically enabled people to have faith that I can handle a role, even when it's not specifically written for an African-American. So, I'd have to say that recognition brings work. A successful movie brings

more work, and that been the biggest blessing.

KW: Harriet was also wondering with so many directors giving some 'classic' films a 'new look,' whether there is a particular role you'd like to reprise either on stage or the big screen?

VD: I would love to star in a remake of Thelma and Louise. Yep, that's the one I'd be interested in redoing.

KW: Marcia Evans says: I'm grateful to see you receiving rewards after putting in so much work into perfecting your craft. I wish you continued success with your career and lovely family, and I'm proud that you represent an example of a sister of worth. She asks: Do you have any personal charity benefitting your hometown of Central Falls, Rhode Island?

VD: Definitely! I'm very committed to its educational institutions, including my alma mater Central Falls High School's drama program, because I know that's what got me my start. I do everything I can to keep it alive since it made me feel like I had something to give to the world. I also support the Segue Institute for Learning, a charter school in Central Falls run by a friend of mine that my niece attends. I'm committed to that because of its proven results. They have the highest math scores of any charter school in Rhode Island.

KW: Marcia has a follow-up question. Are you concerned about art programs being removed from so many public school systems?

VD: I'm very concerned. I do as much as I can in my community. I've gone back to do fundraisers and to offer my services. My sister started a thespian society that my husband [actor Julius Tennon] and I have done workshops with in Central Falls.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

VD: That's a hard one. But I would have to say I can make a great big mac and cheese.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

VD: Lately, my daughter. I get so excited when she says something new, which she is doing every day. I can leave the house for a few hours, come back and meet a totally different person. That's very exciting to me.

KW: Would you mind giving me a Viola Davis question?

VD: Okay. Let's see... Who do you really believe you are when you go home as opposed to the person you pretend to be on the red carpet?

KW: That's a great question. Thanks. So, who do you really believe you are when you go home as opposed to the person you pretend to be on the red carpet?

VD: When I go home, I am a slug. I want to do everything completely opposite of what I do on

the red carpet. [LOL] I like to take off all my makeup, put on a t-shirt, be completely unassuming and just do stuff with my husband and my daughter.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Viola, and best of luck with Beautiful Creatures.

VD: Thanks, Kam.

To see a trailer for Beautiful Creatures, visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TnL6r8U818