Hall of Fame Inductee
Peter Rogers:
Bright Lights and Fond Memories

What started as a knack for the visual at Hattiesburg’s Fine Brothers Matison department store, led Rogers to a degree from USM and an advertising career like no other. See details inside, Page 7

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A publication of the University of Southern Mississippi School of Mass Communication and Journalism
From the Director:

Amazing alumni (and alumni-to-be) cited by ACEJMC

As you’ll be able to tell from reading this edition of the MCJ Journal, this has been a busy year here in the School of Mass Communication and Journalism. The annual symposium in November was definitely a highlight, as nearly a dozen of the university’s advertising and public relations graduates returned for a remarkable symposium and hall of fame induction ceremony.

You’ll also see in this edition that there is reason to believe that our program will continue to produce amazing graduates. Just a few examples:

• MCJ students documented the biggest event to hit Hattiesburg since Hurricane Katrina. ABC-TV’s “Extreme Home Makeover: Home Edition” came to town, and our broadcasting and media production students produced the “behind-the-scenes” documentary that was shown to more than 1,000 volunteers who gathered at the Hattiesburg Convention Center on the night the program aired. Public relations students also provided daily updates on the project’s enormously popular blog as the show was in production.

• Two of our photojournalism students, inspired by the visiting professionals who have been conducting the Southern Mississippi Photojournalism Project, headed for Haiti in the days after the earthquake to document the experience.

Another major accomplishment this year was the hiring of Stan Sanders as director of the new Student Media Center. Sanders joined us after an impressive career as a broadcast journalist, including more than 10 years as news director at the NBC-TV affiliate in Columbus, Ohio. The Student Media Center will eventually be a physical facility, and the school’s faculty has spent several years developing a strategic plan and examining the school’s curricular and extra-curricular offerings, we felt well prepared for the site visit.

The site team’s report was highly complementary of the school’s faculty and students. The team was also impressed with the success of the school’s alumni. Their report’s most critical remarks were related to the school’s woeful facilities. Those of you who have been on campus in the last few years would likely concur that the school is operating in less than ideal conditions; indeed, I’ve had the opportunity to tour our facilities with graduates from the 1950s and 1960s who are always surprised (and sometimes a little horrified) to see that The Student Printz office remains in the still dingy basement of Southern Hall.

The site team agreed that the school’s strategic plan – which calls for dramatically improved facilities and the creation of an independent school of mass communication outside of the College of Arts and Letters – is ambitious but appropriate. The visitors agreed with the school’s faculty, which believes that our program has potential to attract and serve the very best journalism and mass communication students from Mississippi and, really, from across the world.

How alumni can help

Our long-term challenge will be to provide students with suitable facilities and equipment. But because many of our students are coming from difficult economic circumstances (and many are the first from their families to attend college), our more immediate need is to find new ways to provide promising students with the resources they need to complete their education.

This kind of support is especially important in mass communication and journalism, where we realize that students need to spend time outside of the classroom – doing internships, working at the Student Printz, WUSM-FM or at our student-run advertising and PR agency – if they’re going to be able to successfully enter careers.

The university administration is taking the ACEJMC team’s report to heart, and I have reason to believe that we will be in improved facilities in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile, I believe the most important thing we can do for the program’s future is to build our scholarship endowments so that promising, talented students will have the financial support they need to prepare for their careers.

Many of you have created and contributed to our various scholarship endowments, and I hope you know how much our students and faculty appreciate your support. I realize that we’re in difficult economic times, but for those of you who are in a position to help, please know that your help is much needed and much appreciated. If you’d like more information about how you can help, please let me know.

Many thanks for your support of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism.

-- Chris Campbell, Director
School of Mass Communication and Journalism

ACEJMC re-accreditation

The strategic plan designed by the faculty was central to our discussions as we faced our biggest task of the year, the creation of an extensive self-study in preparation for a site visit from the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. ACEJMC-accredited programs go through this process every six years. The site visit team, which spent three days on campus in November, was led by Dr. Judy Turk, director of the School of Journalism at Virginia Commonwealth University, and included Dr. Joe Foote, dean of the Gaylord College at the University of Oklahoma, Dr. Charlyne Berens, interim dean of the College of Communication at the University of Nebraska, and Rose Jackson Flenorl, manager of social responsibility at FedEx.

I’m pleased to report that the site team recommended the school for full re-accreditation. The team found the school in compliance with eight of nine standards; we were found out of compliance only with the standard related to resources, budget and facilities. The ACEJMC accrediting committee concurred with the site team at its meeting in March, and the full council was to make the final decision in early May.

