

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Ferris scholarship recipient has big goals**

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University student Marcel Gooden has been overcoming odds for quite some time. That’s why he believes his current two goals, becoming a television studio producer and a professional comedian, are within his reach.

Gooden, a junior from Detroit, is a television and digital media production (TDMP) major in the College of Education and Human Services. Earlier this year, he was the recipient of a \$3,000 competitive national scholarship from the Orphan Foundation of America.

Raised by foster parents Roselean and Thomas Posley, Gooden graduated from Thomas Cooley High School. “My foster parents gave me the necessities, but in a way that served to educate me,” said Gooden. “They didn’t want me hanging out in the neighborhood, so they provided alternatives like joining the Boy Scouts and the Law Enforcement Explorers.

“My upbringing taught me to be open minded and look at things positively,” he recalled. “It gave me a mindset that looked beyond the neighborhood and the city.” During middle school, it was a trip to London with his church group and actually seeing historical sights he knew from books that gave him the notion to could go to college.

“When I entered high school, my foster parents thought I needed to be in special education for the extra support available,” said Gooden. I didn’t want to be there and my teachers knew I didn’t need to be there. I used that to motivate myself and I got out of special education by the time I was a senior. I felt like the odds were against me and I still made it.”

Gooden, who has had a lifelong interest in comedy, chose Ferris after researching the TDMP program and the availability of financial aid. He sees a definite relationship between comedy and television production. “Being a comedian is sort of the same as being a producer,” he said. “You have to pitch things, either ideas or jokes, in both jobs.”

He has been the opening act for Ferris concerts featuring Sinbad, and Earthquake and Coco Brown, and derives his material from his upbringing and from everyday issues in society. “You can use comedy to confront issues,” he said. “Comedy provides the opportunity to deliver the message you want and to make people think. The key to comedy is having fun while you’re doing something that is difficult to succeed at.”

His inspiration comes from comedians George Carlin, Bernie Mac, Richard Prior and Robin Williams. But unlike his idols, he shuns off-color material. Actually Gooden’s approach is quite simple. “Just be as honest as possible and get people to laugh,” he said. “I want to have an act so that people in China would even understand my jokes.”

And what happens when Gooden lands his dream position of producing a TV sitcom? “Comedy can always be a night job,” he said.