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Miss Illinois crowned Miss America

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) - Miss Illinois, Marjorie Judith Vincent, a pianist of Haitian descent who wants to practice international law, was crowned Miss America 1991 early Sunday.

Vincent broke into tears and smiled brightly as she was given a surprise serenade of "There She Is" by Bert Parks, who returned to the pageant 10 years after he was fired as Master of Ceremonies.

"I couldn't believe it," she said afterward. "I was just so happy that I was in the Top 10. I still don't believe it."

Asked what she would do next, Vincent said, "I have no idea. I

just want to see my family."

First runner-up was Miss South Carolina Mary Waddell Gainey, 24, of Hartsville.

Following her as second runner-up was Miss Tennessee Dana Brown, 25, of Memphis. Miss Texas Suzanne Lawrence, 21, of Humble was third runner-up. And Miss Louisiana Linnea Marie Fayard, 22, of Shreveport took fifth place.

Earlier in the pageant, the 75-year-old Parks serenaded 29 former Miss Americas with a lip-synched "There She Is" that wasn't quite synched. A standing ovation greeted Parks, who neglected to mention at least a dozen of the

former beauty queens he was to introduce.

Vincent, 25, of Oak Park, is a third-year law student at Duke University who graduated from DePaul University in 1988 with a degree in music.

She played Chopin's "Fantasy Impromptu -- Opus 66" with dramatic flourishes and a light touch during the talent portion of the competition.

The 5-foot-6, 110-pound Vincent performed in a rust satin embroidered coat detailed in gold cracked ice over a black sheath petticoat dress.


Vincent, who came to the United

States from Haiti when she was 3 years old, has said she wants to study international law and help in the economic development of the impoverished Caribbean nation. She speaks French and Creole.

Vincent comes from a modest family. Her father is a doorman and a check cashier and her mother is a seamstress.

She said in a pre-pageant interview that she wants to speak out on the plight of battered women.

Vincent was the only black contestant among the 50 this year. Last year's Miss America, Debbye Turner, also was black.



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Penn found Plattsmouth perfect

OMAHA (AP) - Producers seeking a location for Sean Penn's new movie, "The Indian Runner," knew they wanted a Midwestern town near a major river.

The film's location scout, production designer and production manager visited Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota.

Then they discovered Plattsmouth. "Sean had drawn a picture of the town he envisioned, and Plattsmouth was exactly what his vision was," said Don Phillips, the movie's co-

producer.

Filming for "The Indian Runner" will continue in Omaha, Council Bluffs and Plattsmouth and such surrounding towns as Arlington through the end of October.

An avenue in Council Bluffs was blocked off late Friday to accommodate all-night filming at the Theodore Fitch home.

The movie is being produced for about \$10 million and is tentatively scheduled for release through Universal Studios in the fall of 1991. It

will be Penn's first effort as a director and writer. He will not act in the film.

Thom Mount, executive producer, described the film, set in 1968, as a "very intense family drama" that focuses on the relationship between two brothers.

Phillips said Joe, the older brother, is a deputy sheriff. Frank, the younger brother, has returned from Vietnam after three tours of duty. Phillips described the brothers as a kind of Cain and Abel.

Although Frank served in Vietnam, Mount said, "This is not a returning veteran's story."

Phillips said the screenplay is based on the song "Highway Patrolman" from Bruce Springsteen's "Nebraska" album, released in 1982.

Also in the cast are Charles Bronson, Hastings native Sandy Dennis, Viggo Mortensen, David Morse, Valeria Golino, Patricia Arquette, Dennis Hopper and Cathy Moriarty.

Phillips sent Mount the original script for "The Indian Runner" and told him it had been written by a prison inmate. Mount's company has produced such films as "Tequila Sunrise," "Bull Durham" and "Frantic."

Mount liked the script and learned only later that Penn wrote it.

"Don had hoodwinked me because I had to read it without prejudice -- because Sean and I are friends, and Don and Sean are friends, and we've all known each other and worked together for a long time," Mount said.

Penn had used the same ruse in sending the script to Phillips. The two had worked together on "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" in 1982.

Besides the suitability of the Nebraska locations, Mount said, the film crew also was drawn to the Omaha area because of the friendliness and genuineness of area residents.

"In a very good way, Nebraska has not had a chance to become sophisticated yet. I mean that in the most positive sense. And that's extremely important to the story, because it influences the kind of extras and small parts that we cast and the look and feel of things," Mount said.

"If one lives in California, one believes that no one out there drives American cars anymore. That's not the case here. It's great."

The crew of "The Indian Runner" is using the old Omaha police station and jail as a self-contained studio.

Mount said it contains production offices, carpentry and metal shops, electrical and grip departments, wardrobe and costume shops, makeup and hair departments and accounting offices. It also houses an editing facility and a screen room for viewing the film footage shot each day.


Having such a facility is "very unusual and a pleasant surprise," Mount said. It came about because the crew found out about the vacant building, which is owned by the O'Keefe Elevator Co.

The making of "The Indian Runner" will bring about \$4 million to the economies of Omaha and surrounding communities, Mount said.

He said the state and city governments have been very cooperative, especially Omaha Mayor P.J. Morgan and Janet Traub of the Nebraska Film Office.

"There couldn't be better working conditions, from our point of view," he said.

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