

**Two recent broadcast graduates find early success
in small Midwestern television markets**



**Creative
Producer
lands
honored
alumnus**



**L.A. Times
sports
columnist
remembers
SIUE**



**Three new
faces on
Mass Comm
faculty**

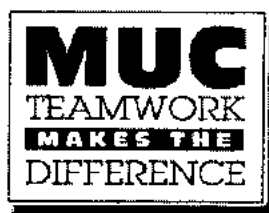


**White House
reporter
delivers
graduation
address**



Print & Design 650 - 2178

College classes are not all about lectures. Students have papers to write, projects to design and presentations to give. MUC's Print & Design offers a state-of-the-art computer design facility to assist students and professionals with their design and printing needs. The Print & Design staff can laminate, bind, create large format banners or posters, and make black & white/color copying. Print & Design is located on the second floor next to Alestle.



Visit us online at:
www.siue.edu/muc

MUC Recreation 650 - 5263

Are you looking for an escape from the daily grind or need something fun to do on the weekend? Check out Cougar Lanes where the billiard tables are green, smooth, and the bowling is cosmic! The newly renovated lanes feature automatic scorers and Cosmic light for out-of-this-world fun! Cougar Lanes also has many of the most popular arcade games for passing time. Cougar Lanes is a great place for fun, fun, fun!

University Bookstore 650-2123

You don't have far to go to purchase textbooks, lab manuals, supplies, books, gifts, SIUE memorabilia & apparel, and greeting cards. The Bookstore is located near the North entrance and our friendly staff is always ready to assist you. Apple computers, iPod & accessories are available!

Auntie Anne's Pretzels 650- 2374

If it's a fresh, hot, golden brown soft Pretzel, with a Dutch Ice treat or cold Lemonade served in a sparkling clean store by friendly, courteous people is what you are seeking, then Auntie Anne's is the place. Auntie Anne's Pretzels is located across from Starbucks Coffee.

The Cougar Den 650 - 2259

Anybody hungry for Pizza, Southwest Entrees, or Smoothies? Cougar Den can satisfy those cravings late into the evening with Pizza Hut Express. Enjoy the ambience and check out the great SIUE campus memorabilia of Cougar Den. Cougar Den is a few feet away from Cougar Lanes so plan a night of food, friends, and fun. All Cougar Meal Plans are accepted.

Union Station 650 - 2320

Stop at Union Station and satisfy your sweet tooth, buy a bottled beverage, grab a quick snack, stock up on a few grocery items or pick up a newspaper. Campus Lost and Found is located at Union Station. Union Station is located next to Starbucks.

Starbucks Coffee 650 - 5200

SIUE's own location of the globally recognized brand features the finest Arabica coffee, espresso beverages, tazo teas, Frappuccino-blended beverages, pastries, sandwiches, and salads. Relax inside the café or enjoy nice weather on the patio. Starbucks is located next to Union Station.

MUC Computer Lab 650 - 3651

An academic computer lab with Internet access, is available to faculty, staff and students, on the second floor.

Campus Information 650 - 5555

Current information about SIUE, its buildings and departments is available at the Campus Information Office. The office also handles ticket sales for many campus events and campus locker rentals. The Campus Information Office is located next to Union Station.

Center Court Dining 650 - 3040

If it's great food variety you crave then Center Court is the place to go. Students, staff, and campus visitors can choose from made-to-order grill items, fresh Deli/Panini sandwiches, Noodle/Pasta dishes, hot entrees, fresh salads, and baked goods. Center Court is also the home of SIUE's Chick-fil-A. All Cougar Meal Plans are accepted. Center Court is located in the lower level.



Lynch up to challenge of alumni president
A Q&A with the new Mass Comm alumni president
page 4

Message from the Director
Patrick Murphy provides department updates
page 5

Granite City to the White House
CBS correspondent Peter Maer returns to deliver the commencement address
page 6

Alper recipient of Distinguished Alumni
Creative Producers co-founder recognized with Distinguished Alumni Award
page 7

Staff

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Lance Speere
<i>Editor</i> | Steve Berry
Jacob Boone
Justin Gibson
Zach Groves | Dr. Kimberly Voss
<i>Copy Editor</i> |
| Debbie Roberts
<i>Advertising</i> | Megan McClure
Holly Meyer
Stephanie Reckman
Bonnie Reding
Ilene Sanders
Matthew Schroyer
<i>Contributors</i> | Steve Berry
<i>Photos</i> |
| Megan McClure
<i>Design Concept</i> | | |

Mass Communicator is the annual publication for the alumni of the SIUE Mass Communications Department. The publication is created by the faculty and students of the department. Students in Dr. Voss' MC324 Public Affairs Reporting class wrote the stories. Students in Prof. Speere's MC323 Publication Design course worked on design concepts for this issue. Photographers for *The Alestle* took the photos.

