

Cypress Lake News

Newsletter of the Department of Communication • University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Outstanding Alumnus Combines American Indian Culture and Media

University of Louisiana at Lafayette alumnus, John Sanchez received the 2013 Outstanding Alumni Award at the annual Communication Department Spring Banquet. Sanchez is an associate professor of news media ethics in the Pennsylvania State Department of Journalism where he focuses on uniting his Apache Indian roots with his passion for mass communication.

“My research is at the intersection of American Indian cultures and the American news media,” said Sanchez. Before receiving the award, he presented a lecture titled “Examining American Indian Identity in the 21st Century: American Indian Facts 101,” and has published a textbook titled “American Indians and Mass Media”

Sanchez obtained his Master of Arts degree in mass communication from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now UL Lafayette) in 1988. He also holds a Master of Science in journalism from the Ohio State University.

Sanchez was formerly with The American University in Washington,



Sanchez received the 2013 Outstanding Alumni Award at the Communication Department's annual Spring Banquet.

D.C. where he taught American Indian Leadership and Politics and served as the Academic Director of the American Indian Leadership program. President Clinton's panel on race initiatives recognized this program as one of the top five programs in the United States.

At Penn State, Sanchez was named one of the top leading scholars in the field of intercultural studies by the Communication Institute for Online Scholarship. He also received the Penn State Communication Alumni Society's Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sanchez is a Freedom Forum Teaching Fellow, an AEJMC/ASJMC Freedom Forum Journalism Leadership in Diversity Fellow, and a Kiplinger Fellow of Public Affairs Reporting. Sanchez serves on the executive boards of the CIC American Indian Studies Consortium and the American Native Press Archives, and he serves as a consultant to the board of directors of the American Indian Policy and Media Initiative.

Communication Department Honors Distinguished Students

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Department of Communication's annual Spring Awards Banquet took place April 26 at the Petroleum Club in Lafayette.

Students from broadcasting, public relations, journalism, advertising and organizational communication were presented with awards for outstanding achievements in their fields.

Among those present, was organizational communication student, Jennifer Burdette. “Attending the banquet was one of the most rewarding things I've done all semester,” says Burdette. “It's a great feeling to join my fellow students at an event honoring all our hard work and

dedication.”

Graduate students and faculty were also honored at the banquet. Nagham Elkarhili, a graduate student specializing in public relations, received a scholarship.

Every year the department's honor society, Sigma Gamma Mu organizes the event. SGM's faculty advisor Alice Ferguson oversaw this year's banquet.

“The faculty and students of the Communication Department work hard each and every semester to achieve results, said Ferguson. “It's our goal to advance the reputation and achievements of the University, and it's an honor to be a part of such a great college and organization.”



Dr. William Davie and Janea Judge-Hemans



Pictured from left: Kedra Deggins, Brittney Garrett, Kathryn Hesse, Emily Larkin, Rebecca Squyres, Molly Armand, Cody Hebert, and Dr. Lucian Dinu

The following awards were presented at the 2013 Sigma Gamma Mu Communication Spring Banquet:

Outstanding Alumnus:
John Sanchez

Outstanding Senior in Communication:
Elizabeth Rose

Outstanding Communication Faculty Member:
Charles Lenox

Outstanding Member, Sigma Gamma Mu:
Chay Bridges

Outstanding Graduate Thesis:
Kayla Trauth

Outstanding Graduate Project:
Al Quartemont

Outstanding Graduate Project:
Sarah D'Avy

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant:
Masey Hammons

Outstanding Graduate Assistant:
Stephanie Majesty

Outstanding Senior in Advertising:
Rebecca Squyres

Outstanding Member, American Advertising Federation:
Kedra Deggins

Outstanding Senior in Broadcasting:
Blair Blanchard

Outstanding Senior in Journalism:
Elizabeth Rose

Outstanding Member, Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ):
Zachary Lasalle

Outstanding Member, National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ):
Brittany Bowie

Outstanding Senior in Organizational Communication:
Desiree Karlene Corneille

Outstanding Organizational Communication Association Member:
Samuel Jones

Outstanding Senior in Public Relations:
Caitlin Eisenhardt

Outstanding Member, Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA):
William C. Hobbs III and Brittany Bowie, Co-Presidents



Dr. Robert Buckman presents Elizabeth Rose with the Outstanding Senior Award



Kayla Trauth receives the Outstanding Graduate Thesis Award from Dr. Phil Auter



Communication Department Alumnus, Mike Spears

Alumnus Credits Success to UL Communication

University of Louisiana at Lafayette Alumna Mike Spears reflected on the skills he learned during his time in college. "I undervalued the knowledge I was gaining as a student, but looking back I see the real value of it," said Spears. He added that he now sees that what he learned in his public relations curriculum is invaluable.

Spears, 48, and a native of New Orleans, graduated in 1990 from UL Lafayette with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication. Spears said as a high school student, he didn't think he could make it in the college world. When he joined the U.S. National Guard, he started to re-think a college career. He said he needed the discipline to improve his self-esteem.