The rigorous self-study process required by ACEJMC forced us to take a very close look at how we go about the business of preparing students for careers in mass communication and journalism. Because the school’s faculty had spent several years developing a strategic plan and examining the school’s curricular and extra-curricular offerings, we felt well prepared for the site visit.

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-- Chris Campbell, Director
School of Mass Communication and Journalism

Dr. Chris Campbell,
Director
MCJ alums aid Saints’ historic victory

By David Tisdale  
USM Office of University Communications

Professional sports and mass media go hand in hand, and University of Southern Mississippi alums figured prominently in both on Sunday, Jan. 24, 2010, when the New Orleans Saints triumphed over the Minnesota Vikings during the National Football Conference championship at the Louisiana Superdome.

They included Vikings quarterback Brett Favre, a record-setting quarterback at Southern Miss from 1987-1990; New Orleans Saints Assistant Athletic Trainer Ken Mangum; award-winning newspaper photographers Tim Isbell of the Biloxi Sun Herald, Ted Jackson of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, and Jerry Holt of the Minneapolis Star-Tribune; and WDSU News Anchor Scott Walker.

Billed by some as the “Super Bowl before the Super Bowl,” the New Orleans game garnered widespread attention because of Favre’s stellar performance this year and the Saints’ record-breaking season in pursuit of their first Super Bowl berth.

“This weekend is going to be absolutely nuts, as crazy at it has ever been for a Saints game,” said Walker prior to the game. “It’s a moment that so many fans of the team have waited for, and some have died waiting for. The Saints mean a lot to this city, and to have them make it this far is really special.”

A Metairie, La. native who graduated from Southern Miss in 1997 and received the Outstanding Senior in Broadcast Journalism award, Walker worked the pre-game show for WDSU. Another New Orleans television icon, Sally-Ann Roberts of WWL-TV, is a Southern Miss alumna and a member of the university’s Alumni Hall of Fame.

Walker recently moved back to the Crescent City after working in Orlando, Fla. and said the Saints’ success has meant a lot to a city that has needed some good news in the nearly five years since Hurricane Katrina caused massive flooding and destruction.

He’s also proud to share the same alma mater with Favre, and marvels at the Kihn, Miss. native’s storied career. “He goes down in my mind as the greatest to ever play the position,” Walker said.

“It’s amazing to think of how many years he’s played at such a high level, how many games he has gone without missing a start, and during that time so many quarterbacks have come and gone in the NFL. It’s mind-boggling. His longevity and athleticism is a real testament to his commitment.”

Favorite son

Favre led the Golden Eagles to three winning seasons and two bowls during his years as a Southern Miss gridiron star, including upset victories over nationally ranked Florida State University, University of Alabama and Auburn University. He has played 19 seasons in the National Football League, mostly with the Green Bay Packers and also with the Atlanta Falcons and New York Jets.

He was in familiar territory at the Superdome, where he led the Golden Eagles to victories over Tulane University, and the Green Bay Packers to a win over the New England Patriots in the 1997 Super Bowl. His record against the Saints is 3-2, all while he was with the Packers.

“Obviously having Brett Favre as perhaps the most successful quarterback in the history of the National Football League as a Southern Miss alumnus is quite significant,” said the university’s Interim Vice President for Advancement Bob Pierce. “Having him compete for the NFC championship a fourth time roughly 100 miles from the hometown of his alma mater raises the level of excitement even further.

“And what’s good for Brett Favre is good for Southern Miss.”

Picture perfect

Isbell and Jackson, both members of the Southern Miss School of Mass Communication and Journalism Hall of Fame, were part of their newspapers’ Pulitzer Prize-winning news teams that covered the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf South. Both understood the game’s impact and how many local fans were frustrated at having to choose between the Saints and Favre’s Vikings.

Jackson described New Orleans as “giddy” with excitement about the January game, but noted that there were a lot of Saints fans who also love Brett.

On Friday, Jan. 22, as he was getting photos of the pre-game preparation at Superdome, he overheard a member of the crew painting the NFC Championship logo at midfield say “I just can’t help it, I’m a Brett Favre fan and I want him to win,” which Jackson said earned him immediate derision from his co-workers.

A big Favre fan himself, Jackson said he still planned to pull for the Saints because they’ve never been to the Super Bowl and No.4 already has a championship ring. Plus, he wanted to go to Miami.

