The 50th annual School of Communication Awards Banquet honored professionals and served as the culmination of a week of activities to recognize the school's legacy.

At the April 28 banquet the school bestowed the following awards: Communication Achievement Award—Ben Gray, producer, KETV, Omaha; Alumni Achievement Award—Joan Lukas, managing partner of the Omaha public relations firm, Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates; Distinguished Service Award—Chet McCarthy, community relations representative for Beverly Health Care and former owner of Printing Services Inc.; Rising Star Alumni Achievement Award—Christine Mixan, community relations specialist, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California; Lifetime Achievement Award—Dan Morrissey, president of Media and Events Design and director of the Omaha Sports Commission.

During the four days prior to the banquet, the school sponsored Communication Week, featuring student and faculty presentations, an alumni panel, and various other activities. The Public Relations Student Society of America and the Ad Club presented campaigns they developed and submitted for national competition. The school's forensics students presented their award-winning work, and graduate students sponsored a colloquium at which they discussed their research. Journalism students canvassed the community and put together a Weblog (or blog) on the public perception of morality in mass media.

Other activities during Communication Week included a photography exhibit by Dr. Michael Sherer, professor of communication; a career workshop for students; a reception for high school journalism advisers; and a presentation on the school's international communication program by Dr. Chris Allen, associate professor, and Dr. Robert Carlson, professor.

As a prelude to the awards banquet, the school sponsored a panel of alumni who reflected on UNO education and their careers. The panel consisted of Paul Critchlow (BS, ’71), senior vice president for communications and public affairs, Merrill Lynch; Rose Ann Shannon (BS, ’73), news director, KETV, Omaha; and Kevin Warneke (MA, ’94), executive director of the Ronald McDonald House in Omaha.

Critchlow Among Visiting Alumni

Paul Critchlow still appreciates what UNO's communication faculty did for him. He wants to make sure students in the UNO School of Communication gain that same appreciation.

Critchlow traveled from New York to be a part of Communication Week activities and to share his knowledge and his love of UNO with students.

Critchlow has enriched the educational experiences for students in the School of Communication in a number of ways.

Critchlow supplied all students in the school this past year with subscriptions to the American Journalism Review and the Columbia Journalism Review.

Earlier in the academic year, he hosted a luncheon and reception in New York City for Professor Karen Weber and several of her communication students. They were there to accept an award from the Public Relations Student Society of America for a campaign they developed on organ donor awareness.

"I love Karen's teaching philosophy of learning communications while practicing philanthropy," Critchlow said. "I admire her and the way she devotes herself to the students. Clearly, under her guidance they are having experiences that go way beyond the norm."
Alumni Updates

Some of the information is courtesy of the Gateway Alumni Organization.

1957
Betty J. (Ellsworth) Davis (BS) continues her work as executive director of the Douglas County Historical Society.

Terrence J. Kelly (BS) is now retired and freelancing in Clarksville, Ind. He spent several years as a reporter and editor for the regional publication, Purchasing Magazine.

1960
Warren Francke (BS) continues to freelance. He is currently writing a history of journalism and speech education at UNO and a history of the Omaha Community Playhouse.

1964
Dick Fletcher (BS) just completed 25 years as chief meteorologist at WTPS-TV in St. Petersburg, Fla. His forecasts are also used by the St. Petersburg Times and WQYK-FM radio.

1969
John Prescott (BS) is a speech writer on the commander's staff for the United States Strategic Command headquarters. Before his current post he spent 20 years in broadcasting and more than 10 years in public relations at Union Pacific Railroad.

Rudy Smith (BS) is a photographer at the Omaha World-Herald. He has worked at the Herald since graduating.

1970
Susan Kruse Saxenmeyer (BS), after 23 years in cable TV public affairs and marketing, retired as vice president for public affairs for Middle America Cox, Cox Communications' largest operating group. She is currently vice president and annual fund chair of the Literacy Council of Tyler, Texas.

1973
Kent McNeill (BS) has been retired since 1997. Before that he was in sales and edited a newspaper.

1975
Ward Peters (BS), after a 20-year career in real estate, owns UPWARD Life Coaching, LLC.

1977
Jim Adams (BS) is completing his seventh year as assistant general manager of UNO Television. Before coming to UNO he worked for 23 years at KETV in Omaha where he was a director and production manager.

John Fey (BS) is in his 17th year at the Omaha World-Herald. He has been a sports reporter, sports copy editor, features copy editor and news copy editor. “My current responsibilities include covering the Omaha Beef indoor football team, and I occasionally write on running-related subjects. I’ve run four marathons [since] 1983 and, most recently, the 2002 Baltimore Marathon.”

1978
Jae Gilbert (BA) has been a graduate assistant in the UNO School of Communication the past year. She will take her last graduate class this fall and is working on her masters' thesis.

