

Meeman Matters

Alumni publication of the
Department of Journalism
University of Memphis
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Inside

Students from all over the world are enrolled in the Journalism Department's online master's program. Learn how it works on page 4.

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Contributors:
Simone Barden
Gina Clark
Felicia Stott
Art Terry

Research journal returns to U of M

By Felicia Stott

Two University of Memphis journalism professors have brought an old friend home from Ohio University. Dr. Elinor Kelley Grusin and Dr. Sandra H. Utt are now the editors of Newspaper Research Journal.

The NRJ is the official journal of the Newspaper Division of the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. It arrived in its infancy at The U of M (then Memphis State University) in 1979 when founding editor Dr. Gerald Stone became chair of the Department of Journalism. Stone started the NRJ at California State University Long Beach.

In 1988 the journal moved to Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Stone left Memphis in 1991 to go to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Coincidentally, Utt and Grusin are both graduates of Ohio University. Although they attended a few years apart, both received their doctorates in mass communication/journalism at the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism. Each received the "Outstanding Doctoral Student in Journalism" award.

In addition, both Grusin and Utt were students of the NRJ's former editors, Dr. Ralph Izard, who was director

of the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism, and Dr. Guido Stempel, distinguished professor of journalism emeritus, who was associate editor.

Grusin and Utt's commitment to the NRJ isn't new. Both have been members of its editorial board for years-- Grusin since 1990 and Utt since 1984.

Journal articles cover a broad spec-

trum, including online and electronic newspapers, legal issues that affect publishing and minority representation on news staffs as well as in news content. Grusin said some research deals with reader perceptions of credibility.

"Other research deals with actual content, which is determined by doing content analyses of newspapers," she said.

Utt and Grusin are proud of their association with the journal.

"The journal is a highly respected publication, and we hope to continue that tradition as we move it into the 21st century," Utt said.

Grusin added, "We want to increase NRJ's use among professionals and continue to use it as a bridge between the professional and academic communities."

Felicia Stott is a graduate student in English who wrote this for Dr. Grusin's advanced news practices class.

Recent NRJ articles:

- ◆Cable Television News Viewed as Most Credible
- ◆Newspaper Online Editors Support Traditional Ethics
- ◆Few Newspapers Use Online Classified Interactive Features
- ◆Traditional, Online Polls Reported Differently

Faculty and student matters

Students

Journalism department students continue to land great internships and jobs. **Lindsay Goldenberg**, former editor of the Helmsman, who graduated in December 2000, went to work immediately for Rolling Stone in New York. Her internships were at Reader's Digest and Rolling Stone.

Students who were interns at The Commercial Appeal last summer were **Jason Greer, Niki King, Khara Woods and Kate Crawford**. Niki and Khara were Scripps Howard interns, the seventh and eighth Scripps Howard interns the department has had in the past four years.

Other recent internships and student work: **Lucy King**, graduate student, undergraduate PR program graduate, International Paper; **Pingping Xie**, graduate student from China, worked in the Ukraine; **Ahlam Muhtaseb**, graduate student, Fulbright Fellowship, Palestinian activist.

Keisha Whitaker has had a PR internship with the Olympic Bobsled team and had an internship with another branch of the Olympic committee in Denver.

Leah Bray Nichols won a Hearst writing award for a story on credit cards at the U of M, which she did in Elinor Grusin's Media Writing class in fall 1999. She won 11th out of 89 schools for in-depth reporting in which she showed that the U of M profited from having students sign up for credit cards through the company that the

Justice honored

Journalism Professor Candy Justice, along with physics professor Dr. Robert Marchini, won The 2001 Thomas W. Briggs Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award.

The Briggs Award was established in 1996 to recognize teaching excellence at the undergraduate level and an overall commitment to undergraduate education. The award is named for the founder of Welcome Wagon International.

Justice is faculty adviser to The Daily Helmsman.

A former reporter for the Memphis Press-Scimitar, she graduated from the University of Mississippi and received a master's from The U of M.

school allows to come onto campus to solicit.

Four members of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) presented a session at the PRSSA national conference in Atlanta on planning a leadership retreat. The chapter was invited to lead the session by the national PRSSA committee. **Katie Flippo** is the current PRSSA president. About 1,100 students from throughout the U.S. attended the conference in October.

Faculty

David Arant, coordinator of graduate studies for the department, led an ethics panel on "Guiding Young Journalists" at the Society of Professional Journalists Convention in Seattle in early October. He led a panel on online news ethics and recruited students for the department's master's program at the National College Media Convention in New Orleans in late October.

