Actor Guy Fortt Takes On The Role of Student

STAMFORD, Conn. — Actor Guy Fortt, star of the Broadway stage, big screen and television and a Greenwich firefighter, is taking on the role of a lifetime in an IDEAL opportunity to finish his college degree at the University of Bridgeport.

Fortt is enrolled in the UB’s Innovative Degree Excellence in Accelerated Learning Program and is working toward a bachelor’s degree in general studies with a concentration in social science.

The IDEAL Program gives working adults ages 23 or older the opportunity to complete an associate’s or bachelor’s degree with evening and weekend class times or through online accelerated courses.

Fortt, a Greenwich fireman for 23 years, previously attended Norwalk Community College and was recognized as a distinguished alumnus in 2008.

“I have always wanted to attain my bachelor’s degree and hope to do it in 15 months,” he said.

Fortt and his wife of 23 years, Dr. Tabitha Fortt, live in Stamford and have four children, Jafar, Anisa, Khairi and Omar, who have all excelled in MMA fighting, football, basketball and acting.

In addition to his family, Fortt said Carolyn Thomas, his former academic counselor at NCC, and friend Curt Harmon also encouraged him to return to college.

The IDEAL program, Fortt said, allows him the flexibility to work during the day, continue activities with his children and pursue his own dreams. “I think I will benefit most by creating my own course of study and spending time with my family,” he said.

Fortt, one of six children, is a Stamford native raised by a single mother who inspired him through her hard work to put her children through private school. While attending school, Fortt said he joined the theater team to strengthen his skills as an actor.

“Mom always said, ‘Son, if you don’t go get it, it ain’t gonna come to you,’” Fortt said. “I took that statement and ran with it.”

Fortt’s acting career has several film credits, including roles in "The Devil Wears Prada," "The Interpreter," "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead" and "She Hate Me," directed by Spike Lee. He has also appeared on television in "Law and Order SVU," "All My Children," "The Sopranos" and "Third Watch." On Broadway, Fortt starred in "The Color Purple" and performed off Broadway in "The Price of Business," "Writers at Work," "Saint Heaven" and "A Soldier's Play."

Fortt created the Community Media Training Program, which helps youth learn about television, film, and theater in front of and behind the camera. He is also involved in a church group and other philanthropic programs.

“My acting career influenced me to go back to school because, at the end of the day, acting will end and I am a person that relies on education to control my future,” he said.

Fortt became a firefighter after witnessing a tragic death and not knowing how to respond. The experience created a “monster” within him to become an emergency medical technician, he said.

“I liked helping and serving people so much, I decided to become a firefighter,” he said.

He has participated in rescue activities at ground zero in New York City and other catastrophes where he has felt “great satisfaction” in helping others.

According to the University of Bridgeport website, the IDEAL program offers people a chance to turn around their futures leading to self-enrichment, higher salaries, promotions and respect from colleagues.

People returning to school should pursue a career that makes them happy and that is financially and morally rewarding, Fortt said.

“My advice is to get that degree,” he said. “Once you have that, no one can take it away.”

by Mike Russo
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