

Monday, November 9, 2009

OU actor Thomas Mahard to appear in feature film "Alleged"

By **Katie Land**, news editor

As a local actor and special lecturer at Oakland University, Thomas Mahard's life has changed dramatically as a result of the recent Michigan Film Tax Incentive.

This summer, he wrapped a four week film shoot for the upcoming film, "Alleged," that centers on the famous Scopes "monkey" trial in the 1920s. Mahard plays Judge Raulston in the courtroom where lawyers debate the legality of teaching evolution in a classroom.

"This role was larger than others I've had in the past. I was in quite a few scenes, and able to have some great interactions with the other actors," Mahard said. "There were a number of really good people involved. It was a tremendous amount of fun."

The past few years have offered a plethora of roles for Michigan natives. Mahard himself has had many small roles lately, appearing with Clint Eastwood in "Gran Torino," Hilary Swank in "Betty Anne Waters," and with Robert De Niro in "Stone."

"The Michigan film initiative has been fabulous. I would support anything and everything to keep it going," Mahard said. "It has really offered many opportunities to enhance, expand and grow my career."

Mahard's experiences have all been positive and have contributed to his reputation as a professional. Each take of a scene can be very costly, Mahard explained, and the entire crew appreciates an actor who is prepared and able to shoot a scene the first time through.

"It was thrilling to be prepared and able to perform and not cost the film any money," he said. "Every take is very expensive, and everyone on set is excited when you are able to be right on top of the scene."

"Alleged" offers a juicier role for Mahard, one that allows him to act alongside respected actors in complex and dramatic scenes. Mahard describes a tense scene in the courtroom where he threatens to hold Irish actor Colm Meaney in contempt, yelling that court had not been dismissed. With 150 extras in the scene all on their toes, it was thrilling, he said.

"I love it when the pressure is on," Mahard continued. "In "Alleged," I was able to act in scenes that were long and quite complicated and the pressure was really on. Being able to fire up in that sort of an environment is when acting becomes really fun."

Mahard can next be seen on stage in Meadow Brook Theatre's annual rendition of "A Christmas Carol." This will be his 24th year performing in the production and the first time he will play Ebenezer Scrooge.



OU's Thomas Mahard appears on set in the new film, "Alleged."

SUMMARY

Thomas Mahard, local actor and special lecturer at OU, plays Judge Raulston in the upcoming film, "Alleged," that centers on the famous Scopes "monkey" trial in the 1920s.

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