Helping Quench the Thirst in Africa

Buey Ruet is using his success in speech forensics competition to focus attention on a national problem in his native Sudan.

Ruet co-founded Aqua-Africa, a nonprofit organization seeking to bring safe water to people in Sudan.

Ruet’s presentation about the shortage of water in his homeland and what he’s doing about it helped the School of Communication’s forensics team to a fifth place in the Interstate Oratory contest. His presentation also placed him among the top 12 persuasive speakers in the nation at the competition, which UNO Forensics Director Abbie Syrek called “the oldest, most prestigious oratory contest in the country.”

“Buey really uses forensics as a means to communicate his thoughts on larger social issues,” said Syrek.

Ruet returned to Sudan this past summer to coordinate the work of Aqua-Africa, his forensics teammates also drew praise from UNO’s interim vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, Sheri Noren Everts, who called their accomplishments “truly remarkable.”
From the Director’s Chair...
by Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, Director, School of Communication

Integrity, A Way of Life for Alumnus John Clark

Integrity. It is a word that gets too little attention these days. To communication alumnus John Clark, integrity was a way of life.

John was a quiet and serious man who lost his more than decade-long battle to cancer and died this summer at age 58. John left behind his wife of 37 years, Joyce, and a wonderful family. He had another family, too — the WOWT newsroom, which he led for 17 years. John followed in the footsteps of legendary news director Steve Murphy, the man who had those reins for 20 years and crafted TV news beginning in 1949.

John was a model for our broadcasting students. While at UNO, he interned at KMTV and landed a job there after impressing news executives, including Dave Hamer, who would later work for John in the WOWT newsroom. John’s first job offer came after a freak accident put UNO alumnus Arlo Grafton on the sidelines. Hamer, a former UNO part-time instructor, and Grafton were on hand at services this summer to remember the life of John Clark.

So was Rose Ann Shannon. She worked with John at KMTV and later battled head-to-head as competing news directors of top-rated Omaha television stations. Rose Ann had nothing but respect for the man who taught her a few things about news. He even did her a favor once by breaking into her locked car — a trick he said he learned at Tech High, where John was a super-sub sixth man on the basketball team.

In the news business, John became the head coach. He cultivated talent and was responsible for hiring many star reporters and anchors over the years. They later landed in large markets such as Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis. John never forgot his UNO roots. He readily accepted Mike Hilt’s requests each semester to speak to our Broadcast Journalism students.

“I could always count on John to give an honest assessment of broadcast journalism. I know that he wanted students to enter the profession with their eyes wide open, and that he wanted them to understand the amount of dedication it would take on their part to succeed in TV news,” said Hilt.

He practiced what he preached. His was a simple philosophy that was explained by WOWT at the time of his death:

“As news director it astonished him that viewers in some surveys are asked if accuracy matters. John believed that if we are not accurate, we are nothing. If he said it once, he said it a thousand times; he’d rather be last and accurate than first and wrong. John was always mindful that many of the stories we do touch people in very personal and sometimes painful ways. He always urged care and caution in those situations.”

Accuracy was John’s highest professional value. In an age when live and breaking stories came to dominate the TV news landscape, WOWT judged the value of a story and the accuracy of its sources.

In 1997, I was lucky enough to spend more than a month in the WOWT newsroom while participating in a faculty development program for journalism professors. Although I have worked and spent time in many newsrooms before and since, John’s approach was truly unique. He granted me full access to the entire station, and he allowed me into management meetings. I remember reviewing consultant data with him and watching as he surveyed a stack of more than 100 applicants for a weather opening.

For me, John’s life is an example for our students and all of us to follow. He was a spiritual, humble and devoted man who indeed lived a life of integrity. The School of Communication will miss John Clark, but we were blessed to have worked with him. Memorials are being accepted in his name at Caring-Bridge.org.

Student Organization News

Ad Club

The UNO School of Communication’s Ad Club participated in the National Student Advertising regional competition April 26 and 27 in Lincoln. The Ad Club finished fourth place in the overall competition and finished second in its presentation, only one-tenth of a point behind second-place Druy University and ahead of Creighton, St. Louis University, Missouri State, Drake and UNL.

