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GIRE & SOTOMOFF

FROM SUBURBS
TO SHOWBIZ

Acting a 'blast' for ex-Mt. Prospect resident

Patrick Rafferty grew up in Mount Prospect dreaming of one day owning a restaurant.

Two things changed his mind: 9/11 and a news story in the Daily Herald.

"The Herald story reported that businesses were suffering after 9/11, but that comedy was booming,"

Rafferty said. "People wanted to laugh."

The story ran a listing of places where people could learn to make people laugh. One was Second City's improv classes at its Arlington Heights satellite school. Rafferty signed up.

"I had a blast there," he said. "And that was my

segue into professional performing."

If you caught the Sept. 23 season premiere of ABC's "Black-ish," you saw Rafferty playing the supporting character of Mr. Travis. Earlier this year, you could see Rafferty as Earl, the unscrupulous car salesman in the CBS TV series "Scorpion."

But the part he's proudest of is playing Nick Offerman's letter carrier, Paul, in NBC's "Parks and Recreation," which ended its run earlier this year.

"Oh, I love that show," he said. "One of my goals was to be on 'Parks and

See **SHOWBIZ** on **PAGE 5**



Actor Patrick Rafferty grew up in Mount Prospect and graduated from Wheeling High School before embarking on a show biz career through Second City.

Showbiz: As a teen, actor was an extra in 'Lucas'

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Recreation."

He had auditioned for the show several times before finally landing the part.

"Nick is from Chicago, so we had lots of talks about the city and being from Chicago," Rafferty said. "It was wonderful."

Rafferty was born in Chicago, the second of six kids to Allstate Insurance employee Philip Rafferty and his wife, Doretha.

At 4, Rafferty moved with his family to Mount Prospect, where his parents still live.

A movie shot in the Northwest suburbs sparked Rafferty's interest in show business, even though he didn't know it at the time. In 1985, the Wheeling High School student became an extra on the set of Chicago filmmaker David Selzer's teen movie "Lucas," partially shot at the then-Arlington High School on Euclid Road.

"Again, it was an article in the Daily Herald that alerted me about the casting call for the movie," Rafferty said.

"I got to be in a scene sitting down from Corey Haim. In a hallway scene, I crossed in front of Keri Green, the red-haired actress. I had a blast. An absolute blast."

Still, Rafferty's life dream of a culinary arts career guided him to earn a degree in restaurant management from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1991.

He moved to Arlington Heights for several years, working in restaurant-related jobs and performing in community theater productions.

Once 9/11 detailed his restaurant plans and Rafferty took those Second City classes, he booked a commercial agent in Chicago. He made a few commercials, plus played "Cop Nuts" in a low-budget independent horror feature, "The Rockville Slayer," about a serial killer who targets grade-schoolers.

"I had always loved movies and television," Rafferty said, "but I never pursued it. While

Commercial inflames Wheeling graduate

Wheeling High School alum Patrick Rafferty is one hot actor.

Take his 2005 "Fantastic Four"-themed SBC Yahoo TV commercial where he imagines himself to be the Human Torch, bursting into flame, taking off at Dodgers Stadium, then landing in the backyard of a posh mansion.

"It was a highly physical shoot," Rafferty said. "I had to do a lot of running and jumping on a trampoline. I had never trampolined in my life!"

He ran in front of hundreds of extras pretending to be fans at the stadium.

"It was a blast," Rafferty reported, "and it meant more trampoline work!"

He hasn't jumped on a trampoline since the commercial. But it did give him his Screen Actors Guild card, plus something else.

"I actually earned a bump-up in pay because I performed my own stunts!" he marveled.

"That is hilarious."

— Dawn Gire

at Second City, I decided this is what I want to do. I decided to give myself a shot."

So, Rafferty moved to Los Angeles to be a part of the Second City's advanced conservatory program. Since then, Rafferty has appeared in several TV series, including "Trophy Wife," "Sam and Cat," "Community," "Suburgatory," "The League," "Himself: M.D." and others.

"I'm a pretty goal-oriented person," he said. "Now I'm in a wonderful place. I am having the greatest time of my life."

— Dawn Gire

• If you know of someone in showbiz who'd make a good feature, email dgreg@dailyherald.com and sotomoff@dailyherald.com.