

### *Akeelah and the Bee*

**Director** Doug Atchison

**Release date** April 28, 2006

**Runtime** 112 minutes

Akeelah and the Bee tells the inspiring story of 11-year old Akeelah Anderson, who participates in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, her widowed mother, her schoolmates and rivals, and also her coach. The film explores issues of education in the black American community, as Akeelah attends a school in South Los Angeles that is primarily black. By the end of the film, everyone, both those in the movie and those watching the movie, roots for Akeelah.

### *A Beautiful Mind*

**Director** Ron Howard

**Release date** December 21, 2001

**Runtime** 134 minutes

"A Beautiful Mind" explores the troubled and brilliant John Forbes Nash, a Nobel Laureate in Economics. The story begins at Princeton University where Nash develops a truly original idea that revolutionizes the world of mathematics and becomes the concept known as "Nash equilibrium." Sadly, Nash develops paranoid schizophrenia, suffering greatly. However, the film ends in a kind of equilibrium, with Nash able to cope with his illness.

### *Dead Poets Society*

**Director** Peter Weir

**Release date** June 9, 1989

**Runtime** 128 minutes

Boys attending a conservative and elite private high school set out on a journey of awakening, inspired by their unorthodox English teacher, John Keating (Robin Williams). Mr. Keating teaches them to look at the world and their lives in new and challenging ways. There is some opposition to this newfound ideology, and Mr. Keating loses his job. We see at the end that this does not end their faith in him.

### *Drumline*

**Director** Charles Stone III

**Release date** December 13, 2002

**Runtime** 118 minutes

Devon Miles graduates from high school in New York City, and receives a full scholarship to attend the fictional Atlanta A&T University, a historically black college proud of its marching band. The A&T band separates itself by requiring all members to read music, by focusing on variety rather than popularity, and by dedication to teamwork. Devon learns a lot, including how to make a friend out of a former enemy. It is a good-hearted film, with great music and performances.

### *Good Will Hunting*

**Director** Gus Van Sant

**Release date** December 5, 1997

**Runtime** 126 minutes

Will Hunting (Matt Damon) has a genius-level intellect but works as a janitor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mathematics Professor Gerald Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgård) comes across Will's amazing mathematical abilities serendipitously when the professor leaves a problem on the chalkboard. He wants to support Will, but insists that Will attend therapy. When Will rejects therapist after therapist, Prof. Lambeau turns to an old friend, Sean Maguire (Robin Williams), for help.

### ***Lean On Me***

**Director** John Avildsen

**Release date** March 3, 1989

**Runtime** 108 minutes

Loosely based on Joe Clark, an inner city high-school principal. The state government threatens to take over a school unless test scores improve, so the Mayor and Superintendent bring in the controversial Clark. Mr. Clark takes drastic measures to change the school, at one point expelling hundreds of students. He turns the school around, angering nearly everyone in the process, but becomes a nationwide symbol of the success of "tough love" in education.

### ***Mr. Holland's Opus***

**Director** Steven Herek

**Release date** December 29, 1995

**Runtime** 143 minutes

"Mr. Holland's Opus" is about Glenn Holland, a musician and composer who teaches high school to pay the bills while trying to compose a memorable piece of music. By following Mr. Holland's career, we see American history from the 1960s to the 1990s through his eyes. The film deals with American attitudes towards the deaf, including Mr. Holland's attitude toward his own deaf son. The story explores the meaning of success and Holland learns what matters in life.

### ***Music of the Heart***

**Director** Wes Craven

**Release date** October 29, 1999

**Runtime** 124 minutes

In an unusual film for Wes Craven, *Music of the Heart* tells the true story of Roberta Guaspari (Meryl Streep), who brings music into East Harlem, New York, when her own life isn't going well. When budget cuts threaten the program, she plans a fund-raising concert that, despite difficulties, ends up in Carnegie Hall.

### ***The Nutty Professor***

**Director** Jerry Lewis

**Release date** June 4, 1963

**Runtime** 107 minutes

Jerry Lewis, best known for his slapstick humor, stars as Professor Julius Kelp, an unattractive and shy university professor who regularly angers the university administration by destroying the classroom laboratory. When a football-playing bully humiliates him, Kelp invents a serum that turns him into the handsome and obnoxious girl-chasing alter-ego, Buddy Love. Lewis said that the two represented good and evil. In 2004, *The Nutty Professor* was selected for preservation in

the United States National Film Registry; it is considered comic genius Jerry Lewis' greatest film.

### *The Paper Chase*

**Director** James Bridges

**Release date** October 16, 1973

**Runtime** 111 minutes

The film tells the story of James Hart, a first-year law student at Harvard Law School, and his experiences with Professor Charles Kingsfield, the brilliant, demanding law professor whom he both idolizes and finds intimidating. Expecting only the basic pressures of attending Harvard Law School, Hart finds himself the fearful challenger of Kingsfield. Their relationship grows more complex when Hart discovers that the woman he is dating is the professor's daughter. However, despite or because of the intensity, Hart becomes an excellent student as he grows into an adult.

### *Rebel Without a Cause*

**Director** Nicholas Ray

**Release date** October 27, 1955

**Runtime** 111 minutes

Nicholas Ray directed this classic film about a rebellious teenager (James Dean) who comes to town, meets a girl, disobeys his parents, and defies the local high school bullies. The film explores generational differences in 1950s America. The film is critical of parents and sympathetic to the rebellious, restless, misunderstood, middle-class American teenager.

### *Remember the Titans*

**Director** Boaz Yakin

**Release date** September 29, 2000

**Runtime** 113 minutes

Although an American sports drama, the film is also an intense tale of race relations and leadership. It tells the true story of Coach Herman Boone (Denzel Washington) as he becomes the football coach at the newly integrated T. C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1971. The team starts out by clashing along racial lines, but achieves unity and, with that, success.

### *Rudy*

**Director** David Anspaugh

**Release date** October 13, 1993

**Runtime** 116 minutes

*Rudy* is an account of the life of Daniel "Rudy" Ruettiger, who dreams of playing football at the University of Notre Dame despite significant obstacles. While achieving some success with his local high school football team, Ruettiger lacks the grades and money to attend Notre Dame, not to mention talent and size. The movie follows his struggle to make his dream come true.

### *Stand and Deliver*

**Director** Ramón Menéndez

**Release date** March 11, 1988

**Runtime** 103 minutes

This inspiring film dramatizes the true-life story of Jaime Escalante, a high-school mathematics teacher who proves underperforming students' potential by helping them pass the Advanced Placement Calculus exam. The students don't like him at first but they learn to believe in him and themselves.

### *The Way We Were*

**Director** Sydney Pollack

**Release date** October 19, 1973

**Runtime** 118 minutes

"The Way We Were" traces the star-crossed romance of Katie Morosky (Barbara Streisand) and Hubbell Gardiner (Robert Redford), socio-political opposites who meet in college, eventually marry, and then divorce. The film covers important parts of American social and political history: political activism, World War II, post-War prosperity, McCarthyism, and social changes in America after the War.

### *With Honors*

**Director** Alek Keshishian

**Release date** April 29, 1994

**Runtime** 103 minutes

*With Honors* explores what is important in life by contrasting the story of a Harvard University student, Montgomery "Monty" Kessler (Brendan Fraser), about to graduate with honors, with that of a homeless man, Simon Wilder (Joe Pesci). The film uses comedy to discuss important issues of politics, relationships, and honor.