Live at 5
Elizabeth Erwin and Janelle Dobson both graduated within the past three years, and today they are on the air in Wisconsin and Iowa.

pages 8-9

Sports columnist owes success to SIUE
L.A. Times columnist Bill Plaschke pays tribute to the lessons learned from college
page 10

A league of his own
Bill Lee, a former broadcast major and minor leaguer, now runs the Frontier League
page 11

Classroom clown calls it a career
Tommy Johnagin shines on "Last Comic Standing"
page 11

Yu joins advertising faculty
page 12

New advertising instructor, students win national BEA award for video
page 12

Multimedia professor joins department
page 13

Department News & Notes
page 5

Lynch up to challenge of alumni president

KMOX reporter urges interaction between students and professionals

Q&A
with
Zach Groves

KMOX News investigative reporter and SIUE Mass Communications alumna Megan Lynch has stepped into the position of Mass Communications Alumni Association president. The 1992 graduate looks to reach out further to the alumni and connect them more with aspiring journalists currently in the department. Lynch spoke to Zach Groves about her plans.

GROVES: What convinced you to take on the role as president of the Mass Communications Alumni Association?

LYNCH: I have to be honest, I was hesitant at first. I'm probably one of the younger members on the board. I feel very strongly about what the department has accomplished over the last five years. It's fun to be a part of that.

GROVES: What do you look to bring to the table as president? Any major goals in mind?

LYNCH: I would like to see an even greater cooperation between the professionals out in the field and the students. I think there has always been a strong link between the alumni in the communications business and the students. I think the department has done a great job with Mass (Communications) Week. I would like to continue that. There's already a classmate of mine that is teaching and doing great things. Brian Ledford has done great things for the department

GROVES: How would you compare this position to your job as an investigative reporter in terms of opportunities? How would you contrast them?

LYNCH: I would say that a lot of what I do at KMOX is a service to the community. I think in that way serving in this capacity for the department would be an extension of that. Step up my level of service to young people. This gives me more personal involvement.

GROVES: What do you like about the job so far?

LYNCH: I got to be honest with you, I can't say I've done a lot yet. I think that when you reach out to people, it's just a daily thing. It's more just a matter of relationships and those daily relationships with people.

GROVES: Was broadcasting something you always wanted to do? Or was it something you discovered while at SIUE?

LYNCH: I would say from the time I was in high school and the opportunity to take broadcasting classes in high school and vocational school. I knew that it was going to be radio or television. I didn't really know because (before) coming to SIUE, I had worked for an NBC television station in Springfield, Illinois. I had already done a newsradio internship in Springfield, where I lived. When I did get to SIUE, I found that radio was my thing. I loved putting sound pieces together. It's just kind of where I fell in.

GROVES: Where did you get your experience



Megan Lynch

in broadcasting and how did they shape you into the professional you are now?

LYNCH: My internship through SIUE was at WIL-FM. They had a strong news department at the time. The news director really took me under his wing. (Gene Hirsch) was the first person that taught me that when you are going back to the station, you play back the audio and prepare the story in your head, so that when you get back you are ready to go.

GROVES: Since graduation, how much has the department changed? Are there any particular parts you have noticed that have changed? List some examples.

LYNCH: I think one of the big things that I think is so beneficial to the students is the portfolio. So when they walk into the interview, they can show that they have done quality work. That's a piece we didn't have when I was there. They had an internship, which was great practical experience, but they didn't have the portfolio. That's helped a lot of graduates sell themselves to employers.

GROVES: Since joining the board, have you had a chance to mingle with any former classmates or professors? If so, how much different is the interaction now?

LYNCH: I think I'm the only one from my graduating class. I (do) get a lot of history from some of the older alumni board. It's always good to get that background. I feel like my role is just to mostly support what the department is doing as much as I can. *Mc*



Patrick Murphy

This has been a great year! To start with, we added three new faculty members. Dr. Musonda Kapatamoyo has joined us from Ohio University to teach multimedia, Prof. Jason Yu from the University of North Carolina to teach media advertising, and Prof. Cory Byers from SIUC to teach media advertising and take over the Video Services operations. Their positive impact was immediately felt in the program, as their enthusiasm for the field and rapport with our students provided great energy. Look for stories about these wonderful additions to our family elsewhere in the Mass Communicator.

The unit's classroom situation is changing a bit as well. DH 2007, a space that some of you might remember as an underutilized

Message from the Director

New faculty, new classrooms mark new look for Mass Comm department

“second” TV studio that was often used more for storage, Alestle parties or as a lunch room, is now being renovated and turned into what we think will be our showcase classroom, complete with risers, ergonomically designed desks and chairs, and “Smart” technology.

Some things have not changed, though. The department still prides itself on offering strong undergraduate and graduate programs. At the undergraduate level, we continue to work hard to offer a forward-thinking curriculum, cutting-edge facilitates, the latest computer software and—often thanks in no small part to the efforts of many of you— excellent internship opportunities for our students. Our Master of Science program continues to thrive, evidenced by the success of our students. Several have gone on to doctoral programs, others have won awards at national conferences, and one won this year's “Outstanding Thesis Award.” For information about the master's degree, contact Dr. Gary Hicks at 618-650-2242 or via email at ghicks@siue.edu.

As I have in the past, I want to take this

opportunity to remind you that we need your continuing support. SIUE offers a secure website (www.siue.edu/CAS/giving/index.html), so giving a gift to Mass Communications can be done electronically. Make sure to designate that your gift is to our department. Also, don't forget about the “Employer's Matching Fund program,” which doubles gifts. Your support is vital and does make a lasting difference.

