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GSU Alumna and Employee Autumn Price Lands Role in New Musical 'Red Summer'



From setbacks and self-doubt to realizing her dreams of being a dancer, choreographer, and student leader, [Governors State University](#) (GSU) alumna Autumn Price ('21) is blazing a trail while following her passion.

In 2021, Price graduated from GSU with a bachelor's degree in [Sociology](#) and started working full time at the [Center for Performing Arts](#). Recently she landed a role in the brand-new musical 'Red Summer', about the largely forgotten Chicago race riots of 1919. 'Red Summer' made its world premiere at GSU's own Center for Performing Arts on Sept. 17.

As a child, Price enjoyed praise-dancing at her church and singing with her grade school and middle school choirs. It was not until her senior year at Southland College Prep Charter High School, when she was assigned a research project on ballet dancer Misty Copeland, that her passion for performance—specifically dance—was ignited.

“I fell in love with her (Misty Copeland’s) story,” Price said. “She seemed relatable and familiar, and she looked like she was having so much fun. I thought, ‘I could do this too.’”

But Price faced a setback her freshman year of college at Bradley University. She attended the first round of dance auditions, but self-doubt got the better of her and she failed to attend the second round.

“I felt discouraged. My sophomore year, I transferred to GSU and enrolled in dance classes taught by Megan Lindsay, who, along with classmates Tyra Barnes and Courtney Heiskell, encouraged me to audition for the Dance Company. They made me feel comfortable and less insecure. I auditioned and made it.”

That’s when Price’s dance journey really took off. By her senior year, she felt ready to take on a position of leadership. She was elected President of the Dance Company and played a major creative role in the 2021 Spring show ‘From Tina to Beyonce: 50 Years of Female Empowerment.’ Additionally, she choreographed the routine ‘Rescue’, about women elevating and empowering one another.

“I learned a lot from balancing my duties as an executive officer, choreographer, dancer, and student,” she said. “At first, I was nervous about setting boundaries while still enjoying the art of dance. But looking back, I see how this experience challenged me and increased my confidence and discipline; these qualities will serve me well as I strive for future leadership roles as a choreographer and educator.”

Price’s work was so impressive to Thornton Fractional North High School’s Theatre Program Director Sade May that after seeing Price perform with the GSU Dance Company, May approached Price about choreographing TF North’s next musical ‘In the Heights’. From there, Price’s confidence in her choreography and leadership skills continued to develop. She has since choreographed ‘Bring It On!’ for TF North as well.

‘From Tina to Beyonce’ is Price’s favorite show to date.

“That show was especially meaningful to me because it combined two of my passions: sociology and dance,” she said. “I (along with GSU Dance Company Secretary Kiaa Driver) interviewed each choreographer and dancer about their dance and what it meant to them. I appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with others to conceptualize what it means to be a woman and explore how each choreographer’s story was told on stage through dance.”

When Price heard about an open call for GSU dance students to audition to be part of the ‘Red Summer’ ensemble, she knew she wanted to be part of it.

“Like ‘From Tina to Beyonce’, ‘Red Summer’ blends sociology, history, social justice, and art. The untold stories of Black Americans connected with me, and the parallels

between 1919 and present day—the Spanish flu pandemic, the murder of Black teenager Eugene Williams, economic and employment struggles—are astonishing.”