Rick Fischer was recognized by the National Academic

Advising Association (NACADA) as an outstanding university advisor for 2001. The Certificate of Merit was announced at the annual NACADA conference in Ottawa, Ontario in October.

Jim Willis has been busy working on his eighth and ninth books. The first is called "Prelude to Greatness: Oklahoma Football in the 1990s," a study of the Oklahoma Sooners football team. His co-author is Jay Smith, a former offensive lineman for the Sooners.

The second book, "The Best Seat in the House: Reporters, Perspectives and Emotions," will be published by Praeger Publishers.

Willis, along with graduate student **Simone Barden**, also organized the seminar, "Covering the Terrorism Story: Probing the Threats and Mindsets," in November (see photos page 7). He's now putting together the first annual seminar for the German Association of Business Journalists to be held this summer at The U of M.

Alumni matters

Kenneth Adams, Public Relations Manager – Diverse Markets, Farmers Insurance Group, Los Angeles, CA, Kenneth323@earthlink.net, Class of 1995

Michael Brumas, communications director for U. S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, McLean, VA, mbrumas@aol.com, Class of 1974

Dana Lynn Dreinhofer, manager, Publications Service, University Public Relations, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY, dld@uwyo.edu, Class of 1960

Bruce C. Ebert, senior associate, Goldmar & Associates Public Relations, Norfolk, VA, bruce@goldmanandassociates.com, Class of 1971

Kimberly Eneks, creative writing and publishing teacher, Overton High School, Memphis City Schools, Memphis, TN, kimmeren@prodigy.net, Class of 1994

Bill Fritz, president of a mail-order sports equipment catalog, Bill Fritz Sports Corp., www.billfritzsports.com, billfritz@earthlink.net

Jamie N. Hodge, marketing and public relations coordinator, St. Mary's Episcopal School, Memphis, jhodge@stmaryss-

chool.org, Class of 1994

Meg Howard, executive assistant to CEO, Transactional Marketing Partners, Los Angeles, meg-howard@aol.com, Class of 1977

Cynthia Janssen, legislative correspondent for U. S. Sen. James Inhofe, Annandale, VA, Cynthia_Janssen@inhofe.senate.gov, Class of 1998

Charlene Pope Jones, director of benefits, Triad Hospitals Inc., Murfreesboro, TN, jones33@mindspring.com, Class of 1977

Thomas E. Jones, senior advisor to Shelby County mayor, Germantown, TN, Jones-T@co.shelby.tn.us, Class of 1971

Charles W. Lee Jr., clec@hotmail.com, Class of 1969

Ann Daniel Loudon, director of principal gifts, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, a.louden@tcu.edu, Class of 1976

Fred Middleton, director of communications services, National Cotton Council of America, Cordova, fmiddleton@cotton.org, Class of 1966

Michelle E. Morgan, service consultant, Bell South, Memphis, TN, Michelle.E.Morgan@bell-

south.com, Class of 1975

Holly Price, manager of quality assurance, FedEx Supply Chain Services, Germantown, TN, holly@cawein.com, Class of 1988

Tona Jackson Simpson, managing director of advancement services, University of Memphis, Cordova, TN, tjsimpsn@memphis.edu, Class of 1988/1995

Kimberly Sipes, chief copy editor for Popular Mechanics magazine, New York, NY, ksipes@aol.com

Ernest Startup, guidance counselor at Idyllwilde Elementary School, Seminole County Public Schools, Sanford, FL, estartup@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu, Class of 1971

Cheri Theil, managing director, FedEx, Memphis, TN, ctheil@bell-south.net, Class of 1988

Christopher F. Thomas, senior account manager, Lincoln Brand Management, The National System, Inc., St. Louis, MO, Christopher.Thomas@thenational-system.com

Traci Zuckerman, sales consultant, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Cordova, TN, traci.zuckerman@pharma.novartis.com, Class of 1993



Who are they?

A couple of alums recognized themselves in this picture we ran last time. Michael Brumas identified himself as the young man on the far right. Bill Fritz said he's the reporter on the far left. Brumas wrote that it was probably Merrill Bankster's Reporting 101 class in 1971. See above for what both men are doing now.

More than a chat room

The Journalism Department's online master's program is helping turn dreams into reality for students all over the world.

If you've ever had that nightmare about showing up for class naked, then the Department of Journalism's online master's program might be for you. Students from as far away as Italy are taking part in this program that allows them to work toward a master's degree in the comfort of their own home—and in the wardrobe of their choice.