Other Ad Club accomplishments include:

- Abbey Schindler and Kate Sypal were awarded $1,500 scholarships from the Omaha Federation of Advertising.
- Melanie Schreiber, Stacie Nelson, Kim O’Connor and Greg Cabrera earned a Pinnacle Award from the American Marketing Association for their work on “Luxe Pet Boutique,” an ad campaign for an Omaha pet boutique.
- The Ad Club co-sponsored (with the Society of Professional Journalists and the Public Relations Student Society of America) a political forum called “Good, Bad & the Ugly.” The forum was a review of the 2006 U.S. Senate election campaigns by challenger Pete Ricketts and incumbent Ben Nelson.
- The Ad Club also co-sponsored “Lights, Camera, Career,” a career workshop, which was attended by representatives from 15 communication agencies, including public relations firms and departments, TV stations and various publications.
- Twelve Ad Club members attended “Meet the Pros” conference in February 2007. The two-day conference was sponsored by the Omaha Federation of Advertising. “Meet The Pros” provided...
Faculty Recognized for Teaching, Scholarship

Three School of Communication faculty members received awards at UNO’s 17th annual Faculty Honors Convocation in April.

Dr. Bruce Johansen was recognized as the Kayser Professor, while Dr. Dave Ogden received the Service-Learning Faculty Award and Dr. Barb Pickering received the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media Alumni Teaching Award.

Dr. Johansen has written 27 books, ranging from studies of Native American issues and environmental concerns to histories of World War II and Latino culture (see story on page 10). Johansen was named the Reilly Professor in 1996.

Dr. Ogden, an associate professor, received his award as a result of work with nonprofit agencies through the Principles of Public Relations class. Ogden’s students have developed public relations plans for more than 50 nonprofit organizations during the past few years.

Dr. Pickering, also an associate professor, was recognized for her commitment to classroom teaching.

“She succeeds by setting high standards of excellence for her students and herself,” School Director Jeremy Lipschultz wrote. “By using this clear philosophy, Dr. Pickering motivates students to do their best.”

UNO noted Dr. Pickering for her work with the Civic Participation Project and Debate Watch, which attracted significant student participation and local media attention.

Since the inception of the alumni teaching awards in the 1990s, seven School of Communication faculty members have won the prestigious award. Additionally, four Communication faculty members have won UNO’s campus teaching award, and one has been recognized with the University of Nebraska system award. Last year, the School of Communication was recognized with a departmental teaching award.

Broadcasting Student Receives Regional Award

School of Communication student Jacob Buckingham became the first UNO student to win the prestigious Jack Shelley Scholarship.

Buckingham received the award at the 2007 conference of the Northwest Broadcast News Association in Minneapolis. Jack Shelley, 95, presented the scholarship to Buckingham.

Shelley, a pioneering broadcast journalist, was news director of WHO Radio and later Television in Des Moines from 1935-1965, and then taught broadcast journalism at Iowa State University for another 17 years. He funds the $1,250 scholarship. Shelley was the third president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association (then the National Association of Radio News Directors) and was the subject of a doctoral dissertation by Dr. Chris Allen, an associate professor in the School of Communication.

Selection committee members praised Buckingham’s application, and NBNA president J. P. Skelley said Buckingham was the clear winner.

Buckingham works part-time as a videographer and editor at WOWT-TV. The Northwest Broadcast News Association is a six-state regional association comprising Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa.
School Struts Its Stuff During Communication Week

When it comes to planning events, UNO’s School of Communication does it well. So well, that on April 19, 2007 the school launched its third annual week long celebration at UNO.

During Communication Week, the School of Communication showcased the nationally recognized work of its students, faculty, alumni and local communication professionals. Student organizations and alumni also presented their award-winning work.

The school began the week with its annual High School Journalism Conference, in which the school presented awards to local high school students for their work on student newspapers, yearbooks and broadcasts. Jane Kirtley, University of Minnesota professor of media ethics and law, also spoke at the conference (see story on page 8).