“I get to go as far as the Saints go, so I’ve already got my ticket and my hotel room booked and, doggone it, I want to go to the Super Bowl,” he said.

“But win or lose, Sunday night is going to be fun.”

Isbell said the game is the matchup he was hoping for, and he was at the Superdome covering this city, and to have them make it this far is really special.”

Jim Coll and Jerry Defatta were among many of the MCJ family to play a role of some kind in the Saints’ historic Championship game. (Photo by David Tisdale)
the game along with Jackson and Holt. He said many fans along the coast were split in their support for the two teams, with some saying they were pulling for Favre to have a good game but for the Saints to emerge the victors.

“It’s funny how some say they’re for Favre, but don’t mention the Vikings,” he said.

Lovable losers flirting with greatness

Mangum, who worked as a student athletic trainer at Southern Miss, joined the Saints staff in 1981. Like Walker, he understands what the team means to the city and its long-suffering fans, especially with the kind of success it has enjoyed this year after many losing seasons.

“Everyone wants to see an underdog do something special, and I think we’ve picked up a lot more fans along the way because of that,” he said.

In 2006, the Saints fell to the Chicago Bears 39-14 in the NFC Championship at Soldier Field in Chicago. With this year’s championship at the Superdome, Mangum said hopes abound that the home field advantage would make a difference.

“It’s going to be electrifying, maybe even more exciting than that first game back in the Superdome in 2006 against the (Atlanta) Falcons,” Mangum said prior to the Saints’ win.

Mangum is also a fan of Favre, whom he met in 1997 when the Packers used the Saints facilities to prepare for the Super Bowl against the Patriots. “He’s incredible, that’s the best word to use. He’s a great person and one of the most competitive athletes I’ve ever seen. I’ve followed him his whole career, and if we don’t make it I’ll cheer him on in the Super Bowl.”

Tim Finnigan of Satsuma, Ala., a Southern Miss senior broadcast journalism major, spent the summer of his sophomore year with the Saints as a media intern when the team held training camp in Jackson, Miss. There he got to know many of the players and came away impressed by their commitment to bring a winner to New Orleans.

“It’s really great to see them succeed, especially when you consider there are a lot of undrafted free agents and lower-round draft picks on that team, guys who really didn’t get a close look from a lot of teams who have since proven they belong. I feel really blessed to have had a chance to interact with them.”

Adored in Minneapolis, Mississippi

Jerry Holt, a native of Cleveland, Miss. graduated from Southern Miss in 1984 after a stint in the Marine Corp. He has worked for the Star-Tribune for 19 years, and before the game he traveled to Kiln, Miss. working on a multi-media piece on Favre’s hometown. He reflected on the impact the former Golden Eagle has made in Minnesota as he watched a new sign erected with the caption “Kiln, Miss. Home of Brett Favre.”

“It’s just all Brett Favre, all the time,” Holt said. “He’s electrified the fan base of the Vikings.”

Favre has been what Holt jokingly calls a “one-man stimulus package” for the press in the Twin Cities area, helping increase sales of newspapers and advertising for local media, thanks to the rabid Vikings fans who want to know the latest about their team and its superstar quarterback.

The day Favre signed with the Vikings, the Star-Tribune received more than two million hits on its Web site. “People can’t get enough of him,” Holt said.

He has a strong sense of pride in his fellow Southern Miss alum, but understands how many in the area are torn in their allegiance between the “Kiln Cannon” and their beloved Saints.

“The attitude down here among a lot of people on the Gulf Coast is that regardless of who comes out on top, it’s a win-win situation for the area,” he said. “Whoever wins, they’ll cheer them on in the Super Bowl.”

Saunders Speaks to PR Class

University of Southern Mississippi President Martha Saunders is shown here presenting a guest lecture to mass communication and journalism associate professor Dr. Jae-Hwa Shin’s public relations theory class on the university’s Hattiesburg campus Oct. 21. Dr. Saunders’ training and experience in the field of communication has led to numerous publications on crisis communication and public relations; widely anthologized published speeches; and the Public Relations Society of America’s highest national award for the “Just 2 It!” public safety communication campaign. (Southern Miss photo by David Tisdale).
Students are ‘Extreme’ volunteers

By Lisa Parker

When ABC Television’s Emmy award-winning hit TV show “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” drove its famous bus into Hattiesburg on December 3, 2009, Southern Miss students were armed and ready to cover the week-long construction of a Hattiesburg family’s new home.