Spears graduated top of his class in military basic training and began to set big goals for himself. His plans were to move to a large city and have a good career making money. Spears admitted he was disappointed in himself because he wanted to be a millionaire by age 40 and eight years later, he still had not achieved his goal.

Motivated by an entrepreneurial spirit, Spears founded Firefly Digital in 1998. Being the boss of his own Internet Company afforded Spears the ability to take risks. "As a business owner, I can pretty much create what I want," says Spears. "I am not confined to certain boundaries like I was when employed by someone else."

According to Spears, being his own boss is like being an artist holding

a blank canvas. He is now capable of painting his own picture. Every three to four years he, along with his employees, are able to reinvent Firefly Digital because the cyber world is constantly evolving.

Spears also used his acquired marketing experience and name recognition techniques when running for the U.S. Senate. He was invited to a debate where participants in the debate were required to either have held a political office or have reached \$100,000 total in campaign contributions.

His run in the 2010 political race against U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La., was a learning experience for Spears.

"No matter what your views and plans are, or how much people like you, if you don't have enough money or resources to cover the entire geographical area during a political race, you can't win," said Spears. Although people in Louisiana approved of his plans, Spears did not have funds available to receive name recognition and reach voters statewide.

In his spare time, Spears wrote a craft book for children titled *Silly Dog Toys*. He also wrote a textbook that serves as a professional handbook for instructing students on how to prepare for the professional world. This book provides a format that is taught by no other professors and was written for Communication 338, Internet Communication, a course he taught for several semesters at UL Lafayette.

From Scrubs to Students



Dr. Katrina Burt

After dedicating 16 years to corporate health care public relations and communication, Dr. Katrina Burt became a Ragin' Cajun. In April of 2013, Burt left the organ procurement organization she had been employed with and began a career as a communication professor.

Burt received her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Mississippi and worked as a journalist for a local newspaper. Burt then moved to Washington, D.C., where she managed healthcare communication for the American Nurses Association and later became a nurse herself. After years in scrubs, Burt decided to attend the University of Southern Mississippi, where she received a master's degree in Public Health and a doctorate in mass communication with a focus on public relations in May 2013.

Reaching the end of her corporate public relations career, Burt connected with former colleague, Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll and was informed about an open teaching position at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Burt wanted to use her experience to educate others.

"I sort of know the deck of cards you're handed in representing an organization, so I thought I could lend that real world expertise to people who want to make a living in public relations," said Burt.

Burt is currently teaching Writing for Public Relations and Public Relations Case Studies. "This is my first time teaching and I love it, says Burt. "It's very eye-opening and refreshing, plus Lafayette is very friendly and open, so it's a good place to start."

Public Relations Alumni Use Education to Promote Folk Band

Communication alumni Fawn Larson and Will Harrison are singers and songwriters for Lafayette's local folk group, The Onlies. The band has been gaining plenty of national media exposure since their move to Nashville, Tenn. Larson and Harrison are graduates from the communication department's public relations sequence and use their knowledge to promote the band.

"We owe a lot of our success to our education," says Larson. "I'm not really sure that we would be gaining as much exposure as we have if it weren't for our ability to communicate well with media."

The two band members understand the value of the skills they acquired in college. "It really is more than just sending out a press release and hoping for the best. We have built good relationships with the press and we continually invite them to be a part of our musical career," says Harrison.

Harrison and Larson started the band as a duo in 2011 and eventually included drummer Luke Andrus and bassist Gary Newman. In their short two year career, the band gained media exposure from The Daily Advertiser, The Times of Acadiana, Offbeat Magazine, The Vermillion, The Independent, The Alexandria Daily Town Talk, The Daily World in Opelousas, KRVS, and KEUN. Online



The Onlies Album Cover with band members (pictured from left) : Luke Andrus, Fawn Larson, Will Harrison, and Gary Newman

blogs have done spotlights on the band, and one of their songs has been featured in an independent film. The Onlies' fame has also extended globally.

"We are starting to see our music pick up in Europe and we are pursuing that market as well," says Harrison. "We've been getting some airtime in Spain, the United Kingdom and we're starting to see some interest in Ireland."

The Onlies are expanding their brand into licensing and advertisements. "We like to keep our thumb on the pulse of the music industry and we know the power that licensing can have on bringing life to an independent band's career," says Harrison. He mentions how local bands Royal Teeth and The Givers have gained exposure through a car commercial and an ad for Amazon's Kindle Fire, respectively. "Another Lafayette act that made it big through licensing is

Brother Dege. His song was placed in an important scene of Django Unchained, and he quit his job and has been touring the globe ever since," says Harrison.

The Onlies credit their skills for marketing, management and media relations for their increasing recognition. Using the knowledge they gained from their UL public relations degrees, Larson and Harrison have saved money and added incredible accomplishments to their resumes. "We have been learning a lot and gained a lot of experience through our band, but most importantly, our education has really saved us a whole step in hiring a PR and management team," says Larson. "Eventually we hope to only have to worry about being the musicians, but for now we don't mind being the public relations team too."

