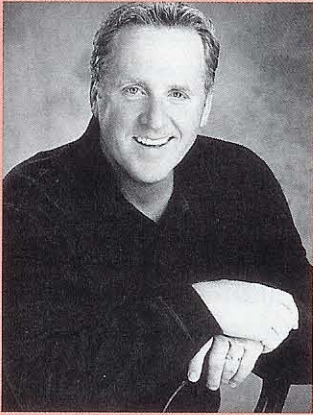


alumni profile

BILL HOAG '76



Countless hopefuls dream of making it as actors. Dreams of the Big White Way or Tinsel Town unfortunately

eludes most, even with all the talent, determination and sacrifice they endure. It's a tough life to choose given all the odds against succeeding at it, but for so many it's a risk worth taking.

St. Francis College alumni, Bill Hoag '76, counts himself as one of the fortunate ones. He has been able to perform for nearly 25 years on stage, in feature films and on TV. He can also be seen in numerous commercials both here and internationally.

"Ironically," Bill remembers, "I came to St. Francis to become a businessman, and became an actor." The first time he performed was in a comedy called *George Washington Slept Here* put on by the St. Francis College Troupers. "I got some big laughs and was immediately hooked. That instant changed my life." A friend of Bill's had talked him into auditioning for the part and that wasn't an easy sell. "I was shy and petrified to even speak in front of more than two people—I even put off taking mandatory speech classes because I just couldn't do it."

After graduation, Bill began working at a bank as a real estate appraiser to earn some money. But with the trade papers serving as an agent, he took to auditioning as much as he could in New York City. After a while in search for his big break, he landed a starring role in an off-Broadway comedy as a potato. The play ran for a while and the reviews were favorable, but the pay wasn't near what he made at the bank. Still, it was an easy decision for him to quit the day job—he knew once he made a living as a professional actor he would never have to do anything else again.

Since that time, Bill's roles have been more meat than starch. He has gained tremendous expe-

rience as a character actor and this year has had guest starring roles on the popular TV shows *Ed*, *Law and Order*, *Special Victims Unit*, and *Third Watch*. His work in commercials also has him traveling around the world. He has worked with some of the best in the business and recently worked closely with Jack Klugman on an episode of *Third Watch*. "It was quite a thrill," he says.

His success could be traced back to that fateful moment when he was convinced to audition against his better judgement. His involvement with The Troupers and his classes at SFC also deserve a nod from Bill too. John Clifford was the Dean of Students at the time and also served as director of all the Trouper productions. "Dean Clifford was one of the reasons I became an actor. He was an inspiration, a talented director and a lot of fun," Bill recalls. His work with the Troupers and a class with Professor Ed Satrakian were the only formal training Bill has had, but it, "set the foundation for the tremendous respect for this occupation."

As for recommending acting as a career, Bill is careful. "The answer is simple. If you truly feel in your heart that a career as an actor is your destiny, you are willing to accept rejection on a regular basis, and you feel that without being an actor you would feel incomplete—then follow your destiny." Bill points out that if you don't have that much passion, you could be wasting your time. "I have been very fortunate, but 85% of the members of the Screen Actors Guild make less than \$5,000 per year."

Bill doesn't make it back to campus as much as he would like to. Still, when he can he tries to support his beloved Troupers, as he did on April 6th when he took in their most recent performance of the classic *You Can't Take it with You*. His former Trouper colleagues are still his oldest and dearest friends. Bill encourages his fellow alumni to feel free to stay in touch with him via e-mail at actor1997@aol.com.