More than 40 students from the university’s School of Mass Communication and Journalism volunteered as members of the student media team, covering three shifts every day for a week and reporting progress on the blog of the “Extreme Hattiesburg” website.

“What we needed was for the website to really reflect the interest of [the community],” said Cliff Brown, media coordinator for the project. “We wanted to give [the people] a sense of what it was like as if they were there.”

And that they did.

The students worked in shifts from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. with teams of three to five people, documenting every step of the process and proving the show’s theme, “The Spirit That Builds.”

“They spoke with volunteers, toured the area, and interviewed visitors such as Mayor Johnny DuPree and Congressman Gene Taylor.”

“Working behind the scenes really put the entertainment world into a new perspective for me,” said Southern Miss graduate student and Ocean Springs native Kyle Neaves, who was a member of the student media team. “We were able to have a hands-on look at how the process of disseminating information to particularly broad parties works. Seeing how things were put together, piece by piece, and how every staff member had a particular function was very enlightening.”

“I was really pleased, really impressed with the students’ writing ability and social skills,” Brown said. “We were all in new territory [in working with this show] and everybody rose to the occasion. Everything was excellent.”

Brown, who leads Cliff Brown Advertising in Hattiesburg, collaborated with Hattiesburg’s Rick Bice of Bice Advertising to build the website. While Bice built and maintained the website, Brown and the students were in charge of the content.

“Working on Extreme Makeover turned USM students into ‘real’ working professionals,” said USM’s assistant professor of broadcast journalism Dr. Mary Lou Sheffer, who was also on site during the week. “Students gained valuable first-hand knowledge - lessons that give them an enormous edge over their competition.”

A small team of Sheffer’s broadcast journalism students were chosen to produce a 45-minute video of their own that documented the experience.

Broadcast journalism major Beth Alexander was a member of the team.

“We tried to cover what you might not have seen in the episode ABC produced,” Alexander said of the video. “For instance, I had two stories: one was about the food and sponsors, [who fed] hundreds of people everyday for 6 days. There were approximately 2,000 cups of coffee consumed everyday!”

Other aspects of the team’s production covered the Heathcock’s family and friends, the food and toy drives that went on during the week, the shuttle drivers and security teams who constantly patrolled the area. The team interviewed individuals such as Congressman Gene Taylor, who visited the site and helped with the work on the house, as well as a woman from Pearl who was a past recipient of an “extreme home” and drove to Hattiesburg to pay forward the kindness she had received.

“Being part of the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition project has been one of the highlights of my college experience,” said Alexander. “Soon after we started filming I realized what a massive effort was put into the show…and learned a lot through the experience.”

Despite cold and rainy weather, the project was a success and completed in seven days. The students were there to chant “Move that bus!” as they witnessed the unveiling of the new home.

The website and the student blog was a success as well, garnering a total of 28,533 visits between November 16 and December 7, 2009.

“It was beyond my expectations,” said Brown. “It was a once in a lifetime opportunity for us all, and I can’t wait to see it!”

The show aired on Sunday, March 21. For more information, or to view the student blog, visit www.extremehattiesburg.com.

The Emmy award winning reality program “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,” now in its 7th season, is produced by Endemol USA, a division of Endemol Holding.

Its executive-producer is Anthony Dominici. David Goldberg is Chairman, Endemol North America. The show airs Sundays from 7-8 p.m., Central Time on ABC.

The home, which belongs to Sherman and Gina Heathcock of Hattiesburg, is the first National Association of Home Builders Green Certified home to be built in Hattiesburg. The key builder of the home was AAA Homes of MS.
The School of Mass Communication and Journalism held its annual symposium and Hall of Fame induction on Nov. 20 on the Southern Miss campus in Hattiesburg.

This year’s event, titled “Universal. Strategic. Modern. Southern Miss’s Leadership and Legacy in Advertising and Public Relations,” honored several professionals – both locally and nationally known – who have had distinguished careers in advertising and public relations since their time at Southern Miss.

“The Hall of Fame was created in spring 2006 to give the School of Mass Communication and Journalism a way of recognizing its many distinguished graduates, as well as other Mississippians who have contributed to the school or to mass communication and journalism in the state,” said Dr. Chris Campbell, director of the school.

In addition to the symposium and induction, the school hosted a career and internship fair for students on Nov. 19. The event was part of a full day dedicated to mass communication and offered students the opportunity to meet local professionals and explore internship and job opportunities.