Master's Program Adds International Specialization

To keep up with the fast changing world and the competitive workforce, the Communication Department master's degree program now offers students the opportunity to specialize in international communication.

"Expectations for higher education are increasing," graduate coordinator Dr. Philip Auter said. "The 21st century has seen a huge increase in instant communication, giving businesses the opportunity to be globally connected."

International communication incorporates advertising, interpersonal/organizational communication, mass communication, and public relations concentrations. This program will provide graduate students with hands-

on experience, as they engage with organizations, teachers, and other students around the world. Students also have the opportunity to complete a thesis or professional project.

Auter is optimistic about the opportunities the new addition will bring to graduate students. "This will give grad students the needed experience to deal with countries like Egypt, India and the U.K.," says Auter.

Former public relations student Josh Brannen thinks the new addition to the M.S. program is exciting. "I would be very interested in earning my master's in this new concentration," states Brannen.

Brannen is now academic advisor at the Academy of Interactive Entertainment

and knows firsthand the importance of understanding international communication. AIE is based out of Australia, so Brannen must interact frequently with others in his company via global communication.

Over the past decade, South Louisiana has seen a surge in the amount of international businesses establishing offices in the area. Specializing in international communication will provide students the skills that these businesses are looking for in potential employees. Auter suggests that all students, including those who did not receive their undergraduate degree in communication, could benefit from the new addition.

Hobbs Returns to Alma Mater to Teach



Lindsay Hobbs

Lindsay Hobbs, an alumna of UL Lafayette, has returned to campus to share her passion for knowledge. Hobbs empowers students to face their fear of public speaking, an important element necessary to achieve excellence in mass communication.

"It was a natural choice to come back to UL," said Hobbs. "And, as far as coming back here to teach, I absolutely love this University, and I believe we have a quality product to offer students at a great price."

Hobbs, the full-time faculty adviser of the UL Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), graduated from UL in 2004 with a

bachelor's degree in English. After working two years as a publicist for a children's author, Hobbs returned to obtain her master's in communication with a focus in public relations in 2011. Currently, she teaches Introduction to Human Communication, Public Speaking, an independent study, and the first-year seminar: Cajun Connection. Hobbs also taught argumentation, Principles of Public Relations courses, and Competitive Forensics. "I really love teaching Introduction to Human Communication," said Hobbs, "But part of the problem with that is that I don't get to see the students one-on-one." "Public speaking is the number one fear in the world," continues Hobbs, "and I get to see people come in on the first day of the semester petrified and face their phobia head on. I get to watch them grow and change and conquer something they never thought they could do, and that's my absolute favorite thing."

Hobbs has gained popularity among students as well. "I like Ms. Hobbs' class because she teaches a different way," said Leonardo Bates, senior football player at UL and student of Hobbs's public speaking class. "You can see she really cares about you learning. She actually gives you work that brings you closer as a class, and gets you comfortable so that you don't mind speaking in front of everybody."

Aside from one-on-one connections with students, Hobbs said she likes to take her classes on a case-by-case basis. Changing the parameters of her

course to fit the needs of her students is one way that Hobbs said she is able to provide a unique learning experience.

"I think that any good teacher constantly re-evaluates the class every semester, and if you teach multiple sections over the course of a year, you do have that benchmark, master syllabus," said Hobbs. "But each class is a case-by-case basis. Every semester I try to tackle something new and add something new to my syllabus and try to do something I haven't done before."

Fueled by her fiery passion and youthful vigor, Hobbs wants to make an impact on the University.

"As for as the Communication Department, next year I'd really like to see us have a student-run public relations firm on campus," said Hobbs. "We're really working at diversifying the type of student who is involved in PRSSA to represent the diversity of our campus and the diversity of public relations."

Hobbs also has high expectations for the future of the university.

"We are at the cusp of something phenomenal," says Hobbs, "especially as ULL gains national recognition because of its football program."

"This is a great time for alumnae to come back, visit their university and watch their football team win," exclaimed Hobbs. "Come back and be a part of what Coach Hud and these guys have been doing! I'm proud to be a part of that, and to get to teach these guys is really special."

Interested in pursuing a master's degree in communication? Our department offers a project of thesis track in the following areas:

- public relations
- organizational/interpersonal communication
- advertising
- international communication
- mass communication

If you have any questions about our program, you may contact Dr. Philip Auter at auter@louisiana.edu.

New Zealand Public Relations Professional Shares Experiences



Martyn Thompson with a kiwi

After more than 25 years of public relations experience, University of Louisiana at Lafayette alumnus and New Zealand native Martyn Thompson returned to Louisiana to share his knowledge.

"Louisiana's been good to us," Thompson said in his New Zealand accent. "I am happy to come back and give back to the institution that has been so good to me over the years."

Originally from Whangarei, New Zealand, Thompson earned his bachelor's degree in history and politics from the University of Auckland before earning his master's degree in communication, with a concentration in public relations, in 1988 at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, now ULL.