Finally and as always, I want to really encourage you to maintain contact with the department. As you are graduates of our program, we want to hear from you by e-mail, snail mail, phone calls, text messages, carrier pigeon or smoke signals. Sharing your stories is the real way that we learn about how this program affected your lives, prepared you for the professional world and/or just helped you to prepare for life's many challenges. Or better yet, please come by and tell us your story personally by joining us at annual Alumni Night here at SIUE. It's scheduled for April 11, and we'll kick things off at 6:30. We look forward to seeing you. *Mc*

Department News and Notes

DR. DONNA HALE received a \$1,000 mini-grant last year from the SIUC Center for Intergenerational Leadership to encourage communication between retirees and young people. Students in Hale's feature writing class wrote stories about local Vietnam veterans. Seven stories were published in several editions of the Suburban Journals of Greater St. Louis. Hale's paper on images of disabled people presented at the 32nd annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium in New Orleans received an award as the top faculty paper in the Newspaper Division.

DR. ELZA IBROSCHIEVA published one article in a peer-reviewed publication this past year. Another two have been accepted for publication in the upcoming year. She is also the co-author of a chapter published last year in the book “Negotiating Democracy,” co-edited by **DR. PATRICK MURPHY**. She is also the editor of the Graduate Section of the Global Media Journal, Spring 2008, and a regional faculty associate at the Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies Center at University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign.

DR. KIMBERLY WILMOT VOSS has published six articles in peer-reviewed publications about women's page journalists and visited five archives in the past academic year. A proposal for her second book is under review at a university press. She recently became a member of

the editorial board of the quarterly journal Journalism History. She will join the journalism faculty at the Nicholson School of Communication at the University of Central Florida in August 2008.

BARBARA REGNELL, professor emerita of the mass communications department, was honored at the university's Aug. 4 commencement ceremony with the Great Teacher Award.

Mass Comm graduate student **HANNAH REINHART** won Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Outstanding Thesis Award 2007-2008, for her thesis “Framing agricultural biotechnology: A case study of Monsanto and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch” Committee: P. Murphy (Committee Chair), Gary Hicks, Ralph Donald and Elza Ibroschieva.

Longtime and beloved department secretary **BARB RANDLE** left the department this spring for an opportunity in the National Corn to Ethanol Research Center on the SIUE campus as an Administrative Secretary.

Longtime broadcast engineer **GUS WILLS** retired in Fall 2007. **LYLE “WAYNE” MILLS** was hired in January as his replacement. Lyle previously worked for Turner Communications in Atlanta, WMAR-TV in Baltimore and for the Sinclair Group.

Granite City to the White House

Graduate of first mass comm class now has front row seat covering the White House for CBS

Story By
Megan
McClure

**"It's a
ringside seat
to history,
and it's
been one
unbelievable
ride."**

**-Peter Maer
CBS White House
Correspondent**

CBS White House correspondent Peter Maer can still pinpoint when he decided to become a journalist – at 8 years old, in Granite City.

Though he was at first unsure as to whether he would prefer working in print or broadcast media, one thing was certain.

"I always wanted to cover Washington," he said.

His dream came true. For 23 years, Maer worked for NBC, beginning as a general assignment reporter before becoming a Senate correspondent and, beginning in 1986, a White House correspondent.

As a high school student, Maer began to dabble in the media, serving as the editor of his high school newspaper and working at a radio station in Granite City. At the radio station, he broadcast a weekly show for high school students, including popular music and sports.

As a college student, he worked in Granite City, Belleville and St. Louis to expand his skills in broadcast journalism. In 1970, Maer graduated from SIUE in the first class of mass communications majors. From there, he worked as a news director at WIBV in Belleville. Later, his career took him to work in Nashville, Tenn., before he ultimately moved to Washington, D.C.

In 1998, Maer went from NBC to CBS, where he has covered the White House for nearly a decade.

Though his role in broadcast has led him to cover every president since Jimmy Carter, Maer recalls a 1985 disaster far from Washington as the most memorable news event of his career thus far.

"I covered the Mexico City earthquake, where I watched thousands and thousands of people die in the rubble," he said.

More recently, Maer traveled to Southeast Asia to survey tsunami damage alongside former Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. He explained that these sobering events reminded him of the "fragility" in life, putting his professional role into perspective.

Earlier this year, Maer was selected as a guest speaker for spring commencement.

"I was just thrilled to see how SIU has changed in so many ways when I was on the campus," he said.

In addition to selecting Maer to deliver the keynote address, the university conferred upon him an honorary doctorate in human letters.

"It's a funny thing to give a journalist," Maer said, noting he was "flattered beyond belief."

According to Kim Durr, executive assistant to Chancellor Vaughn Vandegrift, Maer was nominated for the



Peter Maer

recognition based on his involvement with the university.

"He was also chosen for his contributions to greater society," Durr said.

Maer recalled professors Jack Shaheen and the late Kamil Winter among his greatest influences at SIUE. More than 35 years after Maer's graduation, he and Shaheen continue to keep in contact.

"I think he was born with an integrity gene of some sort," Shaheen said, recounting an instance in which Maer refused to pull a story that spoke negatively about a sponsor while working at a radio station in Belleville. "He was never willing to compromise his beliefs."


Shaheen also cited Maer's "intense interest in all things related to news" as a reason for his success.

"He never reached into the pop culture bag," Shaheen said. "It was always news, news, news."

Additionally, Shaheen said Maer's dedication to reporting on – not becoming part of – the news remains a testament to his journalistic integrity.

