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Press Release

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Author's history of family firsts inspires fictional legacy in *Where Souls Collide*
Former local journalist's debut novel weaves contemporary realities with supernatural twists

DETROIT, MI – Like the heroine in her debut novel **Where Souls Collide**, Stefanie Worth follows in the footsteps of strong, trailblazing women before her. “My grandmother, Mary Lee Warfield, ran Mary’s House of Fine Permanents out of her basement in Cape Girardeau (Missouri). Black beauticians were rare and far between. Women came from miles around, lining up on grandma’s front porch steps at the crack of dawn, to get their hair done. She went from being a housekeeper to running a very successful business until her death in 1989,” says Worth. “My mother, the former Patricia Danridge, was one of the first African American students to integrate Cape Girardeau Central High School in 1956.

“Between the two of them, mom and grandma imbibed me with a willingness to take chances and explore the unknown. So now I find myself a new author, but one of a small group of black writers who pen paranormal fiction.”

Combining the example of her role models with a love for mystery and mysticism resulted in Worth’s debut novel, **Where Souls Collide**. Dorchester’s fourth release in its new African American romance line, the story revolves around Navena, a reporter forced to reconcile her family’s psychic gift, the reappearance of a former lover and the survival of her newspaper with clues from a nightmare predicting murder. Grounded in reality, but offering readers a surreal escape, the plot weaves supernatural suspense around present-day economic and romantic dilemmas.

For Worth, the urge to put thoughts on paper emerged early. By fourth grade, she’d grown bored with dolls and began pouring her creativity into the pages of a homemade diary. A slim stack of index cards, cardboard and an aluminum foil cover housed her first forays into writing – a hobby that soon became the love of her life.

Rejection also came early; first from Seventeen magazine in response to “a handful of angst-ridden poems,” then her English teacher at St. Mary’s Academy of O’Fallon. “I had a thing for run-ons and fragments. Mr. Wendel did not. But he did tell me that I had a way with words.”

Worth took the compliment to heart and entered Mizzou to pursue a degree in journalism. Shortly after graduating with an emphasis in broadcasting, she relocated to Detroit and found work in urban radio promotions and as an on-air newscaster. She then shifted gears and went to work as a newspaper reporter, columnist and co-editor of that city’s premier African American weekly newspaper.

Now, whenever asked about her favorite job, she quickly replies, “The Michigan Chronicle.” She credits the paper as the proving ground that allowed her to exchange her radio and TV experience for stories that showcased in-depth views of community programs, local celebrities and current issues. Worth’s time on staff even helped earn the Chronicle honors from the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

So, where else would she set **Where Souls Collide** but at an African American-owned newspaper? “It seemed fitting, natural, to work from an inner place I felt comfortable enough to alter,” she explains. “How-to books will tell you to ‘write what you know.’ That simply means be familiar with the nuts and bolts of your subject matter. From there, I think we all know, it’s creative license.

“When I was a little girl growing up just outside St. Louis, there were few kids around who were my age – especially girls. So, I just took all my dolls into the backyard and let my imagination keep me company,” she remembers fondly. “Not much has changed. I may not have a huge cadre of African American publishing playmates in the paranormal field right now, but I had really great role models in life who let me know it’s okay to dream differently and reach for success on your own terms.”

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Where Souls Collide, published by Leisure Books, is slated for July 31, 2007, release and is currently available for pre-order through several online sites (Dorchesterpub.com, Amazon.com, bn.com and walmart.com.) For author interviews, speaker requests and additional book information, visit www.StefanieWorth.com or email spw@stefanieworth.com.

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