Thompson applied the communication theory and management skills he learned at USL to grow his own public relations firm in New Zealand, Stanford James Public Relations & Marketing Communication. He continued to run the firm, long distance, from his home in Cajun country. When he was not flying back and forth to New Zealand for business, Thompson taught two public relations undergraduate classes at ULL for a few semesters. Through

these classes, including writing for public relations and case studies, Thompson shared his wealth of knowledge and

"I happened to come across an advertisement for a grad assistantship at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette."

experience with students.

Thompson reflects on how he managed to find his way to Louisiana in the first place. "I happened to come across an advertisement for a grad assistantship at the University of Southwestern Louisiana," says Thompson. "It said 'French Louisiana,' and I thought, 'I played rugby in France, and I enjoyed France, so maybe French Louisiana will be pretty similar.'"

Thompson played rugby professionally in England and one season in France after earning his bachelor's degree.

"It was the love of my life," he stated. "I was a jock, without a doubt, for all of my life." He even coached rugby while attending USL in the late '80s, though he did not play because his knees had been worn out. During this time, Thompson

explained that public relations was more of a side job. Although Thompson has established himself in the field of public relations, he has a passion for history. "In more recent times, I've tried to get back into my history roots because I'm actually a historian, but public relations pays much more than history does," jokes Thompson. His historical works include a book published in 2005 titled *Our War: The Grim Digs: New Zealand Soldiers in North Africa, 1940-1943*, which had special significance as his grandfather was one of the soldiers he chronicled. Thompson also worked on a documentary on the Poverty Point Indian mounds in north Louisiana, which are the largest earthworks in the Western Hemisphere.

"I got into documentary film production because I wanted to turn my book on the soldiers into a documentary," Thompson began. "I've subsequently formed an alliance with a couple of guys in Washington, D.C., and we put a proposal in, which was accepted by the Smithsonian Channel, to do a major documentary on the Poverty Point mounds in the northeast of the state, which are applying for UNESCO World Heritage status." T. Michael

Maher, Ph.D., the head of UL Lafayette's Communication Department, said that Thompson's heritage enhances his ability to appreciate such historical issues that native Cajuns may overlook. "He comes in with that 'outsider's' New Zealand perspective," said Maher. "He doesn't take for granted the things that we, the natives, might take for granted."

Thompson said he was one of the fortunate few who truly enjoyed every endeavor they have undertaken. "I'm having fun doing stuff that I want," Thompson said. "I'm lucky enough to have done well enough in business to be able to do what I want, and that's what you want to have in life when you get to be my age: to have the choice. If you've got choice in life, then you're pretty sweet."

Mass Communication Alumna Wirtz Wakes up Acadiana

Just follow the faint music emanating from the dressing room in the hallway of KATC at 4 a.m., where Tracy Wirtz prepares to wake up the nine-parish area as anchor of "Good Morning Acadiana."

"My alarm clock goes off at 12:40 a.m.," said Wirtz. "I get here between 1:30 and 2."

Despite her brutal, "zero-dark-30" schedule, Wirtz bursts into the newsroom with effervescent energy, often belting out a greeting to the mostly empty building, setting the tone for the next few hours. Her enthusiasm for her occupation illuminates the room. However, when she first made the jump to television from radio, she wasn't as confident.

"For me it wasn't an awful transition, but I felt like I had a lot to prove to the people here, especially in the newsroom," Wirtz explained.

For the 43-year-old Wirtz, the transition was somewhat unexpected. On the road leading her to Good Morning Acadiana, there were roadblocks. Her professional journey began in Crowley in the late 1980s.

The oldest of her parents' seven children, Wirtz met her future husband, Kevin, while they were students at Crowley High School. Before graduating in 1988, Tracy and Kevin gave birth to their first daughter. The couple later had two more children, a girl and a boy.

Wirtz said she went on to enroll at the University of Southwestern Louisiana (UL-Lafayette), where she said she majored in changing majors.

"When I registered for college, I registered as a computer science major, and I immediately changed my major to mass communication once I got there," she said, "and then, just, oh, you know, I changed to interpersonal communication, then speech education, heck, I just bounced around and eventually got back around to mass communication."

Busy raising a young daughter while attending college, Wirtz held a job with a cluster of Crowley radio stations in addition to working at her grandfather's restaurant.

Wirtz graduated from USL in December 1992 with a bachelor of arts degree in mass communication with a focus on broadcasting. Her formal education was complete, but her journey was just underway.

"I did radio until 1995, and then I



UL Lafayette Alumna Tracy Wirtz

got out of on-air broadcasting and just went into various marketing jobs. I did marketing and sales for five years, and really just kind of bounced around five while my children were small.

"Then, in 2000, I got a call from one of my old radio bosses who said it's time for you to come back, and so I did," said Wirtz.

Wirtz spent the first half of the last decade as an on-air personality with KQIS 102.1 FM. Wirtz said she was comfortable with the medium and the medium had been kind to her. At that point in her life, she said, making the jump from radio to television was inconceivable.