"There was never a desire to be in the limelight," Shaheen said.

Maer says his career has given him a perspective of current events that few people are able to experience.

"It's a ringside seat to history," he said, "and it's been one unbelievable ride." 

Alper recipient of Distinguished Alumnus

Creative Producers
co-founder gives
back to SIUE

Story by
Justin Gibson

When Keith Alper attended Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, he was just like many other students working hard at broadcasting his work in the TV studio and then recording them onto VHS tapes in hope of them accelerating his career someday.

Since then, Alper has made the transition into a skilled master of his craft, co-founding the St. Louis based marketing agency the Creative Producers Group, and even becoming the recipient of a prestigious alumni award from SIUE.

Alper has ventured into several projects with SIUE, including the branding of the "e" campaign, and a multimedia presentation for the opening of Korte Stadium. This was done through his company, Creative Producers.

"We are TV, web and overall content producers," Alper said. "We offer clients a wide range of services like events, meetings and media production."

If a client wants an event put on, Creative Producers can do mobile marketing, webcasting, trade shows and other marketing options. If a client wants to host a special meeting, then Alper's company can provide many services such as a dealer convention, corporate conference or a recognition event. Media production ranges from marketing to live events.

The Creative Producer's Group has handled clients ranging from Panasonic to U.S. Bank to Jiffy Lube.

Distance is not a challenge for Alper and Creative Producers as they have done work from California to New York and from Israel to China.

The service offered by Creative Producers has won the company numerous awards and recognitions, including the AV Video and Multimedia Producer Top 100 for 10 years in a row.

Alper, a 1984 graduate from the Mass Communications department, was awarded the 2007 Distinguished Alumnus Award at the Summer Commencement Ceremony by the SIUE Alumni Association.



Keith Alper

The award is given to SIUE graduates who have distinguished themselves in their selected area of work as well as providing community service.

"I felt very honored to receive the award," Alper said. "It makes me very proud of SIUE and all the ways it has grown since I graduated from there."


Director of Alumni Affairs Steve Jankowski said that Alper was given the award because of the overachieving success he had attained in his chosen field, and his desire to stay connected to the SIUE community.

"Not only has he had great success but he has provided significant contributions to the university in terms of time, talent and personal resources," Jankowski said.

When Alper attended SIUE, he loved being active with any form of media production. He worked for WSIE Radio for his entire four years at the university and enjoyed getting into the TV studio and editing room with some of his favorite professors.

"I really liked listening to John Rider, and I was there when Riley Maynard came in, so I had the opportunity to work with him," Alper said.

Alper believes that his hard work is a huge contribution for his success.

"Just when you think you are catching up with things in this business and start figuring them out, they change," Alper said. "It takes a lot of hard work and there is no such thing as an overnight success." 

39th Annual Alumni Mass Communications Event

A fun networking opportunity for Mass Communications alumni that also includes student and alumni award and scholarship recipients

DATE: April 11, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: SIUE, Dunham Hall, Television Studio.

PARKING: Metered Parking, Lot E, behind Dunham Hall; Visitor Parking, Lot B

For more information, see our website <http://www.siu.edu/MASSCOMM/> or contact the Department of Mass Communications at 618/650-2230



Janelle Dobson lands first job in Wisconsin

Story By
Stephanie Reckman

Try, try and try again has been the motto for recent SIUE graduate Janelle Dobson. And her persistence has paid off.

Dobson, who graduated in May 2007, was hired for her first job as a reporter and weather fill-in at WJFW, a news station based in Rhinelander, Wis. WJFW is a station located two hours north of Madison, Wis., and reaches about 8,000 viewers.

“The thing I like most about my job is that I never know what it will entail,” Dobson said. “Usually my weekend days are about 12 hours, but it flies by because I’m doing what I love.”

Recently, Dobson received a much welcomed surprise as she was assigned an exclusive interview with the single survivor of the Crandon shooting rampage, which occurred in October.

“My package, with my standup and all, is on Newschannel,” Dobson said. “CNN and any NBC affiliates could air it, which is so exciting.” As a Mass Communications major with an emphasis in television and radio, Dobson was well prepared for the struggles associated with landing a first job in her field.

“You are told over and over by professors that this business is difficult,” Dobson said, “but in the back of my mind I still thought that it would be easy.”

Mass Communications professor Ralph Donald said that as an undergraduate Dobson was an excellent student and was ready for the professional world.

“She took in everything we taught,” Donald said. “She was one of our stars.”

Although Dobson spent the summer sending more than 40 resume tapes and contacting station after station with little feedback, she never questioned the career she chose.

“I wanted to have an effect on people,” Dobson said, “a positive one.”

Finally, Dobson received the result she had been waiting for...her first call-back.

Dobson arrived in Rhinelander for a one-day interview in which she had to shoot, edit, and write a pack-

Two recent graduates find their way on air in Midwestern markets



Photo courtesy of Janelle Dobson

age to air on the evening news.

“I think the interview was a really great experience,” Dobson said. “It prepared me for what I would be doing five days a week.”

As an Illinois native, Janelle said the move to Wisconsin was a big one.

“I’ve never been this cold in my life,” Dobson said. “Unfortunately, I do a lot of stories outside, so I’m standing out there for hours just freezing. Last weekend I stood in a blizzard for hours. It was miserable, but worth it.”