The school wrapped up Communication Week with its 52nd annual School of Communication Awards Banquet at the W.H. Thompson Alumni Center. The school presented awards to the following alumni and local communication professionals:

- Distinguished Service Award: The UNO East Side Custodial Staff.
- Rising Star Alumni Achievement Award: Julia McConahay, account executive for Bailey Lauerer public relations and marketing in Lincoln.
- Alumni Community Service Award: Howard Marcus, special sections editor at the Omaha World-Herald.
- Communication Achievement Award: Molly Skold, manager of the O! campaign.
- Alumni Achievement Award: Mark Allen, a reality show producer and casting director for ABC-TV (see story on page 11).
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Larry Allan Boersma, wildlife photographer whose work appeared in the movie “The Truth About Cats and Dogs” and in various books and magazines.

At the banquet, the school also recognized its 2007 Scholarship Award winners. They are: Abigail Anson, Rebecca Ann Boyer, Jacob Buckingham, April Burress, Linsey Carsey, Peggy Deaver, Patrick Doty, Katherine Dowd, Jenna Doyle, Laurie Dutcher, Andrea Eischen, Michael Fischer, Heather Mead Garrett, Laura Hall, Joel Hartung, Audrey Klein, Kevin Laurenti, Cassy Loseke, Megan Nanfito, Teresa Oberdorfer, Charley Reed, Buey Ruet, Abbey Schindler, Melanie Schriber, Stacy Seier, Abby Supenski, Kate Sypal, Theresa Thiel, Laura Wapelhorst, Laurie Welch, Alex Wright and Kelsey Zach.

The school gave Outstanding Undergraduate Student Awards to Laura Wapelhorst, Sally Gutschow and Todd Reischl. Jennifer Mullins, Ethan Deas, Kate Rempfer and Glauca Steckelberg received this year’s Outstanding Graduate Student Awards.

Other Communication Week events consisted of PRSSA, Ad Club and persuasion presentations held in the Milo Bail Student Center; forensics presentations held in the Eppley Administration Building; an alumni panel; and a wine and cheese alumni reception held at the Weber Fine Arts Building Art Gallery.
Communication Lauded For Its Academic Excellence

Two new awards displayed in Arts and Sciences Hall remind students what the UNO School of Communication is all about: academic and teaching excellence.

In Fall 2006, the School of Communication was recognized for its academic achievement and quality of teaching when it received the annual Chancellor’s Strategic Planning Award for Academic Excellence and a Departmental Teaching Award at campus ceremonies in the Milo Bail Student Center.

The awards are designed to recognize academic units that exemplify a commitment to furthering UNO’s strategic goals and helping UNO’s diverse student body to reach its potential. The award also recognized the school’s commitment to academic excellence and an active participation with the community and region.

“We are pleased to receive this important recognition, as it represents the highest level of academic excellence demonstrated by students and faculty in the School of Communication,” said Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, School of Communication director.

The School of Communication received this award after submitting a formal application, which included a notebook of accomplishments and letters of support. The application was revised this year following work on the academic program review.

Some of the accomplishments include more than 650 publications of current faculty, development of service-learning and first-year experience courses, collaboration with the Peter Kiewit Institute, and student engagement in the areas of public relations, advertising and broadcasting. The school was also acknowledged for the development of new programs, such as the Speech Center and new media and visual communication programs.

The school was also one of four UNO units recognized for having competed in the NU Teaching Award competition. Chair Emeritus and Professor Dr. Hugh Cowdin said, “I’m really proud of what the whole school has done.”

Dr. Cowdin and the late Vi Whitsett, a Department of Communication secretary, organized the first application for a departmental teaching award more than a decade ago. Founding Director Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell revised later versions of the application, and the department received a nomination for the system award.

“I don’t think, back in 1975 when the Department of Communication was launched, that the late Jack Brilhart and I could have predicted what this school has become,” Dr. Cowdin said.

The awards are displayed in Room 108 of Arts and Sciences Hall.

Campus Community Learns How to Deal with Difficult Issues

In April 2007, CBS canceled “Imus in the Morning” due to a racial and sexual insult made by the radio host Don Imus. This insult and the impact is an example of the effects of poor dialogue choice.

So how should students and faculty deal with difficult dialogues and help put an end to racial and sexual insults and stereotypes?