"When you jump markets, you leave, you go somewhere else for a year or two. That wasn't an option for me. It wasn't something I could do because I had a child, so I stuck with radio," explained Wirtz.

"Then in 2005, I got a call, really out of the blue, from somebody at TV 3 who said, you know, we have this position opening up because Candice Gale was leaving," she recalled. "They said we'd like for you to apply. It is not guaranteed, but we'd like for you to apply and see what we think, and it just kind of worked out." It proved a great fit and Wirtz, who had previously been known solely for her voice, soon became a household face as

well. KATC meteorologist Dave Baker has worked alongside Wirtz since her first day.

"She's definitely got the gift for gab on the morning show," said Baker. "Tracy is always rip-roaring ready to go every single morning, and it really is a pleasure to work with her on GMA. We have a lot of fun. She's a good friend."

Wirtz puts in long hours in the newsroom in addition to time spent on air every week. After the show, she can be found at her desk making contacts with sources, lining up interviews, and scouring social media for stories. Her arduous work schedule dictates down time. However, Wirtz's energy emerges victorious yet again in her choice of free-time activities.

"I like to listen to music when I'm doing something," she said. "I love to cut my grass when I put my ear buds in and turn on my radio. It's one of my favorite things to do."

It's been more than seven years since she first graced Acadiana television, and Wirtz still helps wake the weary every weekday morning. However, she admits she often wonders what the future holds.

"I vacillate between wondering if I have another 15 or 20 years in me or if the runway is shorter than I think it is," said Wirtz. "I'll just take it one day at a time right now."

Dear CMCN Alumni:

We want to know what is going on in your life. Drop an email to cypresslakenews@gmail.com and let us know about your new job, promotion, career change, marriage, new baby, or any other exciting news. Tell us what year you graduated and with what degree.

Alumni News

• 2013 •

Avery Davidson (B.A., broadcasting) heads the Louisiana Farm Bureau's television programming as executive producer of "This Week in Louisiana Agriculture." Davidson came back to school after many years to finish his degree as an example to his two sons. When he came back to school, he served a vital role in the broadcast newswriting lab.

Sara D'Avy (M.S., interpersonal/organizational communication) works as performance auditor at the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office in Baton Rouge.

Andre Favors (B.A. and M.S. interpersonal/organizational communication) is working on his doctorate in communication at the University of Memphis.

Kayla Trauth (M.S., advertising) works as marketing coordinator at Advance Products & Systems, Inc., an oil and gas pipeline in Scott, LA.

Conor & Laura Runkel (husband and wife) graduate students in the Communication Department, have been named to The 2013 Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges List. **Baylie Schoenfelder**, a junior in the undergraduate public relations program, has also been named to the list. Students selected for the list must meet certain criteria, including a high grade point average, levels of participation in school and community service, potential of ability, competence and leadership.

• 2012 •

Laine Blazeovich (B.A., public relations) is working as a recruiter/enrollment counselor at ULL; is working toward an M.A. in Students Affairs Administration in Higher Education from Northwestern State University.

Kristen (Borchert) Gary (B.A., public relations) married Phillip Gary in 2013 and lives in Broussard, LA. She works as associate development officer at Pursuant, a fundraising consulting company.

Marcy Champagne (B.A., public relations) has worked for Walt Disney World Company since 2011. She has

been in merchandise for Disney for two years as well as a campus representative for the Disney College Program. Champagne is currently on temporary assignment making group reservations for conventions, sporting events, weddings and family group trips.

Dustin Domangue (M.S. interpersonal/organizational communication) manages a branch for Chase bank.

Jan Douglas (M.S. interpersonal/organizational communication) is working toward a PhD and teaching at the University of Oklahoma.

Nathan Justice (B.A., public relations) is studying for the Master's of Business Administration (MBA) with the prestigious Hult International Business School in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). He and his team have made the regional finals competing for the \$1 million Hult Prize.

Brittany Thibodeaux, (B.A., public relations) is working as medical review assistant at Heinen Medical and is the mother of two-year-old Bella.

• 2011 •

Leah (Domingues) David (B.A., public relations) married Brandon David in December of 2010 and are expecting their first baby in August of 2014. She is an operations technician with Freeport-McMoran Oil & Gas.

Kayla Jackson (B.A., public relations) started her own wedding and event planning company, Moonlight & Lace Weddings and Events, in Shreveport and Lafayette. She planned eight weddings in her first year of business.

Jillian Rando (B.A., public relations) was promoted to executive assistant to the president, vice president and executive creative director at BBDO in San Francisco.

Sara Yongue (B.A., public relations) worked as public relations director for the Children's Museum for Acadiana (CMA) and is now the social media manager for the Matthew Aaron Agency.

• 2010 •

Jillian Dickerson (B.A., public relations)

works as the assistant to the president of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA).

Kayla (Blanchard) Guidry (B.A., public relations) married Jordan Blanchard and welcomed twins (a boy and a girl) in April 2010. She works for Lafayette's Potenza Creative as an interactive media planner.