Although Dobson has her first job, she has more plans for the future.

“I really like reporting, but eventually I would love to become an anchor,” Dobson said. “I also want to come back to St. Louis.”

As for now, Dobson is enjoying her life as a Wisconsin reporter.

“Overall, I am so happy to be working in the industry,” Dobson said. “This is what I wanted and now that I’m here, it’s great. It’s hard being in a new place without any friends or family, but you just have to make the best of it.” *M*

Iowa becomes home away from home for Elizabeth Erwin

Story By
Ilene Sanders

Elizabeth Erwin loves to report on issues and events that bring awareness to her community. One of her favorite stories she covered was the National Special Olympics in Iowa last year.

“It was so great to see the spirit and the drive the athletes have,” Erwin said. “Athletes came from across the country to compete, make new friends and share their stories. It’s so inspiring to see how much they’ve had to overcome and yet how positive they are.”

It only took one mass communication class for Erwin to know that broadcasting was for her. Erwin’s mother, Margaret Olson, knows that her daughter has always been a people person.

“That, combined with her love for writing and her inquisitive nature, made this a perfect match,” Olson said. “She will not stop a job until it is done and done right.”



Elizabeth Erwin at WOI-TV in Des Moines, Iowa

Erwin graduated with honors from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 2005 with a bachelor of art’s degree in mass communications and has been successful ever since. While in college, she was awarded the Press Club of St. Louis Award. She is currently working as a reporter and anchor at WOI-TV in Des Moines, Iowa.

Before landing her position at WOI-TV, Erwin started her career as a reporter and fill-in anchor working for KCAU-TV in Sioux City, Iowa, within a few months after graduation.

Within six months, the vice president of KCAU-TV noticed Erwin’s talent and promoted her to KCAU-TV’s sister station in Des Moines, Iowa.

“I love reporting and anchoring,” Erwin said. “To me, it’s not a job, it’s fun.”

At 24 years old, it wasn’t the interviewing of all the presidential candidates that made her nervous, it was when she was chosen to interview Ty Pennington and Patrick Dempsey (McDreamy) that she “freaked out.”

While Erwin attended SIUE, she was a reporter for WSIE 88.7-FM and was the host for SIUE’s Global Village. She believes both programs have helped her get where she is today.

“I needed both of them in order to be a reporter,” Erwin said. “WSIE helped my writing and news judgment, and SIUE Global Village helped me become more confident in front of the camera and taught me how to talk to an audience.”

Not only were the two shows beneficial, Erwin also credits her mass communications professors Riley Maynard and Kimberly Voss for being great mentors.

“Dr. Maynard really knows how to engage students and make them want to learn more,” Erwin said. “He prepared me for the real world. And Dr. Voss is amazing. I learned so much from her.”

Voss returns the compliment to Erwin and considers her a special student.

“I was always impressed with her work,” Voss said. “I’ve been teaching at universities for more than a decade and Elizabeth was the kind of student who stands out. She has great skills, but also saw the big picture in terms of critical thinking. She asked the right questions.”

Erwin interned at KPLR-TV while in college. She said it was there where she got her hands-on experience. For the first time she got to “see the fast-paced world.”

“It’s tough, but if you really love it, it’s really worth it,” Erwin said. “Every day is different. It’s telling of what we do. I have learned about so many different things.”

Her two favorite kinds of stories to report on are “the funny and goofy ones with quirky people, and doing stories that change lives for the better.”

Erwin grew up in the small town of Minooka, Ill., and is happy to be reporting in the Midwest.

When Erwin is not covering a story, she enjoys taking her Yorkie “roommate,” Bianca to the park, spending time with friends, and shopping.

“When I am done exploring, I would love to work in Chicago because my family is there,” Erwin said. “But that’s not for awhile.”

For now, Erwin loves where she is, but she will continue to get excited when she visits home during the holidays. *M*

Sports columnist owes success to SIUE

Bill Plaschke began at The Alestle, but now you can find him at the L.A. Times and on ESPN



Bill Plaschke

Story by
Matthew Schroyer

When Bill Plaschke stepped into the office of Mass Communications Department Chair Bill Ward in 1977, Plaschke was living out of a Roxana church basement and did not have much money.

What he did have, Plaschke said, was “luster.”

“I’ll be the best writer you’ll ever have,” Plaschke said to Ward.

Ward smiled and said “We’ll see.”

Plaschke would graduate in 1980, and after several stints at several newspapers, wound up as a sports columnist for the L.A. Times and as a guest on ESPN’s “Around the Horn.” Ward, Plaschke said, prepared him for the future and molded him into the reporter he is today. Although, Plaschke admits, the trial-by-fire wasn’t easy.

“[Ward] used to yell at us, make us work all night,” Plaschke said of his experience at The Alestle. “I remember working all night for a story, then hopping into a car the first thing in the morning to take it to the printers.”

Plaschke was a sports editor for The Alestle during his education in the Mass Communications Department, and said his most rewarding work came from oddball assignments. First as the sports writer and later as the sports editor, Plaschke said he would write stories on “everything and anything,” even a story about a nearby little league field plagued by dangerous gasses.

“When I was there, the only thing between you and your dreams was how hard you wanted to work and how much you cared,” Plaschke said. “SIUE taught you that anything was possible.”