Jim Ressegieau (MA) completed seminar studies in Chicago and is currently serving a congregation in Essex, Iowa.

1979
Paul Hammel (BA) is with the Omaha World-Herald's Lincoln bureau. He spans the country for the newspaper “in search of the gawd-awful and the God-inspiring.” He lives in Lincoln with his wife, Nancy Evans, and his daughter, Jennie.

Mike Hendricks (BS) has spent the past 20 years at the Kansas City Star. He has been a columnist the past eight years. “I write whatever I want on whatever topic that interests me.”

1982
Marge Peterson (BS) received the 2004 Henry Fonda Award, Nebraska's highest award for promoting tourism, for her 20 years of writing and editing stories about Nebraska for various publications.

1984
Anne Walsh (BS) is senior manager of corporate communications for the Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha.

1985
Cindy Gonzalez (BA) is a reporter at the Omaha World-Herald. She has a daughter, Ischel, and son, Joey.

1986
Karen (Steinbrock) Furbush (BS) currently lives in Phoenix and works as a business consultant for a software company in the health care industry.

1990
Mary Bernier (MA) works for the University of Nebraska Foundation to raise funds for UNO.

Tim Kaldahl (BS), after several years in health care public relations, is now assistant director for media relations at UNO.

1991
John Watson (BS) is director of marketing and public relations at Bellevue University. He is also an adjunct professor in marketing management at the university. He has fond memories of his TV production class at UNO. “I did a bit where I portrayed a farmer warning the populous of an impending onslaught of 'killer potatoes,' complete with a captured potato replete with bare teeth and evil eyes.”

1993
Joan Lukas (MA) received the UNO School of Communication's 2005 Alumni Achievement Award. She purchased Leslie Associates public relations firm and it is now called Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates.

1996
Kara Schweiss (BS) works as a copywriter for Gordmans in Omaha and is a freelance writer and photographer.

Scott Kemper (BGS) is the wire editor for Data Transmission Network in Omaha.

2002
Mike Machian (BA) is finishing a feature-length film, “Nites of Aksarben,” which he co-produced.

Wendy Townley (BS) is an account executive at Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, an Omaha public relations firm. She continues her work as a freelance writer for local and national publications.

2003
Lachelle Price-Parker (BGS) works as a grants management clerk at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md.

Nick Turner (BA) has been working for Fairchild Publications in New York as coordinator of special projects. He produces advertorial pieces for Women's Wear Daily, a fashion trade publication. He also worked in the public relations department for Cotton Inc.

Kristin Zagurski (BS) is a reporter at the Omaha World-Herald. She covers crimes. Continued on page 3...

---

Page 2
We were delighted with the opportunity to visit with our alumni and retired faculty and staff during Communication Week and at the 50th Awards Banquet. Dr. Warren and Mrs. Carol Francke and Dr. Hugh Cowdin hosted a wonderful reception, which drew surprise visits from Sue Saxenmeyer from Texas and Patti Matson from New York. As mentioned in CommUNO, distinguished alumni Paul Critchlow, Rose Ann Shannon and Kevin Warneke offered current students a lively panel discussion.

Speaking of students, we were very excited to see our students awarded $76,664 in scholarships this year. The quality of our more than 500 broadcasting, journalism and speech majors is extraordinary. Additionally, the more than 100 graduate students are very active in presenting papers and receiving awards.

In faculty news, Dr. Chris Allen is the recipient of the Alumni Teaching Award. Dr. Allen just returned from London with a group of 14 International Communication students. Dr. Bruce Johansen, the Kayser Professor, was in Poland during the same time to lecture.

The hectic pace of April yielded to the relative quiet of May and June on the UNO campus. Please drop me a note with your news. We are asking that you provide a current email address, so that we can keep you informed throughout the year with news updates. We look ahead to our exciting first year in the new College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media!

Sincerely,

Jeremy Harris Lipschultz, Ph.D.
Robert T. Reilly Professor & Director
School of Communication
Jlipschultz@mail.unomaha.edu

CommUNO wants to hear from you!

Name: ____________________________

Year graduated: __________ Degree received: ____________________________

E-mail address: ____________________________

Any change in mailing address (other than the one to which the newsletter was sent):

______________________________

Send in this reply form and you will be registered to win a Maverick hockey jersey, a UNO sweatshirt, or t-shirt.

We will be sending you regular updates about the School of Communication and its faculty, students and alumni.

(402) 554-2600 / FAX (402) 554-3836 / www.communication.unomaha.edu
The School of Communication Remembers
ABC News Producer Leo Meidlinger

Sam Donaldson’s producer for “PrimeTime Live” during that period.
Meidlinger’s career often meant that he be in some of the world’s most troubled spots. He covered the Persian Gulf War and was in Belgrade and Somalia during their civil conflicts.

Eventually Meidlinger became senior producer for “World News Tonight with Peter Jennings.”