“We need to listen first and get all the facts, then react second,” said Dr. Cynthia Robinson-Moore, assistant professor in the UNO School of Communication.

Dr. Robinson-Moore was one of 20 UNO faculty, 10 staff and three administrators to participate in a two-year project titled “Breaking Silence: Difficult Dialogues at UNO.” The group attended a week long workshop in May 2006 led by Dr. Steven Littlejohn, a nationally known consultant on difficult dialogues.

The project is being funded by a $100,000 grant from the Ford Foundation as part of a nationwide initiative called “Difficult Dialogues: Promoting Pluralism and Academic Freedom on Campus.” UNO is one of 26 higher education institutions to receive the grant.

“The Difficult Dialogues program dares each of us at UNO to take a risk,” said Dr. Shereen Bingham, School of Communication professor and assistant director. “It invites us to participate in dialogue with others who may think very differently than we do on sensitive and controversial issues, at this moment in history, when our community is divided on issues of race, religion and sexuality. Participating in genuine dialogue on difficult issues requires courage: It opens the possibility of learning something new that might change what we think or who we know ourselves to be.”

After attending the 2006 seminar group members took their knowledge back to UNO. In March 2007, the group

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PRSSA Members Represent School at National Meeting

Two School of Communication students represented UNO at the National Assembly Meeting of the Public Relations Student Society of America in Nashville this past spring.

Abby Supenski and Jaime Ishii said they culled valuable information and ideas that should help them develop a stronger PRSSA chapter at UNO.

"Going to the 2007 PRSSA National Assembly was an amazing experience," Supenski said. "It was interesting to network with other public relations students from across the country. I learned a lot from everyone I met about what works well in their chapters and I heard many ideas on different aspects of PRSSA such as recruiting, professional development and fundraising."

Supenski said the conference also increased her awareness of the opportunities for professional development for students.

Berkshire Hathaway Meeting Subject of DVD

School of Communication faculty and students captured highlights of the 2007 Berkshire Hathaway stockholders meeting in a half-hour television program aired on Omaha’s Cox Channel 17 (The Knowledge Network).

Faculty and students covered the threeday meeting and activities of Berkshire Hathaway CEO and investor Warren Buffett. Some highlights from the program, titled “Three Days in Omaha,” include Buffett enjoying ice cream from Dairy Queen and playing ping pong with Microsoft’s Bill Gates.

The School of Communication is selling copies of the program on DVD. Please visit TheOmahaNews.com. The project was a collaboration with UNO Television and the College of Business Administration.

Communication Alum John Clark Remained Devoted to Alma Mater

John Clark, news director at WOWT-TV in Omaha, died in June after a lengthy illness.

Clark was a 1971 journalism graduate from UNO and received an Alumni Achievement Award from the School of Communication.

“When I think of John Clark, I think of integrity,” said Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, director of the school. “He always said it was better to be accurate than first with a story and be wrong.”

Clark invited Lipschultz to spend some time in his newsroom during the summer in 1997. Lipschultz said Clark was “an extremely professional news director.”

Clark began his broadcast news career as a reporter for KMTV in Omaha following a UNO internship at the station. In 1980, he joined WOWT and became assistant news director and assignment editor in 1984. The station appointed him as news director in 1991.

Clark returned to UNO numerous times over the years to speak to Dr. Mike Hilt’s broadcast journalism students.

“He cared a lot about our students,” said Hilt. “He was unselfish with his time and his knowledge, and he never forgot his alma mater.”

A tribute on the WOWT Web site noted that Clark “was especially proud of the many national and regional awards won by Channel 6 during his tenure, but he most valued the trust that viewers placed in our newscasts night after night, year after year.”
organized a discussion called “What Omaha Do You Live In?: Talking Openly About Race and Identity.” More than 150 participants openly discussed how race affects them.

Other members of the Difficult Dialogues group are using what they learned.

“I have applied many things from the seminar into my classroom. For instance, I used to be quick to give my opinion and very combative on different issues. Now, I listen more, and I’m not so quick to give an opinion until I’ve incorporated all details of the discussion. I listen before I react,” said Dr. Robinson-Moore.