The program, created by Dr. Bill Brody, journalism professor, began in 1995 with six to eight-week courses. Now all graduate classes are online and span the entire semester. The department offers online classes at night to accommodate students with full-time jobs and limits enrollment to eight or nine students per class. The program is ideal for students who do not live near a university, and according to Cathy Philpot, online coordinator, 99 percent of online students live outside Tennessee.

How does all this long-distance, techno-education work? You can throw your pen and paper out the window for class time and warm up your keyboarding fingers because the online classes take place in an Internet chat room. First, participants need a computer with Internet access and browser software. Second, to "show up" for class, the students and instructor go to the Web site of the chat service provider and enter the assigned password and a chat nickname. Students then type the course code for the class they want to join, and a chat window with several boxes appears. One box displays names of students in the room. Another shows the number of people in the room. Students use a third box for entering comments that appear in the main box. The result is a running commentary. The sender's name appears before each comment so everyone will know who is "speaking," and a scroll bar allows the user to review the entire discussion.

Teachers as traffic cops

Because several students entering comments simultaneously could become chaotic, Brody and other teachers act as online traffic cops to keep control. To comment, a student enters a question mark and waits for the teacher to type "GA student's name," for "go ahead." Also, when the teacher wants a certain student to answer a question, the teacher types the student's name after the question.

Over the years, Brody has seen some unusual comments and recalled one from a student who said he needed to leave the chat room for about 20 minutes to deliver a baby. It turned out the student was an obstetrician who was taking journalism classes to learn about setting up a television program.

A corporate advertising and marketing communications manager in Latrobe, PA, named Rudy Frank, is also taking advantage of the online program. Frank learned about the program through an Internet search in 1998 and has only a few elective requirements remaining to complete his degree.

Frank said he has mixed feelings about his online experience and said, "My

By Gina Clark

pursuit of a master's is a lifelong dream that wasn't practical until the Internet. U of M's online program has made a dream a reality for me."

Flexibility and convenience

As a full-time employee who lives 50 miles from the nearest journalism graduate school in Pittsburgh, Frank said he is pleased with the program's flexibility and convenience; however, he said online discussion is less effective than face-to-face because it lacks emotion and takes away the opportunity for students to connect personally. In addition to the loss of a personal connection, Frank also said he has had some technical problems staying connected to the chat site, a problem that can be distracting during a heated debate.

Another online student, Michelle Ferrier, is an instructor in the Mass

Communications Department at Emory & Henry College in Emory, Va. Ferrier said a master's degree would allow her to continue teaching at the college level. She emphasized anonymity as a major factor that sets online education apart from traditional classroom instruction.

"The disadvantage is that you never meet your professors and classmates. The advantage is that you never meet your professors and classmates," she said.

For example, Ferrier has taken online classes while nine months pregnant and relaxed on her couch with her keyboard during class, and no one knew or cared.

"The online environment allows you a certain anonymity where you have to make knowledge and the sharing of it paramount," Ferrier said. She said students in traditional classrooms often prejudge each other based on physical factors such as age, gender or race, limiting the depth of class discussions.

True feelings can emerge

Online anonymity, however, removes those barriers allowing students to focus solely on other students' contributions. As a result, Ferrier said online

students have been more willing to express their true feelings, adding to the intensity of the discussion. However, she pointed out that you must remain motivated and assertive to participate successfully in the chat environment.

Through the online program, students can earn a Master of Arts degree in journalism in two years by completing two courses each fall, spring and summer semester. To graduate, students must complete four core courses plus electives. Like on-campus students, they may choose one of three options: 24 credit hours plus a thesis, 30 credit hours plus a professional project or 36 credit hours of course work only.

While the department faced some challenges setting up the online program, Philpot said, faculty members are

committed to the program's future. So far, four students have been graduated.

'Not for the faint hearted'

Gus Morgan, a daily newspaper reporter in Madisonville, TX, was the graduate in May 1998. The other three are Janna Andersen, a journalism instructor at Elon College in NC; Ashley Blair, who works in public relations in Jackson, TN; and Steve Dembner, who works in public relations at the United Nations Forestry Service in Rome, Italy.

Although the online program allows students to slip into something more comfortable and put their feet up for class, it can be physically challenging, as Dembner found out when he had to log on at 3 a.m. because of the time difference between Memphis and Rome. Students also have found the classes to be intellectually challenging.

"Online education is not for the faint hearted," Ferrier said.

Gina Clark is a graduate student in the Department of Journalism and is the content manager for the online edition of The Daily Helmsman.

'The disadvantage is that you never meet your professors and classmates. The advantage is that you never meet your professors and classmates.'