“We want our students to succeed and do great things once they leave Southern Miss,” Campbell said. “It’s a great opportunity for them to network and make connections with professionals in the area, and at the same time the businesses benefit because the students are so eager and willing to work and find internships.”

The symposium was divided into three parts: A morning session, which featured discussions with each of the graduates about their work and careers; the Hall of Fame induction luncheon; and an afternoon session, which consisted of various round table discussions and question-and-answer panels between the students and inductees.

Proceeds were donated to the Barbara Shoemake and Robert Gene Wiggins endowments, which are named for two prominent former USM faculty members and support scholarships and fellowships for deserving students in the School of Mass Communication and Journalism.

The 2009 MCJ Hall of Fame inductees included:

• Rick and Beth Bice, ’78 and ’77, who established Bice Advertising, Inc., in 1978 as fresh Southern Miss graduates aiming to provide creative advertising, graphic design and multimedia for

See Honorees, Page 9
Hall of Fame Honoree Peter Rogers: “I Try to Make Every Day a Fond Memory”

By Lisa Parker

It’s been more than fifty years since Southern Miss alum Peter Rogers ('57) packed up and moved to the big city, leaving his hometown of Hattiesburg behind for the dazzling lights of New York City. He quickly went from working as a runner for $40 a week to creating multi-million dollar advertising campaigns, all the while living in a large penthouse in the city and mingling with the famous.

A life of success and prestige hasn’t worn away his appreciation for his hometown, though, as he somehow found the time to do a phone interview with an alumni newsletter at his alma mater.

Rogers is among the elite in American advertising, having penned smart one-liners for Vidal Sassoon, Pierre Cardin, Arnold Scaasi, and Blackglama American Legend Mink. He’s worked with some of Hollywood’s biggest stars, including Judy Garland, Rita Hayworth and Lauren Bacall, to name a few.

Most recently, however, he was one of twelve Southern Miss alumni inducted into the MCJ Hall of Fame on Nov. 20, 2009.

Born and raised in Hattiesburg, Rogers worked for Fine Bros. Matision Co., a local department store, doing window displays and advertising to pay his tuition to the University of Southern Mississippi. His natural artistic talent and a knack for visuals and design made it clear early on that he was headed elsewhere.

“They said when I left Baptist hospital [after I was born] I screamed ‘New York! New York!’ before I ever said ‘mother’ and ‘father,’” Rogers says. Even over the phone, his beaming smile is evident. “There was never a question of where I was going to end up.”

Rogers came to Southern Miss as a student in 1953 and joined Kappa Alpha Fraternity. He graduated in 1957 with his Bachelor’s degree in art. “I wanted to be a painter,” Rogers says. “[I was fond of] Augustus John, the English portrait painter.”

It was while at USM that he met Charles Thomas, a former fraternity brother who lives in Hattiesburg but remains one of Rogers’ closest friends.

“He was always a movie buff,” says Thomas. “He loved movies and famous people – he always intended on being in that circle. [New York] was always his ambition.”

After graduating from USM, Rogers volunteered for the draft and served in the United States Army in Germany for two years. Almost immediately after his return, former employer Milton Fine made a call and arranged a job at the company’s buying office in New York City. Rogers was in New York a week later.

He later worked as a runner for a pharmaceutical advertising company, and within a week he received a call about an opening doing traffic at an advertising agency. That agency was Warwick and Legler, located on Park Avenue.

“I got there and I was standing in front of the Seagram building on Park Avenue,” Rogers says. “I looked up and that’s when I knew – I had arrived.”

Eventually, he became the art director at the Trahey Advertising Agency, and after ten years he bought the agency and renamed it Peter Rogers Associates.

The agency flourished under Rogers, yet he was incredibly selective about his clients. At one point his clientele totaled just 31 accounts.

“I’m not interested in doing mass-market products,” he once said in an interview. “I like to pursue the jewels. My clients are personal to me.”

This comes from a man who once fired Gucci, if only because the company wanted its products photographed in a way he didn’t much care for.

Rogers became known for his methods of pairing powerful images with sharp one-liners. His work for Danskins resulted in the phrase, “Danskins are not just for dancing”; for Bottega Veneta leather goods, it was “When your own initials are enough”; and for Blackglama, “What becomes a legend most?”

The Blackglama ads featured 40 unidentified celebrities in artistic, mysterious poses and wrapped in the company’s glamorous $8,000 mink coats. In the late 1970’s, a book titled “What Becomes a Legend Most? The Blackglama Story” was published as a collection of the ads from the campaign and included his comments.