Group members also learned to understand how people construct social realities in communication with others; the moral and values basis of different issues; typical patterns of communication used when encountering contentious, difficult issues and the limitations of these; dialogue as a form of communication that enables constructive exploration of difficult situations; a variety of models for dialogue; how to frame issues and ask questions in a way that makes constructive communication possible; how to facilitate dialogue, especially in the classroom; and how to teach dialogue to students.

“The Difficult Dialogues project at UNO is a great way to get people talking about race issues and to learn how to open up without being afraid. Students will continue to implement what they learn throughout workshops and speakers, and portfolio and resume reviews for more than 300 students from a three-state area.

PRSSA

National honors are becoming commonplace for the UNO School of Communication’s chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America. The chapter took third place in Rowan University’s 2007 National Organ Donor Awareness Competition.

“This is especially impressive because the campaign was launched late in the (spring 2007) semester,” said Karen Weber, PRSSA faculty adviser.

Weber said the campaign was spearheaded by juniors Heather Mead Garrett and Theresa Thiel. “We expect more success from these two talented students,” Weber said.

As part of the campaign, the students sponsored a “Lunch for Life” in which the students provided free sack lunches to UNO students, faculty and staff who showed proof through their driver’s licenses that they were organ donors. The students also registered 35 new donors. The students conducted the campaign in partnership with the Nebraska Organ Donor Retrieval System.

The PRSSA also received extensive publicity for its Kids N’ Kans Carnival in June in Omaha’s Elmwood Park. PRSSA members offered face painting for children, set up a moon bounce and ran a hot dog stand. The chapter raised $400 and collected 215 pounds of food for the Omaha Food Bank. PRSSA has partnered with the local food bank on several service projects this year to raise an additional $500.

The chapter also sponsored a team of students who competed in the annual Bateman National Case Study Competition. The team created a campaign that provided resources for family caregivers and held a health fair at the Christ Child Society in March.

The spring semester marked the debut of Mav Solutions, UNO’s first student-run PR firm. The firm’s first client, the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media, asked the students to create a media plan for the new college. Tactics included a centralized calendar, an electronic newsletter and a new brochure.

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Minnesota Prof: Public’s Right to Know Being Undermined

The U.S. government has created a “culture of secrecy” in the aftermath of 9/11, First Amendment scholar Jane Kirtley told a UNO audience in kicking off Communication Week at UNO last April.

Since the terrorist attacks in 2001, the federal government has argued that secrecy is needed to protect national security and that openness makes the country more vulnerable to further attacks, said Kirtley, Silha professor of media ethics and law in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota. She said, however, that secrecy does not necessarily equal security.

During her presentation, titled “Seduced by Secrecy: How the Public’s Right to Know Has Been Undermined in the Post 9/11 Environment,” Kirtley said no political party has a monopoly on secrecy. Secrecy can become more pronounced under a Republican administration because the GOP tends to be more deferential to the intelligence community, she said. Also, the Bush administration has been in power since 9/11, so the current debate on secrecy has focused on Bush’s policies.

One example Kirtley cited of the lack of government openness involves the implementation of the federal Freedom of Information Act, which is intended to provide access to federal government documents. Lawmakers usually do not place a high priority on revising the FOIA, particularly under presidents who indicate they will veto such changes. Congress did pass amendments to FOIA in 1996 but has not allocated enough money to enforce them, Kirtley said.

Under the Clinton administration, Attorney General Janet Reno issued a memo that emphasized a presumption of openness with federal documents. In October 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft issued a memo that reversed much of the Reno policy on openness, Kirtley said. Ashcroft told federal agencies to consider the privacy and institutional concerns that might arise from disclosure of information.

Recent court decisions involving FOIA have been inconsistent, often resulting in more closure of records, Kirtley said.

Kirtley said.

She also discussed the federal government’s increased efforts in recent years to force journalists to reveal the names of confidential sources or turn over documents relating to leaks of classified information.

The highest profile case involved information leaked about CIA operative Valerie Plame, which led to subpoenas served on journalists Matthew Cooper of Time magazine and Judith Miller of The New York Times. Miller served jail time because of her refusal to reveal her source.

