

LEVI FRAZIER, JR.



Levi Frazier, Jr. is a published author, actor, playwright, director, producer and educator. He retired from Southwest Tennessee Community College in August 2021 as an Associate Professor and Theatre Manager in the Communications, Graphic & Fine Arts Department, after 15 years of service to the College. Prior to joining Southwest, Frazier was an instructor in the Department of Theatre and Communication Arts at the University of Memphis and taught English at State Technical Institute at Memphis. Frazier is co-founder of Beale Street Repertory Company and Blues City Cultural Center where he now serves as Artistic Director.

A prolific playwright, Frazier has written over fifty plays including: "A Helping Hand," "Big Ten, You're Different," "For Our Children," "Ramesses the Great," "A Sad State of Affairs," and "Down on Beale Street." His work has been produced nationally in major theatrical markets such as New York, Chicago, Miami, Austin, Hollywood and Memphis. His musical, "Down on Beale Street," had an off-Broadway run at the Richard Allen Center in New York. Frazier's work also has reached international audiences. "A Tribute to Richard Wright," was produced, by invitation, at the Sorbonne in Paris, France for the African-American and Europe International Conference and his "For Our Freedom & Yours" was produced in Lodz, Poland. His most recent stage work, "The Juneteenth Story," a play with music, which he also directed, premiered at the Cannon Center in February 2013.

Frazier has amassed several awards for his playwrighting. He received the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's Southern Writers Project Award and garnered first place writing honors at the Association for Theatre of Higher Education National Conference. His play, "When it Rains," was selected for a reading at the Conference on World Affairs at the University of Colorado at Boulder and at the National Black Theatre Festival. It was produced at the Coleman Smith Artistic Company in Hollywood, California and awarded Honorable Mention in the Stage Play Script category for *Writer's Digest* and won first place in Chattanooga Theatre Center's Play Writing Contest. It also won an Ostrander Award in Memphis, Tennessee, for Best Original Play.

As a screenwriter, Frazier's talents were often recognized. He was a semi-finalist for the American Film Institute's Summer Situation Comedy Workshop, the Organization of Black Screenwriters Award, and the Writers Network Screenplay and Fiction Competition. His script, "Ninja and The Nut," was selected as a finalist in America's Best Writing Contest's Sitcom Category. He also presented a script writing workshop on "A Raisin in the Sun" at Yale University for the Yale Divinity School.

Adding to his many artistic talents, Frazier has written four children's books: "Tickle the Rain," "I Love You So Much," "The Spools Move In," and "Man Up!" His short stories have appeared in several anthologies including *Homespun Images*, *Homeworks*, *Homewords* and *A Book of Tennessee Writers* which has included the works of such notable Tennesseans as Nikki Giovanni, Alex Haley and Shelby Foote. Other short stories, essays and articles have appeared in *The Memphis Parent*, *Grace Magazine* and *Memphis Magazine*. In 2004 his book, "151 Things That Happen or Don't Happen When You Turn 50," was published by Goal Mine Press.

An actor in his own right, Frazier appeared in the movies "Walking Tall II," "The Firm," "The Chamber," "Her Hidden Truth," and "The Mississippi" as well as a host of national commercials and industrial training tapes.

Frazier earned a Bachelor of Arts in communication arts and psychology from Rhodes College and a Master of Arts in speech and theatre from the University of Memphis. He is married to Deborah Frazier and is the proud father of Ayana, Levi, and Matthew and grandchildren Leah, Moriah, and Michaela.