When his first internship ended, he applied to 50 more newspapers at the end of his senior year. Again, he got only one reply. This time, it was the St. Petersburg Times in St. Petersburg, Fla. At this job, and also at a previous job at the now-defunct Metro-East Journal, Plaschke came into contact with fellow classmate Rick Pierce.

“Bill was always a great writer,” Pierce said, who is the Illinois editor for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. “He’s always had that gift.”

Plaschke would later find himself working for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and finally, at the L.A. Times.

Plaschke said he works with people who come from more affluent schools and backgrounds, but there is one important thing about him that separates him from the rest of the pack.

“I work harder,” Plaschke said. “I work with a lot of people from the Ivy Leagues and people from very exclusive backgrounds. SIUE prepares you for the real world like none other.”

Plaschke suggests if people want to follow in his footsteps, they should begin by taking a chance.

“I want someone who will take a chance and do the offbeat story,” Plaschke said. “I want someone who will cover the little league story, the athlete with cancer. The human aspect.”

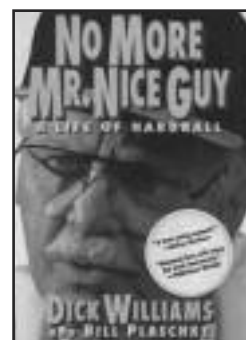
“I Live For This”
by
Bill Plaschke and
Tommy Lasorda
(2007)



“Good Sports,
Spoilsports,
Foul Balls and
Oddballs”
by
Bill Plaschke
(2002)



“No More Mr.
Nice Guy”
by
Dick Williams
and Bill Plaschke
(1990)



“Hard Knox”
by
Chuck Knox and
Bill Plaschke
(1988)



A league of his own

Story By
Jacob Boone

While at SIUE, baseball was a big part of Bill Lee’s life as he played for his father, Roy Lee, on the Cougars Baseball team and today, baseball is still in Lee’s blood.

Today, Lee works as the commissioner of the Frontier League, a professional independent baseball league.

“It’s been fun and it’s not work when what it is you do for a living is fun,” Lee said.

Lee said the league has really developed since it began play in June of 1993. Attendance has gone from 68,000 fans league wide to over one million fans since 1993.

After graduating from SIUE with a broadcasting degree, Lee signed with the Atlanta Braves and played in their minor leagues.

In 1980, he started work in the front office for the Birmingham Barons. He has since worked as the general manager of the Chattanooga Lookouts, a Double A minor league affiliate for the Cincinnati Reds and previously for the Atlanta Braves.

Before taking the job with the Frontier

League, Lee worked in Seattle as the vice president of marketing for the Thunderbirds hockey team.

But Lee was missing the Midwest and baseball and in 1994, became the commissioner of the Frontier League.

SIUE Baseball Head Coach Gary Collins said Lee has been a big reason for the Frontier League’s growth and success.

“I just think he had the foresight to get teams into metropolitan areas,” Collins said.

“They’ve (the Frontier League officials) have made some smart decisions and I think he’s gotta take credit for a lot of that,” Collins said.

Lee said learning the craft of front office work was a lot of fun and that when you’re putting smiles on people’s faces and hopefully making them happy, there’s a lot of gratification in that.

“You can’t take anything away from the



Bill Lee

people you’ve gotten to meet and the places you’ve gotten to go,” Lee said. “I’m blessed to be doing what I do.”

According to Lee, one thing stands out in his time as commissioner of the league.

In 2003, the league drew more than 1 million fans in attendance. Lee was at GCS Ballpark, home of the Gateway Grizzlies standing in front of the crowd and it hit him.

“I’m in charge of something a million people to go,” Lee said, adding that he thought that going over a million in attendance was just the start of drawing two million fans.

Lee also helps with the SIUE Baseball team.

“He helps out whenever he can,” said Head Coach Gary Collins. “He’s been good to the program. He’s a friend.”

Lee said he uses his broadcasting degree every day and said communication is an important skill.

“To me, the greatest skill you can have in life is to communicate with people and through SIU, I was able to do that,” Lee said.

Classroom down calls it a career

Story By
Holly Meyer

Tommy Johnagin knew he wanted to make people laugh since he was 8 years old.

Now 24 years old, Johnagin has grown up to be what his 8-year-old self wanted to be – a comedian.

“I like to make people laugh on and off stage,” Johnagin said. “I have a tongue-in-cheek, dry sense of humor.”

Johnagin, once an SIUE mass communications student, has not hit super stardom yet, but his career is gaining momentum.

A semifinalist on NBC’s “Last Comic Standing” Season 5, Johnagin is working his way up to headlining comedy clubs across the country.

“I’ve been in this business for 10 years,” said Matt Behrens, general manager for the St. Louis and Fairview Heights Funny Bone. “Honestly, he is probably the fastest moving comic I’ve ever seen.”

Behrens said 90 percent of the headline acts he books for the Funny Bone are more

than 30 years old. He was recently named one of the top New Faces at Montreal’s Just for Laughs Comedy Festival – one of the biggest comedy festivals in the world.

Johnagin’s first stand up performance of his career was at the Fairview Heights Funny Bone on open mic night; he was 18.



Tommy Johnagin

When he was 21, Johnagin gave up mass communications at SIUE, dropping out after a semester and two days.

