Alumni award winner excels on the big and little screens

by Alyssa Kadansky - Wednesday, July 23, 2014

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With a passion for film, nothing could stop University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus Kristofor Brown ’88, of Pacific Palisades, Calif., from making it big in Hollywood.

His success in the television and film industry and beyond has led Brown to be honored with a 2014 Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award. Brown and nine other award winners will be recognized during Homecoming Weekend at the Alumni Awards Celebration on Friday, Oct. 17.

Brown enrolled at UW Oshkosh and immersed himself in campus clubs and organizations. He was a Reeve Union Board (RUB) member, the RUB Cinema Committee chair, the RUB vice president and eventually president. He also was an All-Campus Executive Board member, an Alcohol Task Force member, part of the NACA Wisconsin Region Steering Committee and involved in the Sigma Pi fraternity.

Brown pursued his bachelor's degree in radio-TV-film at UW Oshkosh. His success inside and outside of the classroom landed him an array of awards, including the Outstanding Senior Award, the NACA Outstanding Service Award and the Radio-TV-Film Outstanding Screenwriting Award. He was challenged by his professors to go far, especially by Doug Heil.

After graduation, Brown decided to take on the challenge.

“Eight months after graduating from UWO, with $2,000 to my name, I moved to Los Angeles to pursue my dream career in television and film and, hopefully, screenwriting,” Brown said. “My first job was an unpaid internship with a feature film producer, which led to a low-paying, full-time position.”

A few months later, Brown suffered a financial setback from an uninsured medical procedure that left him with more than $9,000 in medical bills.

“That led me to accept an entry level position in television animation production, simply because they were offering $50 more per week than my current job,” Brown said.

He worked at the company for three years, and during that time sold his first script for an episode of the Saturday morning cartoon Super Mario Brothers on NBC.

Brown went on to work as an animation production coordinator for MGM. He also wrote freelance episodes for the MTV cartoon series Beavis and Butt-Head. He was then offered a position in New York City to work as the voice director and first full-time staff writer for the show.

“Three months later, I was promoted to head writer and co-producer,” Brown said. “My work on that series launched my career as a writer.”
Brown was then hired as the writer and producer with film producer, screenwriter, director, actor and comedian Judd Apatow on Undeclared, a television series that Apatow created for Fox.

“Even though it was Kris’s first time writing half-hour, narrative prime-time network television in Hollywood, he quickly established himself not only as a skilled writer, but also as a producer, both on set and in the editing room,” Apatow said. “I knew Kris must have had a rich experience in his years at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.”

Brown has since worked on many network and cable TV shows, including MTV Network’s The Tom Green Show, Fox Network’s Oliver Beene, CBS Network’s The Stones, Nickelodeon’s Supah Ninjas and the 2013 Kids Choice Awards, as well Spike Network’s Blue Mountain State and many more.

He also worked on numerous feature films like Kicking & Screaming, Fun with Dick & Jane, The 40-Year-Old Virgin, The Ant Bully and Drillbit Taylor among others.

Brown has written headlines for The Onion, was a creative consultant for the 69th Academy Awards and was the writer and editor of several Beavis & Butt-Head books for Pocket Books.

In 2014, Disney XD ordered a full, 20-episode season of Brown's Kirby Buckets series, which combines live-action and animation to premiere Oct. 20.

Outside of the studio, Brown is involved with his family, as well as his community. He cheers on his favorite Wisconsin sports teams all the way from California, enjoys skiing, skateboarding, playing sports with his sons and coaching youth flag football in Los Angeles.

No matter which channel his work takes him to, Brown prides himself on being a UW Oshkosh alumnus.

“I spent five years at UW Oshkosh and those were five of the happiest years of my life,” Brown said. “Those years helped shape me in ways that go beyond academics… UW Oshkosh will forever be a part of me.”

For more information about the alumni awards dinner set for Friday, Oct.17 during Homecoming 2014, please contact the Alumni Relations Office at (920) 424-3449 or email alumni@uwosh.edu.

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