Michael Spears (M.S., communication) not to be confused with the Michael Spears on page 3, earned a J.D. law degree from Southern University, Baton Rouge; and has passed the Texas bar exam. He is now practicing law at GEICO insurance company and lives in Addison, Texas.

• 2009 •

Rosalyn (Firmin) Miller (B.A., public relations) married Brandon Miller in 2010 and they started their own company, Cajun Pools & Spas, and they are building a new home in Breaux Bridge.

Hope Ford (BA, broadcasting) is an anchor at KLFY-TV (CBS) in Lafayette.

Tova (Oustalet) Stelly (B.A., public relations) pursuing a project management license (PMP).

• 2006 •

Royd Anderson (M.S., broadcasting) had his documentary, "The Upstairs Lounge Fire," screened at Princeton University. The documentary which examined the worst mass murder of gays in U.S. history, was written, directed and produced by Anderson. Watch the trailer at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61_6_wejmcTE

• 2005 •

Jessica Morrow Russo (B.A., interpersonal/organizational communication) and her husband Frankie founded Potenza Creative in May of 2007. Jessica is a marathon runner and a tri-athlete. She and her husband Frankie have two children.

• 2004 •

Danielle J. Alasador (B.S., mass communication) is now an associate professor at LSU in the College of Human Sciences & Education.

Amy (Broussard) LeBlanc (BS, mass communication; M.S., public relations)

is teaching speech and broadcasting at Breaux Bridge High School. She is married to LCVC Creative Director Lance LeBlanc (UL Visual Arts alum) They have an almost 2-year-old son, Locke Stafford.

• 2002 •

Chrissi Coile (B.A., broadcasting) - former Ragin Cajun cheerleader and outstanding broadcasting major had a day named after her on December 13, 2013.

Coile, who began her career at Lafayette's KLFY-TV as a weekend anchor and reporter, moved to Shreveport's KTSB-TV and became part of the First News team.

When she resigned to spend more time with her family, "National Chrissi Coile Day" was proclaimed in Bossier City, LA.

• 2001 •

David D'Aquin (B.A., broadcasting) - is news director, operations manager at

Knight Broadcasting of Baton Rouge, the umbrella corporation for the NBC affiliate Ch. 33, Fox 44, CW21 and Z-TV.

• 1999 •

Jacques Doucet (B.A., broadcasting) - is a sports reporter and anchor for WAFB-TV (CBS) in Baton Rouge.

PRSSA Co-Presidents Help Rebuild Organization

Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), is a student organization at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for students who are interested in careers as public relations practitioners. The purpose of the organization is to broaden students' awareness and education and to launch their careers. Brittany Bowie, one of PRSSA's co-presidents, is hopeful that after their presidency is over, she and co-president Billy Hobbs will see the organization continue to flourish and draw in more members.

"There are over 200 students in our university whose concentration is public relations," Bowie says, "but right now we only have around 35 paying members of PRSSA. I hope that in the spring, our current members can persuade new members to join our group and attend the Regional Conference with the LSU



PRSSA co-presidents Billy Hobbs and Brittany Bowie

"It offered a chance to look at things from two different perspectives, and with both of us being so passionate in our field, it gave us much more enthusiasm to accomplish our goals."

chapter." Hobbs hopes that after his term is over, the new president and the future PRSSA members will be more involved with not only their local chapter, but their national chapter. "I hope PRSSA becomes a student-run firm," Hobbs added, "and I think being more involved with the national chapter would be really beneficial."

Bowie and Hobbs agreed that being co-presidents was definitely a different experience. However, with the many

changes needed to be made, having two presidents was useful. "This is the first time we know of that there's been more than one president," Bowie said. "It offered a chance to look at things from two different perspectives, and with both of us being so passionate in our field it gave us much more enthusiasm to accomplish our goals."

Hobbs wanted to help build the organization into something better.

"When we joined," Hobbs said, "there

weren't many members, maybe five, and meetings were not very beneficial. We just sat around and kind of stared at each other. Being a member before I became co-president was beneficial because I knew what needed to be changed, improved, or perfected."

Hobbs' decision to join the organization was guided by a desire to make meaningful connections.

"I decided to join PRSSA to get more involved in the university and the College of Liberal Arts, said Hobbs. "I wanted to gain new friendships, learn more about public relations and hopefully make new connections with people who could help me jumpstart a successful career in the exciting world of public relations."

UL Lafayette Communication Professor Earns National Recognition



Dr. William Davie and the Bliss Award

Dr. William Davie received the 2013 Edward L. Bliss Award for Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Education. The award is presented annually by the Electronic News Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) to recognize significant and lasting contributions to the field in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service.

"The Bliss Award recognizes the nation's top broadcast educator, and Dr. Davie deserves this recognition," said Dr. T. Michael Maher, head of the Department of Communication. "Bill Davie has written nationally distributed textbooks on broadcasting and media law; he is a well-published scholar who has held national leadership roles in scholarly organizations; and his undergraduate and graduate students have distinguished themselves at the highest levels of competition."