SIUE professor Kimberly Voss remembered Johnagin’s jokes from her Mass Communications 202 class.

“He was really funny – and the other students got his humor,” Voss said. “He made the class more interesting. Yet, he knew where to draw the line so that his comments did not dominate the class.”

After dropping out of school, he moved

to Chicago to pursue his comedic career. Even though he was unsure of what would happen, Johnagin had the full support of his family.

Johnagin said he uses his life experiences and the relationships he has with people for fuel for his material.

One punch line revolves around Johnagin noting his mother was the only person to have ever Google-d cat rape.

Even though he is not afraid to joke about a topic, Johnagin does avoid swearing, checking the bad words at the door out of habit; in fact, Johnagin does not even swear off stage.

“It really comes from growing up,” he said. “I would have got in trouble if I cussed. By the time I could cuss, I didn’t want to.”

Johnagin said less talented comedians use it as a crutch.

Next year, Johnagin will be performing his jokes at the Best of Bob and Tom Theater Shows and a Comedy Central Festival. He could end up on either the Late Show with David Letterman or the Tonight Show with Jay Leno and maybe a special on Comedy Central.

Yu joins advertising faculty



Steve Berry/The Alestle

Jason Yu, a new assistant professor in the Department of Mass Communications, brings an international perspective to his advertising classes.

**Story by
Bonnie Reding**

New professor Jason Yu hopes that involving alumni in his classes will help students to see the big picture through the eyes of those who have real world experience.

"I would like to interact with alumni, so that my students and I can get fresh knowledge," Yu said. "I would love to get a chance to invite some of them in to give lectures, for example; students need knowledge from the professional area and not only the academic area."

Yu chose to come to SIUE because the Department of Mass Communications is such an active department.

"I got a very, very good impression about the faculty at this department," Yu said. "I felt I could build good personal relationships with other faculty members here."

Professor Ralph Donald was excited when Yu was added to the faculty.

"He infuses the department with youthful exuberance and new ideas," Donald said.

Donald said this type of attitude is refreshing and instructors such as Yu are the future of the department.

The location of SIUE was another benefit for Yu. He enjoys the advantages of having St. Louis nearby.

"I grew up in a big city in China, so I'm kind of an urban boy," Yu said.

Yu received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Zhejiang University, and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin. He is currently finishing his doctorate from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Yu previously worked for the Zhejiang Daily newspaper as an education reporter, advertiser, and copywriter.

Having an impact on students is important to Yu.

"I enjoy interacting with students, especially in the media planning class,"

See Yu, next page

New advertising instructor, students win national BEA award for video

New Mass Communications Instructor Cory Byers and his students in his electronic media advertising class will be honored among other winners of the Awards of Excellence at the Broadcast Education Association Festival of Media Arts in Las Vegas in April for their entry to the AquaFresh Extreme Clean nation video competition. The Festival has become one of the largest faculty and student competitions among communications educators.

SIUE's 30-second video commercial depicts a mortician brushing the teeth of a deceased man presumably because of foul breath; of course, using AquaFresh toothpaste. Cut to the funeral parlor for the viewing and the grieving widow is saying her good-byes to the departed husband. She notices he has "fresh breath" and, therefore, kisses him ... and kisses him ... and continues to kiss him as the product credit roles announcing AquaFresh toothpaste "for an extreme clean." The final shot is the deceased holding a box of toothpaste ... with a wide grin.

"I can't say I agreed with the top choices of the AquaFresh judges," Byers said good-naturedly, "but, I was thrilled to hear the BEA was recognizing our efforts."

According to the BEA's Web site, the award honors "professionalism, the use of aesthetic and/or creative elements, a sense of structure and timing, production values, technical merit and the overall contributions to the discipline in both form and substance."

"I think this is a testament to the good work everyone did on the spot." Students in the class wrote, produced and served as members of the video crew, as well as doing post-production and editing of the final product.



Steve Berry/The Alestle

Cory Byers, a new advertising instructor in the Department of Mass Communications, discusses media images in one of his advertising courses.

Two local professional actors volunteered to play the parts of the deceased husband and the grieving widow. Byers was director and editor, and also played the part of the mortician.

"For this kind of production class, one of the best ways to teach it is to actually go out and do it with all hands on deck, treating it like a real project." M



Steve Berry/The Alestle

Dr. Musonda Kapatamoyo joined the Department of Mass Communications in fall 2007 and teaches the multimedia courses. He earned his doctorate at Ohio University.

Multimedia professor joins department

**Story by
Steve Berry**

New mass communications faculty member Dr. Musonda Kapatamoyo is researching the application and impact of mobile technologies in Africa.

"I'm looking at text messaging and how it has affected how people communicate," Kapatamoyo said. "In most African countries, we like to explain everything in detail like I'm doing now. But with text messaging you write almost everything in code form."

Kapatamoyo is also working on a book about telecommunications policies in Africa, which he hopes to complete by this summer.

Kapatamoyo teaches multimedia classes such as web design, writing for the web, and multimedia interactive content. He began teaching at SIUE in August 2007 after earning his doctoral degree from Scripps College of Communication at Ohio University. Kapatamoyo earned his undergraduate degree in Zambia.

Kapatamoyo said information communication technologies are his special area of knowledge within mass communications. Information Communication Technologies explore technological ways of transmitting information.

