



Steve Blackwood

Credits:

Courtesy of Steve Blackwood

Teacher, actor, mentor: Michigan's Steve Blackwood gives back

Former 'Days of Our Lives' star Steve Blackwood (ex Bart) wears many hats. Blackwood is a husband, father, acting coach, professor, singer, and mentor to name a few.

A graduate of Oakland University, the **Eastside Michigan** native returned home to the Great Lake state two years ago in his words to 'take advantage of the film incentives.... and help my aging parents.'

In addition to his time spent teaching drama as an adjunct professor at Hillsdale College, Blackwood shares his knowledge and experience by offering an acting class one Thursday evening every month at the Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills. With each session, Blackwood offers a different 'lesson,' including 'cold reads,' 'monologues,' and 'scene nights.'

Blackwood's students are quite versatile. They come from all walks of life – mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. And they're a gifted and talented group of people.

There's 22 year old David Shapiro – a naturally gifted actor and model – think Joe Jonas meets Zac Efron colliding with Robert Downey Jr. And the lovely and talented Denise Gutenschwager– think Carol Burnett meets Kathryn Joosten. There's also the sophisticated businessman turned actor, Tom December – if that name doesn't belong in lights, what name does?

Last month, Blackwood offered his students a competition in scene reading for a terrific prize. The students performed and perfected scenes using Blackwood's coaching. Judges for the competition included Blackwood, myself, and **Michigan** director Dan Conway. It was a tough decision but winner Denise Gutenschwager won a free photo session as well as a free private acting session with Blackwood. Watch for more from this talented lady.

There was a method to Blackwood's madness as far as offering a competition with a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

'The incentive of competing gave the students a feel for what it would be like in a real audition. They learned how to compete in front of judges who would choose the best,' he said.

Blackwood uses the four hour monthly acting workshops to pay it forward as it were. He critiques and directs his students in a gentle, but firm manner. He offers them tips, support, and positive reinforcement. And he offers them hope with a gentle nudge.

'Most of my students at one time or another have booked paid acting jobs.... It's fantastic.... It makes me very happy....,' Blackwood shared.

Blackwood says he finds teaching 'fulfilling and gratifying.' He says he loves being 'of service' to his students to share his own knowledge of acting.

Much more than a coach and teacher, Blackwood is a true mentor to his students. He does his best to help them through the struggles of their chosen profession.

'I not only teach my students how to act, I give them life lessons,' said Blackwood.

Among his many projects, Blackwood appears in the much anticipated film 'Machine Gun Preacher' starring Gerard Butler, Kathy Baker, and Michelle Monaghan. Portions of the film were shot in the **Metro Detroit area**.

The film tells the story of the real 'Machine Gun Preacher,' '... Sam Childers, a former drug-dealing biker tough guy who found God and became a crusader for hundreds of Sudanese children who've been forced to become soldiers.' ([Via IMDB](#))

Interestingly Blackwood plays a role in the film different from the one he was to audition for. The actor was asked to cold read for the role of the bank loan officer – and he got the part! Look for him in the film's trailer below.

'[Machine Gun Preacher](#)' opens nationwide September 30. Find a **Detroit** theater [here](#).

Watch Steve Blackwood in the trailer film's [here](#).

You can also watch Gerard Butler talk about 'Machine Gun Preacher' with Jay Leno [here](#).

To coincide with the film's upcoming opening, Steve Blackwood will be a guest on **Detroit's** Fox News morning show (**Comcast Channel 12**) with Lee Thomas Wednesday September 28 at 8am.

For more on Steve Blackwood, visit his [official website](#).



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