**Michelle Ferrier,
online master's student**

Fall happenings at Meeman

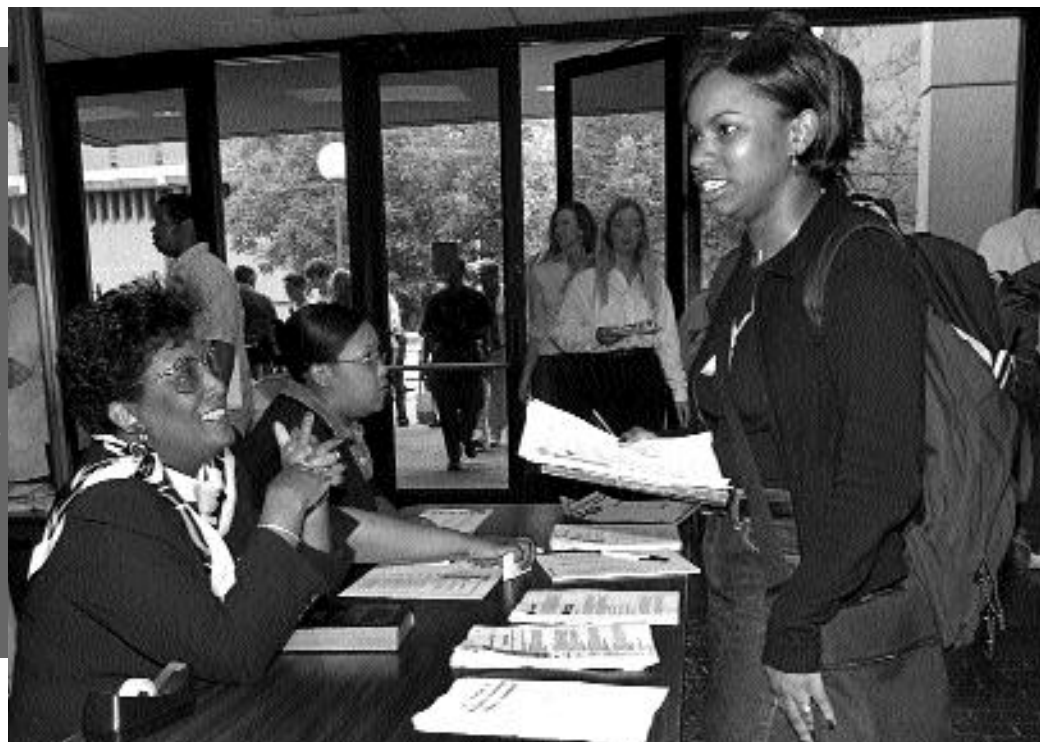
Annual open house



Dr. Jim Redmond, chair of the department, handles grilling duties for the day at the Fall Open House. Judging from the line waiting for a hot dog, he's a pretty good cook.

Photos by Art Terry

Dr. Cynthia Hopson (L) chats with a student about the National Association of Black Journalists. Representatives from all department groups were at the open house.



Covering the Terrorism Story



Dr. Jim Redmond (L), Mike Boettcher of CNN, Dr. David Arant, and Anne Willis

Photos by Simone Barden



Edward B. O'Donnell Jr. (L), consul general, U.S. Consulate, Frankfurt, Germany, with Dr. Jim Willis



Bill Lunn of ABC 24/UPN 30

Dr. Jim Willis helped organize the seminar, "Covering the Terrorism Story: Probing the Threats and the Mindsets," at The U of M in November.

Among the participants were Mike Boettcher, national correspondent for CNN; Mary Walsh, Pentagon producer for CBS; and Penny Owen, The Daily Oklahoman reporter who covered the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma.

Other participants included Stephen Jones, former attorney for Timothy McVeigh; Shannon Blanton of The U of M Political Science Department; Susan Brenner, associate dean and professor of law at the University of Dayton School of Law, Dayton, Ohio;

Col. Ann Norwood, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Uniformed Services University of Health and Sciences in Bethesda, Md.; Charles Bryant, regional director of the West Tennessee region of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency; Bill Lunn, anchor at ABC 24/UPN 30; and many others.

Edward O'Donnell, U.S. Consul General to Frankfurt, Germany, was a special guest speaker.

Sponsors of the three-day seminar were the Lionel Linder Center for Urban Journalism, The University of Memphis, the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, the Mid-South Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, and Federal Express.



Charles Bryant (L), Col. Ann Norwood, M.D., Stephen Jones, Susan Brenner, Mike Boettcher

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Did getting a journalism degree help your career? _____

Please include any news you'd like to share with other graduates. We'll put this in our next issue.