"I am very interested in ICTs, information communication technologies," Kapatamoyo said. "So I investigate their uses, their appli-

cation, and their impact on society and development."

When Kapatamoyo interviewed for his teaching job at SIUE, he realized the director of the Mass Communications Department, Dr. Patrick Murphy, also graduated from Scripps College at Ohio University.

"Some of my professors that taught him also taught me and they knew him from his publications and his work in the field and they thought he would be a good mentor to me," Kapatamoyo said.

Dr. Elza Ibroscheva is Kapatamoyo's more official mentor.

"He is a very interesting man that is for sure," Ibroscheva said. "It is a joy to talk to him because he brings a wealth of experience from his personal life and his international travels. So it's always a pleasant conversation with Dr. Kapatamoyo."

In his free time Kapatamoyo listens reggae MP3s, plays soccer, and volunteers with the Jaycees Club.

Kapatamoyo said in the future he would like to create a class at the graduate level dealing with comparative international communication.

Kapatamoyo said the profound potential of the Internet is an important topic in mass communications right now. He said teaching students about the future depth and interactivity of the Internet is something he would like to see mainstreamed in mass communications.

M

Yu, continued from previous page

Yu said. "I am very impressed because students really want to learn. They ask a lot of questions, and as a teacher, you are very happy when you are able to solve students' problems."

Although Yu has only been teaching at SIUE for a little more than a semester, the students here have already taught him a lot.

"I have learned to think from a student's perspective," Yu said. "Because I am a new

instructor, I think students should think in my way, and if I think it is easy, then students should think it is easy. If I think it is important, then students will think it is important, but actually that is not the case."

Stressing the nuts and bolts of the mass communications industry is just as important as the creative side of the industry, according to Yu.

"Students say they are just interested in doing creative work, because they think the

creative work is fun, but they don't see that there is something behind that. I need to let the students know the importance of how to develop a strategy and how to do research." Yu said.

Donald said having a background in the research side of advertising was one of the reasons Yu was such a great addition to the department. Donald said new faculty can take a fresh look at department practices and offer innovative solutions. M

Mass Comm Pledge Form

1. I wish to contribute \$_____ to the department's Alumni Scholarship Endowment Fund. I am either self-employed or my employer does not match charitable contributions.

2. I wish to contribute \$_____ to the department's Alumni Scholarship Endowment Fund. My employer or personally owned business, _____, participates in a program to match charitable contributions. The SIUE Foundation may call me or my employer at _____ to make arrangements for the matching gift.

3. I wish to contribute \$_____ to the Mass Communications Development Fund.

4. Please contact me at _____ to discuss my pledge and to make the appropriate arrangements.

The SIUE Foundation accepts Visa and MasterCard.

Charge \$_____ to my MasterCard ___ Visa ___

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Checks should be made payable to the SIUE Foundation. They should be mailed to the Mass Communications Department.

Please mention the Mass Comm Alumni Scholarship Fund in the memo field of your check. Thank you very much!

*Department of Mass Communications
Campus Box 1775
SIUE • Edwardsville, IL, 62026*

Where are you?

We'd like to tell other Mass Communications graduates what their friends and colleagues have been doing since graduation.

Take a moment to fill out this card so Mass Communications alumni can keep up with each other. Information will be printed in next year's Mass Communicator.

Also, if you have any suggestions for articles in next year's Mass Communicator, let us know.

Name _____ Year Graduated _____

Company Name _____ Position _____

Updates, Awards, Honors _____

Comments or Ideas _____

Send to: Where Are You:
The Alestle • Box 1167
University Center, Room 2022
Edwardsville, IL • 62026-1167
Updates can also be submitted via e-mail:
director@alestlelive.com

CONGRATULATIONS

2008 Department of Mass Communications Award Recipients

Robert L. Emig Mass Communications Scholarship
Michelle Lach

Belleville News-Democrat Award
Megan McClure

Bob Hardy Broadcast Journalism Scholarship
Catherine Klene

St. Louis Newspaper Guild Outstanding Student in Journalism
Matthew Schroyer

John Rider Graduate Achievement Award
Tom Atwood

St. Louis American Outstanding Student in Journalism Award
Jacob Boone

Elmer C. Broz Award for Achievement in Journalism
Maggie Rhynes

John Rutherford Ott Award
Maggie Rhynes

Kamil C. Winter Achievement
Valerie Martinez

Jack Shaheen Media Image Award
Holly Meyer

Judy Landers Creativity in Strategic Media Award
Margaret Frost

John Regnell Media Policy & Law Award
Anna Dunn

Press Club of St. Louis Award
Anthony Patrico

Barbara Regnell Leadership in Media Award
Ilene Sanders

Alumni Achievement Award
Jack Klobnak



Webradio

*SIUE's 24-hour, nonstop source for Music,
Talk Shows, News, Sports and up-to-date
information about campus activities and events!*

www.webradio.siu.edu

Is there something YOU want to hear?

Want to volunteer and have your own show???

LET US KNOW!!!

Contact Marifaith Schweitzer at

swimgr12004@yahoo.com

Or stop by Dunham Hall Room 0141

Office # 650-3267

With your ideas for Webradio shows!

**The Department of Mass Communications
would like to wish the best to its longtime engineer**

Gus Wills

Enjoy retirement!