Kirtley was not optimistic about chances for passing a federal shield law, which would protect journalists in such circumstances. She doesn’t see much support for a shield law among lawmakers. If reporters come under attack for not revealing their sources, journalists overall have a harder time gathering information.

Kirtley also fears that the federal government may some day prosecute journalists under espionage laws for revealing what the government considers to be national security information.

Despite the grim picture Kirtley painted concerning government secrecy, she said she tries to remain optimistic but doesn’t see immediate changes.

Kirtley has been at the University of Minnesota since August 1999. Before that, she was executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press for 14 years. She was appointed director of the Silha Center for the Study of Media Ethics and Law in 2000 and was named to the affiliated faculty of the University of Minnesota Law School in 2001.

Kirtley speaks frequently on First Amendment and freedom of information issues, both in the United States and abroad.
Communication Grad Delivers Commencement Address

School of Communication graduate Sally Gutschow delivered the keynote speech at UNO's August commencement. Gutschow, a South Sioux City, Neb. native, received a bachelor of science degree in journalism (with an emphasis in public relations and advertising) and minored in marketing. Here is the full text of her commencement address:

“What would I want to hear at a graduation speech? Not how hard I’ve worked – that’s a given. Not how this is the start of something new – that’s a given. I would want someone to ‘wow’ me, to tell me something I have not thought of before.

Then I started thinking how surreal this commencement experience really is. We’re together here today, sharing the same excitement; but, the differences in our celebrations are infinite.

“Some of us come from a long history of college degrees. Some of us are making family history. Some of us got here with stellar grades. Some of us are breathing a sigh of relief we actually passed that last final. Some of us already have ‘real’ jobs and a pile of work to do on Monday. Some of us are thinking, ‘Oh man, what now’?

“Whoever you are and however you made it to your seat today – Congratulations! Your parents, spouse, children, family, friends, teachers and advisers are proud.

“Do you remember the first time you walked onto campus and thought, ‘I’m a Maverick’!? Neither do I.” So what will you remember about your time here at UNO?

“I’ll remember the first day of the semester, taking notes, following along – just to find out I was in the wrong classroom. I’ll remember the friends I’ve made, especially the ones I met on one of those crazy last-minute road trips. I’ll remember staying up all night studying for the wrong final, then truly understanding the meaning of the phrase ‘wing-it’ the next morning.

“It’s true that planning projects, writing essays, studying for exams and perfecting presentations have landed us here together today. But it’s our experience as Mavericks – the first-rate instructors, the organizations, the leadership opportunities and the professional learning environment - that have really shaped who we are.

“Maybe the road was more curved than straight, and there were probably more mountains than hills to cross. But through all of our trials and error, through all of our highs and lows, we’ve learned to think on our feet, to double check everything and to nurture relationships that will last a lifetime. And most importantly, we’ve learned to trust ourselves. Because no matter how we managed to get things done, we did it. We’re here. And as long as we carry our Maverick Mojo, there is nothing we won’t accomplish!”

Communication Finds Cyberspace a Good Place to Learn

You can learn a lot from an avatar. That’s what faculty and students in the UNO School of Communication are finding out.

An avatar is a person’s online “likeness” or persona, and faculty and students are finding that their “cyber” personalities and relationships with other student cyber representations can teach them a lot about their real-life personalities and relationships.

Dr. Lynnette Leonard, an assistant professor in the school, is using a program, called Second Life. As described on its Web site, Second Life is a “3-D virtual world entirely built and owned by its residents.” According to the site, more than 8 million people now reside in Second Life and some of those residents are UNO students.

To inhabit the world, each student or faculty member develops a personalized avatar to interact with other avatars. A student can design an avatar with a physical appearance that resembles the real-life individual, or the student’s avatar can look completely different.

Leonard teaches computer-mediated communication. Students in her course develop avatars to interact with each other and Second Life residents.

“There tends to be a general feeling that people who interact online or find fulfillment through that channel are odd, disturbed or socially inept,” said Leonard.

On the contrary, said Leonard, people can learn much through online interactions and can use such communications to “confront their own limitations and prejudices.”

