

Out of my twenty-two years of education, there are only two teachers that I want to accredit my drive, discipline, and success for. One was the one in high school who convinced me to do music and theatre, and the second was the one that whipped me into shape to be a competitive performer on a national scale. The latter was Mrs. Stacy Alley, who I genuinely think any budding performer should feel lucky to work with. The entertainment industry everyone dreams of working in is not by any means an easy, participation-awarding one. A plethora of my past teachers simply say “follow your dreams,” but Stacy says if you’re going to follow your dreams you’re going to be *prepared* and *professional* while you do it. I’ve had personal experience with her as a director, educationally and professionally. I’ve also been her student in multiple dance and career-teaching classes. She helped me start working professionally at nineteen years old. Now, after spending twenty-two years in the south with not much proper training before college, I live in New York City with callbacks for national tours – something I’ve dreamed of since I was little. Being Broadway-bound was something I always wanted but never *truly* thought I’d reach, but because of Stacy, I genuinely, 100%, think I’m headed in that direction. She’s tough in the most caring and genuine way – and no one serious about this profession should be taught by someone who instructs lightly or without heart. And The University of Alabama has never been anyone’s first thought as a “hub of theatre,” let’s be honest. However, because of Stacy’s work with the Theatre and Dance Department, that notion is changing. She is bringing in students from all over the country with insanely diverse backgrounds. I have seen it with my own eyes working as a Student Ambassador for the department. Stacy Alley will hold a special place in my heart forever – she taught me how to learn what I want, work for it, and earn it.

- Will Harden