



THE BRONX - A Bronx high school teacher won top honors at a film festival for an independent film based on a real-life murder mystery.

James McSherry, a film teacher at Lehman High School, grew up with Nicky DeMattio, an ex-con who was just released from a New York prison after serving 21 years for murder.

McSherry wrote, produced and directed "Poetry Man," which is based on DeMattio's drug-related murder. The filmmaker says the character in the movie is a typical Bronx guy who fell in with the wrong crowd. The film won the President's Award at last weekend's Burbank International Film Festival.

He says he struggled to stay out of trouble growing up, but managed to keep a clean record. McSherry says his childhood was tough because his father was murdered when he was 14 years old and his mother then raised five children on her own.

McSherry says he is already working on a new film based on a book he wrote called "A Clean Street's a Happy Street." The film could begin shooting as early as next spring.