Davie is coordinator of the Mass Communication/Broadcast program at the university and holds the Board of

Regents Support Fund Professorship in Communication. He served as interim department chair and is a past graduate coordinator.

In 2012, Davie's students' radio production, "Louisiana Focus," was named the Best All-Around Newscast in the 2012 Society of Professional Journalism Mark of Excellence Award competition. One of his students also placed first in a radio news competition at the Southeast Journalism Conference.

Davie has served as division head of the Electronic News Division of AEJMC as well as the News Division of the Broadcast Education Association. He has been the AEJMC liaison with the Radio Television Digital News Association.

The Bliss Award is named for Edward L. Bliss, a long-time writer, producer and editor for CBS News. He was known for his work with Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite; he ended his career as an educator at American University in Washington, D.C.

Korbel Promoted to Master Instructor

After 11 years of service to the university, communication instructor John Korbel was promoted to master instructor. This is the first time the department has offered this promotion.

"The reason I like it is because it distinguishes you as somebody who had a lot of experience in the area you are teaching," says Korbel. "It also takes into account how the students evaluate you, both academically and as an advisor."

Although teaching has a lot to do with the master instructor promotion, Korbel said that it was important to show the department and students that the job entails more than just teaching and receiving a paycheck.

Some of his other responsibilities for the university include being the scholarship chairman for the department and an advisor for the Radio and Television Digital News Association (RTDNA). He has worked for several years with the department chair, Dr. T. Michael Maher, to organize and promote the annual Fish and Game Feast. This annual event generates funds for sending communication students to various competitions like RTDNA and The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) conferences around the country.

The idea for promoting someone to master professor was borrowed from other departments. "The position emanated from the English department which has a huge number of teachers at the instructor rank," says Maher. "It's good that the university is recognizing these faculty members, who really are such extraordinary teachers and have given students so much. I just think it's wonderful that they have a way of distinguishing themselves and an incentive system that, you know makes it worth their while to become master teachers."

Prior to teaching at UL, Korbel held the news manager position at KATC in Lafayette. He initiated an internship program for broadcast students at UL to have the opportunity to get real world experience.

Ferguson Completes Doctorate

Dr. Alice C. Ferguson completed her doctoral studies in August 2013 and graduated with a Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the University of Southern Mississippi. After successfully defending her dissertation, Ferguson was promoted from Instructor to Assistant Professor of Advertising. She continues to teach and to pursue research interests grounded in her doctoral studies.

"This degree has been many years in the making and I am grateful to my family and Communication Department colleagues for their unwavering encouragement and support," Ferguson said. "I look forward to teaching in our department's graduate program and to working with graduate students on theses and projects."

Ferguson's doctoral research introduced new theories of perception from the field of ecological psychology to the study of mass media uses and gratifications. "To my knowledge, this is the first time this particular block of perceptual theory has been applied to the study of mass communication," Ferguson said.

"Our field's foundational theories are rooted in traditional fields of social and cognitive psychology, so the addition of ecological psychology adds a more modern psychological approach to the study of communication."

This new approach allows researchers to study mass communication within the context of media users' immediate environments and considers users' goals and motivations as well as users' internal processing of communication messages.

"We now have theoretical tools to help us understand mass media and related devices as environmental components that can either enhance or restrict the user's range of daily activities," says Ferguson. "This is especially important for understanding new and portable media forms, as well as for helping to address challenges faced by media users who have special needs, such as those suffering from Alzheimer's Disease or other forms of dementia. Adaptive media technologies can now be evaluated with new theoretical tools to determine how they might help to improve quality of life for these patients."

Ferguson received her bachelor's



Ferguson at her graduation

degree in Radio, TV and Film from USM in 1984 and her master's degree in journalism from UL in 1992. She has been associated with the Department of Communication's faculty since Fall 1999, when she joined as an adjunct faculty member. Ferguson became a full-time faculty member in 2004 as the department's Instructor of Visual Communication and served in that capacity until beginning doctoral studies in Fall 2008. She returned to campus in Spring 2011 to resume teaching while completing her dissertation research.

Sigma Gamma Mu Hosts Halloween Week in Burke-Hawthorn Hall

Sigma Gamma Mu (SGM), the communication honor society, held their first Haunted Hell week during Halloween week, in Burke Hawthorn Hall. Haunted Hell week featured office door decorations and costume contests.

SGM invites members from the Communication Department who maintain a 3.0 GPA in communication classes and 2.8 overall GPA. SGM choose to take part in Halloween festivities this year, in hopes of bringing exposure to the organization. SGM members worked hard on preparing and promoting the Haunted Hell week, which was also held during Homecoming week. The week featured a friendly door decoration competition for faculty and staff. Dr. Alice Ferguson orchestrated the scary scenes all over the building, setting off many competitions, including faculty and staff door decorations and costume contests for faculty and students.

