

OAKLAND

Local author uses life experiences to publish first novel

By ANDREA WALKER

Special to The Oakland Press

Southfield author Stefanie Worth has been writing since she was a child, but it took until recently to publish her first book.

The former reporter and anchor for WJLB-FM (97.9) grew up in Missouri but has spent the last 22 years in the Detroit area and based much of

her book in the city. She patterns one character's

apartment after a west-side flat she used to live in, and another character lives in a condo on the Detroit Riverfront. There also are many restaurants in the novel that she hopes capture the feel of the eateries throughout the metro area.

"I get a lot of questions about the characters, whether they're based on real people," Worth said. "That answer would be no. I took classes in characterization and studied up on archetypes and personality traits as I developed the characters in 'Where Souls Collide.' They're local, yes, but totally fictional."

She'll be at Borders in Troy on Saturday promoting "Where Souls Collide," and she's excited to meet readers there.

Growing up, Worth said, she had no idea of the opportunities available in the writing world. She listened to her mother and headed to college, graduating in 1985 from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a degree in journalism. It was that writing base that supported her dream of becoming a novelist.

"I sometimes second-guess myself and wonder if I would have pursued television writing or creative writing if I'd been aware of more writing options," Worth said. "When

I'm realistic, I loved being a reporter, and that is probably why I jumped into blogging quite a while back, to keep my fingers on that 'hot news' button."

Starting her career in radio, Worth was a news anchor for the National Public Radio affiliate KBIA-FM at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a reporter and anchor on WJLB radio in the mid-1980s.

She also is former vice president of communications and corporate affairs for the Greater Detroit Area Health Council and former director of brand identity and communications for the United Way of Southeastern Michigan. Now she is the director of communications at the American Diabetes Association, Michigan/Northwest Ohio Office.

While in college, Worth recalls, many of her professors claimed publications like USA Today wouldn't last. The shift to a 24-hour cycle in the last 15 years helped her make her switch from radio news to newspaper.

"The industry has changed a lot, and now all of the different mediums intermix with each other," Worth said. "The whole mix of print and online media has also given a new aspect to writing. Having journalism training helped me consolidate ideas and get to the heart of what I was writing."

Unlike many new authors, Worth spent several years before the publication of "Where Souls Collide" prepar-



Worth

FYI

Stefanie Worth will sign "Where Souls Collide" (Leisure Books, \$6.99) at 7 p.m. Saturday at Borders Troy, 460 W. 14 Mile Road, (248) 585-6029.

ing herself for the launch date July 31. Having worked in marketing and communications for several years, she had an understanding of what it takes to dedicate herself to promoting a book.

Although she believed she was prepared for the work it would take, she admits it was more than she expected.

"The good responses you get when people start reading your book instantly counter all the hard work," Worth said. "A woman all the way in Texas got the book as a gift from her boyfriend in August. She wrote telling me she felt like it was written just for her."

"Where Souls Collide" tells the story of a young journalist named Navena, who must reconcile her family's psychic gifts and the reappearance of a former lover. She is forced to help save her newspaper from closure by using clues from a nightmare to predict a murder.

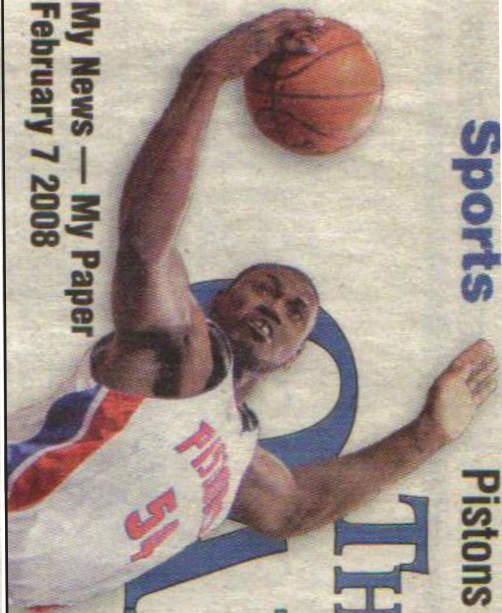
Worth says the novel is a contemporary romance that draws on her areas of expertise in journalism but leaves many other realms of experience untapped for future novels.

Currently working on her second manuscript, Worth counts herself blessed to have the first manuscript she's written published and in readers' hands. She's also working on a short story that will be included in a holiday anthology from Dorchester Publishers later this year.

"I sold the first manuscript I ever finished — that's very fortunate," Worth said. "Having a critique group really helped me take great strides in getting published. Their knowledge helped me skip over a lot of stumbling blocks that first-time writers have."

Worth comes from a long line of professional women and hopes "Where Souls Collide" will convey the strong feminine work ethic she carries with her.

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Pistons weather the Heat

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