Meidlinger, a native of Omaha, was a past recipient of the UNO School of Communication’s Alumni Achievement Award.

Photos Courtesy of ABC News

A former UNO journalism student who went on to a stellar career in broadcast news died in January 2005. Leo Meidlinger, 61, was ABC’s lead producer at the World Trade Center site following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He won Emmy and Peabody awards for his coverage.

Meidlinger began working in TV production while a student at UNO. He joined ABC in 1972, and six years later he was sent to Washington to produce coverage of the White House for ABC. He remained on that beat during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. He was also

Alumni Updates, continued from page 2...

accidents, fires and court proceedings in the Omaha area. She has worked at the Herald since 2003.

2004


Valerie Cutshall (BA) is an education writer for the Papillion Times.

Melissa Kucirek (MA) is coordinator of marketing and promotions at Clarkson College in Omaha.

Juli Logemann (BS) is a quality assurance representative for Double Fine, a company that develops video games. Logemann tests video games for several San Francisco-area electronics companies.

Josie Loza (BA) is a reporter for the Omaha World-Herald.

2005

Darci Robb (BS) is the public relations director for the Nebraska Propane Dealers Association.

Allen Receives Outstanding Teaching Award

Dr. Chris Allen, associate professor in the School of Communication, was one of nine UNO faculty in 2005 to receive the UNO Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award. Allen was noted for his work in helping communication students produce a weekly live TV newscast during the academic year and for his annual two-week trip to London as part of his international communication class.

Students, Alumni Benefit

UNO students, faculty, staff and alumni who need help in preparing oral presentations now have a place to turn.

The School of Communication is launching a new UNO Speech Center this fall. The center will consist of two “wings.” The Basic Course Wing will provide assistance to students enrolled in the public speaking fundamentals course, which is required for a large majority of UNO students. The wing will be housed in Arts and Sciences Hall Room 183 and staffed with speech instructors who will assist students in planning, researching, writing and delivering speeches.

The Speech Consulting Wing, housed in ASH 185, will offer free consultation services for students, faculty, staff and alumni in developing effective oral presentations. The wing will foster a “Speaking Across the Curriculum” effort at UNO that promotes excellence in oral communication for all students and majors. The school will be naming a coordinator for the center who will work with Dr. Karen Dwyer, the basic speech course program director, in managing the center’s services.

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor
Jennifer Mullins

Contributing Writers
Jeremy Lipschultz
Teresa Lamsam
Dave Ogden
Hugh Reilly
Karen Weber
Sherrie Wilson
New College to be Responsive to Needs of Campus, Community

by Robert Welk, dean, College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media

Effective July 1, 2005, School of Communication students will be enrolled within the new College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media. The new college combines the School of Communication, KVNO/UNO Television and the departments of the College of Fine Arts, including Art and Art History, Music, Theater and Writers' Workshop.

The combination of academic and academic-support units that make up the new college is able to provide students with the essential theoretical and practical knowledge they will need in their chosen disciplines. Through its outreach activities, the college is able to engage its community by providing cultural contributions to the Omaha metropolitan area and the state.

In part, the restructuring of these units is the result of the budget reductions of the previous four years, which totaled about $500,000. This restructuring was not an easy process and took a considerable amount of time to achieve. In fact, the time could have been reduced considerably by simply being mandated, but Chancellor Nancy Belk chose the path of letting the affected units “figure it out,” letting the faculty and staff determine if restructuring was the correct course of action and how best to accomplish it.

It was not easy for the faculty of the Fine Arts College to give up their singular identity in their own college and to take second place in the name of the new college. It was difficult for the staff of KVNO/UNO Television to give up their stand-alone administrative site and become imbedded in the new college. Perhaps the School of Communication came away the best by finding itself in the name of the new college while leaving the obscurity but relative safety and largess of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The faculty and staff of the affected units believe the new administrative structure best achieves the mission of UNO as Nebraska’s metropolitan university, maintains the existing high-quality academic and academic-support programs, and also provides opportunities for innovative collaboration and the sharing and soliciting of resources. The restructured college also provides a more efficient format for collaboration across units and increased flexibility. For example, an interdisciplinary degree program in interactive media will be under discussion in the fall. A second program under review will be a new journalism program in arts criticism. A film program and an inter-college program in software design have also been suggested.

The College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media is united by its conviction that imagination and human communication are inseparable aspects of the same intellectual process. Through traditional and innovative teaching and the use of emerging technologies, the college promotes learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, and service to the profession and to the broader community in all aspects of human communication.

School of Communication degrees will be renamed in the new college with the former Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees becoming Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Bachelor of Science in Communication. Students currently enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences may elect to complete their degrees without moving to the new college. Programs and/or majors do not change, but rather the name changes reflect the movement of the School of Communication from the College of Arts and Sciences to the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media.