Ferguson was satisfied with the amount of participation in the event. "I actually saw when I went to make my coffee run a few different people in costume, and

then I noticed it looks like they're all going to class in Burke Hall." Zombies, ghosts, and witches could be found roaming the hallway. Each day consisted of different activities: Monday included faculty and staff vs. student groups door decorating contest; Tuesday included a scary movie feature in which one non-perishable food item was payment for entry; Wednesday was "Zombie Red-Out" in which faculty and students wore red (Geaux Cajuns!) to celebrate Homecoming Week; Thursday included faculty vs. student costume contests; and Friday included float decorating on the eve of Homecoming.

"The whole idea was at this point in the semester when people are starting to get tired and going to that last stretch, lighten up a little bit, have some fun, give some visibility for the department and the program," Ferguson said. Because Burke Hall is home to more than just communication students, the

Halloween festivities helped to draw attention to the department and generate interest in communication.

SGM looks forward to future events to gain more visibility for student groups and the department. "Every event that SGM puts on, we learn a little something about what gets good response," says Ferguson "Any kind of aesthetic event is nice, but the more that we can involve those faculty and student the better the event is."



Lindsay Hobbs on the left and door contest in the right

Faculty News



Dr. William Davie and Graduate Student Adam Miller presented “Sports Talk and the Impact of the Attack,” at the

Broadcasting Educators Association (BEA) conference in Las Vegas. The paper resulted from research conducted by Miller to test if the attitudes of listeners would shift when radio talk show hosts criticized basketball star LeBron James’ decision to leave Cleveland to play for Miami. Miller discovered that listeners reacted negatively when radio hosts spoke humorously about James rather than having a sincere, serious, heart-felt opinion. Dr. Davie presented a paper on the presidential election at the conference which features over 2,000 broadcasting professors and students.



Dr. Patricia Holmes, an associate professor, was awarded a sabbatical leave to write a book on the rubber industry in Liberia,

Africa. Holmes traveled to Liberia from Fall 2012 through Spring 2013 to research raw rubber, a key export for the country. Liberia, a country that was originally established by freed slaves, has spent the last few years trying to rebuild its damaged economy after suffering years of neglect from ongoing civil war.



Interpersonal/Organizational Instructor Aurora Auter and the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) held a

bone-marrow drive on February 12, 2013 in Moody Hall. The “Be the Match” drive was inspired by Good Morning America’s Anchor Robin Roberts, who was diagnosed with MDS (myelodysplastic syndrome) and needed a bone-marrow transplant procedure. NABJ and two other student groups, the Student Leadership Council and Black Male Leadership, to organize the event.



Dr. Phil Auter, along with numerous communication faculty and graduate students contributed papers for chapters in Social Media Go

To War: Rage, Rebellion and Revolution in the Age of Twitter, edited by Ralph Berenger and published by Marquette books. The book is a combination of papers from 39 international scholars and chronicles how social media were used during the Arab Spring. Dr.

William Davie, Dr. Steven Dick (an adjunct professor at UL), Maha Bashri (assistant professor at Bradley University), Mohammed Galander (associate professor at Qatar University), James St. Pierre (a mass communication professor at Notre Dame University at Louaize, Lebanon), and Naila Hamdy (a communication professor at American University of Cairo, Egypt), wrote “Revolution in Egypt and President Obama’s Reponse: American and Middle Eastern Student Views.” Dr. Phil Auter, Aziz Douai (an assistant communication professor at University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Canada) and UL graduate student Dustin Domangue wrote: “The ‘News Blog’: Social Media and Global News Coverage of the ‘Arab Spring’.” Naila Hamdy and UL graduate student Lindsey Conlin wrote “Women and Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution.”



Faculty Advisor and Instructor Lindsay Hobbs traveled with the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) UL Chapter to San Francisco. Hobbs has assisted with

guest speakers at local chapter meetings including, Kim Billeaudeau, UL’s Director of Career Services, who presented: “The Roadmap to Your Resume.”



Dr. Dedria Givens-Carroll travelled to the annual Southern States Communication Association’s conference in Louisville, Ky., where

she served as vice chair and planned the program for the Public Relations Division. She was elected vice chair and will plan the

program for the Mass Communication Division for the 2014 SSCA meeting in New Orleans. She presented several papers and panels on a variety of topics including teaching writing for public relations online, evaluation of senior portfolio submissions in the public relations campaign management course, and a paper entitled “To the Rescue: New/Social Media Technologies Help Connect to Crises” about how social media was used following Hurricane Katrina and five years later during Hurricane Gustav.



Dr. D.K. Kim and Jan Douglas (2013) published “What Does This Mean, ‘Just be a Friend’?: Analysis of Volunteer Uncertainty During the Assimilation

and Socialization Process at a Youth Mentoring Organization,” in Kramer, M., Gossett, L. & Lewis, L., *Volunteering and Communication: Studies from Multiple Contexts*, pp. 169-189). Peter Lang Publishing, New York, NY.



Dr. Sandra Duhe is moving to Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. She has accepted a position as the Chair of the Division of Communication Studies.



Dr. Wonjun Chung moved back to his home country of Korea after teaching for several years at UL Lafayette.