Helene Quigley, a graduate student in the school, has been involved with Second Life since 2005. She is studying how educators use “multi-user virtual environments” to create learning experiences for students. Besides helping students and faculty develop their own avatars, Quigley designs

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Cyberspace a Good Place to Learn
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and creates 3-D objects for Second Life, such as buildings, clothing and various shapes and accessories that can be used by virtual residents.

“I have been getting very involved in consulting for companies and institutions interested in developing training sessions, workshops and exhibitions in the virtual world,” she said.

Quigley designed an exhibit for the Second Life’s fourth birthday celebration and will eventually move it to some virtual property she owns.

“I invested in land my first week in Second Life, and now own nearly 17,000 square meters of mainland property,” she said.

Acquiring virtual property may sound far-fetched, but the School of Communication doesn’t think so. Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, director of the school, has developed a virtual classroom in Second Life, where students are gathering for lectures and discussions.

“This is an exciting opportunity for students to use some of the latest computer technology to learn about themselves,” said Lipschultz. “We want students to understand how to use technology to enrich their learning experiences and lives.”

Quigley attests to the positive impact online learning experiences have on her life. “I have met many talented, interesting and creative people from throughout the world, and I consider them mentors and very close friends. I will surely meet many of them in real life someday.”

Johansen’s Work Focuses on Issues ‘That Matter’

“Write about things that matter. Sciences are full of such things, but the journalistic herd is usually writing about how Britney Spears shaved her head,” said Dr. Bruce Johansen, professor at UNO’s School of Communication.

Johansen follows his rules. He has been researching and writing about important environmental matters since he was a journalism student at the University of Washington. His principal topic of environmental interest narrowed to global warming in the 1980s, and he started actively investigating the topic in the late 1990s, which was still before most people had heard of global warming.

“Global warming has a substantial political dimension because interpretation of the science shapes how everyone on Earth will produce and use energy in the future,” said Johansen.

Johansen has written 27 books and has two more under contract. One of his books, The Global Warming Desk Reference, was published in 2001. In 2006, Johansen’s three-volume “Global Warming in the 21st Century” was published by Praeger. His latest book, which was published this year, focuses on U.S. government efforts to squelch scientific findings related to global warming and other issues. The book is titled “Silenced: Academic Freedom, Scientific Inquiry, and the First Amendment Under Siege in America.”

Johansen has also written about environmental issues in national magazines, like The Progressive, and newspapers including the Omaha World-Herald, The Washington Post and Wall Street Journal.

“I am not a scientist by training. My effort has been to help explain the scientific work to other people, as a writer, which is what I teach,” said Johansen.

Johansen enlists the help of several scientists to critique his work for accuracy. One of his best relationships is with James E. Hansen, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City. Hansen was raised in Denison, Iowa, and has been critiquing Johansen’s work, along with his colleagues, since 1999.

Johansen is among a circle of people, many of whom are scientists, to whom Hansen sends drafts of his work. Recently, Johansen defended Hansen in a letter to the editor of The Wall Street Journal after the newspaper attacked Hansen in an editorial.

Johansen’s other books focus on Native American studies, Latino history and toxic chemicals. He published his own book about the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in the Philippines, which was recently referenced in Ken Burns’ documentary “The War.” The internment camp is of special interest to him since his wife’s family was held there during World War II.

Johansen continues to report on issues that matter from a number of locations around the world. He has visited the Arctic and lectured at universities in Europe.

When asked about his career highlights Johansen said, “I’ve enjoyed being part of a school that is full of good people and has been for many years, and I’ve enjoyed continuing to develop as a teacher.”
Communication Alum Living His Dream: Reality Shows

For most UNO students, becoming the producer of a top reality television show is a dream. But for UNO alumnus Mark Allen, the dream is reality.

Graduating from UNO in 1987 with a degree in journalism and an emphasis in public relations, Allen worked through college as Omaha Mayor Mike Boyle’s media assistant.

Like many UNO students, Allen was married and worked full time while attending school and never imagined he’d someday be working for ABC.

“Growing up in small town Iowa, I always felt like there were other people who were more talented, gifted and maybe ‘chosen’ for the dream jobs. Now I know it was me. And it’s all of us...no matter who we are or where we are from,” said Allen.

