

NEWS

WALL

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local resources through which she could build on that desire to perform.

“When I was in elementary and middle school, I was active with both the Uwharrie Players and The Talent Company,” she said.

But HK’s high school years would require a relocation to allow her the opportunity to work more diligently toward her dream.

“In order to get more intense training in performing arts, Mom and I moved to Charlotte so I could attend Northwest School of the Arts,” HK said. “In order to attend, students must live in Mecklenburg County and must complete an audition.”

HK added that the move to attend the Charlotte-based school was a good decision.

“It (Northwest School of the Arts) got me on track for the future,” she recalled.

The budding actress de-

scribed college life at Western Carolina University as reminiscent of her early years in Albemarle.

“Even though we lived in Charlotte during high school, I guess I’m still a small-town Stanly County girl at heart,” she said, adding that had she not seen the Western Carolina campus as a youngster on a trip with her mother (also a WCU grad), she probably would not have even considered attending there.

“WCU was the right fit,” she said.

Confirmation of that choice being “the right fit” can be found in Wall’s academic credentials, as she graduated on May 7, 2022 with Magna Cum Laude honors and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre.

But completing her degree didn’t mean a beach trip or extended celebration, because upon graduation, HK was hired to work at Pendragon Theatre in Saranac Lake, New York (the Adirondack region). While there, she served as director of the

theatre’s youth performance (“Frozen, Jr.”), before going on to star in two of Pendragon’s adult shows, “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” and “The Woods.”

One of Wall’s favorite parts of that experience was working with the youth theater camp.

“It was a wonderful experience,” she said. “There’s nothing more refreshing than coming into a theater and watching young people create.”

Wall’s time with Pendragon Theatre was a seasonal gig, so late in the summer of 2022 she returned to Charlotte, only to be pleasantly surprised by an unexpected opportunity.

Prior to graduation from WCU, Wall had attended a two-week intensive audition in New York City offered through the LiNK program of The Association for Performing Arts and Entertainment Professionals. The program allowed Wall to be seen by theater professionals who are responsible for casting, direction and opera-

tions of professional theater companies ranging from small regional troupes all the way to Broadway.

“It’s one of the best things I’ve ever done,” Wall said. “It was lots of work, but fun, too. I made many great friends, all of whom are currently in professional theater.”

“I got home from Pendragon on Tuesday or Wednesday,” HK added, “and I got an email from my agent on Friday asking that I submit some videos of performances. I did that, and later that same day he called me back and let me know that I had been cast in ‘Buddy, The Buddy Holly Story.’”

“He told me, ‘I hope you haven’t unpacked your bags yet,’ then let me know that I needed to fly out that Sunday to Medford, Oregon.”

In Medford, a city of 86,000 just north of the California border, Wall was cast as Marlena Madison in the musical drama portrayal of Holly’s life, and began a whirlwind tour of the continen-

tal U.S., appearing in as many as four performances a week.

“We started in Medford, and since that time we have performed in Oregon, New York, Vermont, Florida, Alabama, Texas, Arizona and South Dakota,” she said. “We’ve experienced heat, storms and snow and seen countless sights. To get to see all this at age 22 has been a blessing.”

Looking back, Wall credits her instructors and colleagues at all levels for helping her build toward her current success, but mentioned two people in particular who have been an inspiration to her.

“My mom and I were involved at times with The Piedmont Players from Salisbury, and during that time I met twin brothers James and John Woodson, who hold a very special place in my heart,” she said. “They had a fiery passion for theater, for precision and for the art of performing. Their example challenged me to think

beyond community theater.”

Theater and performing remain the focus of Wall’s future, and the Albemarle native received accolades recently from the Broadway World organization, at its Central New York Regional Awards Event. At the awards ceremony, Wall was recognized for Best Performance in a Professional Musical, as well as first runner-up for Best Director in a Non-Professional Musical. Both awards were for her work during summer 2022 at Pendragon Theatre.

“My immediate goal is to stay involved in performing as much as possible,” she said, adding that although her long-term goal is to perform on Broadway, she loves her current situation as well.

“I love touring,” HK said, “and my heart is in the entertainment industry.”

“Theater is like fishing,” she added. “It takes patience, but when you get a bite, you better reel it in.”

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