

Non-traditional student attends STCC

SPRINGFIELD – Stephen “Stix” Josey, who has written, produced and acted in his own feature films, has taken on a role that could transform his life: Springfield Technical Community College student.

Josey, a community-minded entrepreneur with a creative spirit, hopes to graduate next spring with an associate degree in business administration. The Springfield resident came to STCC two years ago as a non-traditional student. He was in his early 50s and had worked for years in the entertainment industry.

Several years before starting at STCC, Josey attended Saddleback College, a community college in California, where he acquired the skills to make his first independent movie, “Angels Around Me.” The film, which can be found at Amazon Prime Video, was selected for the Independent Philadelphia Film Festival in 2011. He won Best First-Time Director and went on to produce other independent movies and perform as an actor.

Before learning about cinema at Saddleback, Josey worked for Sony Records as an in-house music producer assisting artists that included John Legend and the rap group Wu-Tang Clan, among others. “Once you’re in the industry, you meet all these different people,” he said.

Although he lived in California and other states as an adult, Josey spent part of his childhood in Springfield and Boston. He returned to Springfield in 2011 to take care of his ailing mother. He then got married and took a job as a government property specialist.

Josey found out his employer would pay for his education, so he decided to enroll at STCC in 2017.

“Plus, being a movie and music producer and having my own business, it wouldn’t hurt to have a business degree,” he said with a laugh.

This past spring, Josey was one of six STCC students who won a Grinspoon Entrepreneurship Initiative Entrepreneurial Spirit Award. At the annual banquet, he exhibited his home-grown business, Spotlight Entertainment. Spread across his exhibition table were DVDs of his movies and television shows, a book he wrote, and music CDs he produced.

Business Administration Professor Diane Sabato, who met Josey through her work with the Grinspoon Entrepreneurship Initiative, described him as a “lifelong learner” who is always thinking about his next entrepreneurial project.

“He’s one of our non-traditional students who has been an entrepreneur in

one form or another throughout his adult life,” she said. “He recognizes opportunities and knows how to take advantage of them to advance his business.”

Lidya Rivera-Early, director of community engagement at STCC, described Josey as humble and “super integrated into our community.”

“He cares about what goes on in our area and is always looking for ways to positively influence and encourage our youth by providing different avenues for them to explore their talents,” Rivera-Early said.

Josey is enrolled in STCC classes and working as a property specialist thousands of miles from Hollywood, but he hasn’t given up his passion for movies and music. Flexibility in his government job allows him to fly to movie sets around the country to take small parts in some big movies. He recently took a role as a construction worker in the Mark Wahlberg movie “Wonderland” and played an FBI agent in “Patriots Day,” about the Boston Marathon bombing. He acts on a television show called “The American Family Dreamers,” which is filmed locally and available on Amazon.

One of the actresses on the TV show is his niece, Kaliyah Gaulin, a 16-year-old Springfield Central High School student who has released two R&B albums

produced by Josey through his company, Spotlight Entertainment.

“She’s a phenomenal kid,” Josey said.

Josey is doing his part to help her follow her dream of making it big. He has introduced her to some of the famous people he knows in the entertainment industry.

Josey realizes the entertainment industry can be difficult. But he also knows the music and film business can be rewarding and exciting. That’s why he encourages his niece, and he continues to take roles in movies and produce his own TV programs and films.

“Amazon has been really good to me,” he said. “I have several films and TV shows on Amazon right now, which is awesome. It’s amazing. I’m a kid from the projects and I can turn on Amazon and see my work up there.”

He said he enjoys asking people from Springfield to take parts in his TV shows.

“I want to get people in the community excited,” he said. “I want to bring a piece of Hollywood here, and maybe open up a performing arts school where I can teach about music and film. That’s my ultimate goal. And I want to continue to act in other people’s projects, because I love acting.”