

# The Washington Times

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## Washington honored

Speaking of celebrities, look for even more star power in the District later this week, when two-time Oscar winner **Denzel Washington** turns up to receive the 2009 Horatio Alger Award.

Recipients of the honor — named for the 19th-century author whose novels chronicled the rise of impoverished children from challenging starts to successful lives — must have overcome humble beginnings or adversity to achieve success and serve as outstanding role models.

Born in New York, Mr. Washington, 54, began working at the age of 11, sweeping the floors in his mother's beauty shop. After high school, he dreamed of a medical career while attending Fordham University, but he promptly changed his mind after attending theater summer camp.

In 2006, Mr. Washington wrote and published "A Hand to Guide Me," a best-seller featuring actors, politicians, athletes and other public figures who recall their childhood mentors. The book was published to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. The actor-director has served as the organization's national spokesperson and has been a member since age 6.

"Denzel will serve as a role model for today's youth by encouraging motivation, purpose and superior accomplishments," said **David L. Sokol**, president and chief executive officer of the Horatio Alger Association.