After graduating from UNO, Allen worked as the employee communications manager at First Data Corp. for six years and then as the corporate communications manager at Oriental Trading Co.

Now Allen works in Los Angeles in unscripted television. He has worked on such shows as “Extreme Makeover Wedding Edition,” “The Real Gilligan’s Island,” and “The Bachelorette” and was most recently the supervising producer on “Supernanny.”

One of Allen’s most memorable and humorous experiences in unscripted television was while shooting the “Extreme Makeover Wedding Edition” for ABC. Liza Minnelli was lined up as a surprise singer for the bride and groom and was told not to practice before the wedding. While setting up the ceremony, Allen suddenly heard, “Start spreadin’ the news,” from the other side of the grounds; he raced over to tell Liza to stop.

“Suddenly, I realized I just told Liza Minnelli to stop singing,” said Allen.

Allen has other great memories from his work as well. He interviewed the candidates on “The Bachelorette” and watched as Trista met each of them for the first time. During the filming of “The Real Gilligan’s Island” near Cancun, Allen and his crew had to evacuate the island because of an approaching hurricane. He admits there were some great off-camera moments he wishes they had on tape, but the camera crew refused to shoot due to the storm.

Even though Allen has many amazing stories, one of his proudest moments was back in Omaha when he gave away hundreds of toys to children through an organization called Citizens for Equal Protection.

“So many times over the past 20 years I have paused and thought ‘There’s no where on this planet I’d rather be right now, than right here.’ Everyone deserves to feel that way in their job, no matter what it is,” said Allen.

Allen’s last project was as the supervising producer for an NBC prime-time reality dating show. He wrapped up the show in July 2007 and finally has time for a break.

“And right now, I like it that way,” said Allen.

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James Ressegieu (BS, ’71, MA, ’78)

Jim finished seminary and is a pastor at a church in Essex, Iowa.

Kathy Cox Schwartz (BS, ’06)

Kathy spent part of her last semester at UNO in India. She spent 11 days there as part of the UNO/InfoUSA Spring Break Tour. She visited Delhi, Calcutta, Kharagpur, Bangalore and Agra.

Kathy Tewhill (MA, ‘03)

Kathy has taught full time in Creighton University’s Department of Journalism and Mass Communication during the 2006 - 2007 and 2007 - 2008 school years.

Wendy Townley (BS, ’02)

Wendy is the assistant director of University Relations at UNO. She will manage media relations for the university. Wendy has worked as a public affairs specialist for Cox Communications, as well an account executive for Leslie Kline Lukas & Associates, a local public relations firm. She is also a board member of the Omaha Press Club and the Nebraska chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

Lunch with Korean Journalists

UNO journalism students April Burress and Chantel Crockett learned about how their professional craft is practiced in Korea.

The School of Communication students had lunch with six South Korean journalists as part of UNO’s Korea-United States Journalists Exchange. The program, sponsored by UNO’s International Professional Development Program, gave the Korean journalists an opportunity to meet with UNO faculty and students, state and community leaders and local journalists and to learn more about social and cultural trends in the U.S.
Founders' Club Continues to Help Student Organizations

The UNO School of Communication is enlisting the support of alumni to help fund various student organization activities. The school created The Founders' Club last year to provide external support to assist communication students who travel to regional and national conferences to give presentations or learn about their professions.

"We called it the Founders' Club because the $10 contribution forms the foundation for a long-term development effort," said Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz, director of the school. "Founders will be asked to add a dollar each year to their investment in the future of our programs."

Lipschultz said alumni and friends may become a member of the Founders' Club by donating at least $11 to the school's Communication Excellence Fund during 2007.

The School of Communication Development Committee has established a needs list and goals that include establishment of an endowment to fund activities of excellence, a building to house the School of Communication, UNO Television and KVNO-FM, and support for faculty development.

Lipschultz said those wishing to donate can do so online. To donate to the School of Communication, log onto http://communication.unomaha.edu and click on "Alumni Giving."

CHILL OUT! at UNO's Alumni Night on the Ice!

Saturday, January 12, 2008
UNO vs. Miami (Ohio)

Designated Seating for School of Communication Alumni! See flyer inside for details!

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