“My ads became my art,” says Rogers. “I think my work was quite unusual and classic.”

Self-described as a fun-loving individual who just likes to have a good time, Rogers is quick to note that he has a serious side.

“I was very serious about my work,” he says. “I work hard to play hard, but I never worked overtime. I worked while everyone was at lunch.”

Hard work obviously paid off, especially that one day when a certain Vidal Sassoon came calling.

“The advertising manager [for Vidal Sassoon] called me and said, ‘I hear you write the best one-liners in town,’” then asked me [to work on a campaign]. So we flew to New Orleans where Vidal was having a seminar and pitched the idea.”

Sassoon loved Rogers’ idea and hired him on the spot. It was a $4 million account and tripled Sassoon’s business overnight. And the slogan? “If you don’t look good, we don’t look good.”

Just then, I can hear a boisterous, high-pitched bark coming from the background.

“That’s my dog, Lydia Louise,” he says. “She’s ready for her walk.”

“I love walking. That’s why I love New Orleans, because I can walk or take a cab everywhere,” he says. “I like walking around and looking at nice houses. It’s very nice here.”

I ask about his recent trip back to Hattiesburg for his Hall of Fame induction, and his voice grows quiet as he turns somewhat serious.

“It really was an honor to come back,” he says. “It was a challenge, though, because I can’t stand to sit and talk about myself in a room full of people.”

Peter Rogers’ stories of glitz and glamour and working with Hollywood’s finest are captivating and intriguing, yet when I ask he can’t seem to choose just one to call his fondest memory.

“I try to make every day a fond memory,” he says. Sounds like another classic Rogers one-liner.
Symposium Keynote Speech:

Martin: ‘The Road to the Real Thing’

Editor’s Note: Mart Martin, Class of ’78, was inducted into the MCJ Hall of Fame during an induction luncheon at the annual MCJ Symposium. He delivered the keynote address at the luncheon, which follows:

It’s an honor to be here today. When I asked Chris what I should speak about, he suggested I tell you about my 20 years at The Coca-Cola Company. So what I hope to do is to answer the two questions that I’m most often asked: Was New Coke planned? and How in the world did you get that job? The answer to the second question was quite a journey, so I’m calling this “The Road to the Real Thing.”

The road actually started here in my hometown at Hattiesburg High School, where I was involved with the school yearbook and newspaper, and served as president of the Key Club. One day after giving a club report at a meeting of the Kiwanis Club, our sponsor, I was approached by the owner of a local radio station who invited me to audition. I soon found myself a 17-year-old with his own radio show, which gave me the opportunity to learn the radio business.

The next year I enrolled at Southern Miss and continued my involvement with school publications. As far as a major, I had always assumed I was going to go into art, but then someone pointed out that artists make like $1.75 a week so I decided to look for something a little more lucrative and discovered Advertising. For my final campaign, I created a plan they sponsored, Mississippi Special Olympics accounts executive and learned to pitch business and service accounts. One of its clients was Louisiana Special Olympics. They had been awarded the 1983 International Summer Special Olympics Games and were looking for a director of public relations. Suddenly, I found myself living in Baton Rouge, in that role, having achieved my goal in just two years.

The reality is, I didn’t have much experience. But I coupled what I had learned in school with some basic gut instincts and put together a successful campaign that drew more than 1,000 media and helped fill Tiger Stadium with 70,000 cheering fans for the opening ceremony. To this day, that remains one of the best moments of my life. And, of course, always in the back of my mind was the fact that Coke was a sponsor.

Baton Rouge had been so successful in staging Special Olympics that it won the rights to host the 1985 National Sports Festival, an event where current and future Olympic athletes would come together to compete in non-Olympic years (and, yes, Coke was a sponsor). I stayed on with the local organizing committee as Director of Public Relations and Media, and had the opportunity to work with fledgling network called ESPN on its first broadcast of a multi-sports event.

My clearest memory of that time was not the stellar performances by well-known U.S. athletes, but the day I heard on the radio that Coke was changing its formula. “What are they doing?” I remember thinking. Naturally, I was certain that I could be of service to The Coca-Cola Company. So I used my contacts to get an interview in Atlanta and was offered a six-week contract that turned into four years as a full-time PR consultant. (By the way, the answer to the first question, Was New Coke planned? is no. As company president Don Keough said, “The truth is we are not that dumb, and we are not smart.”)

Those consulting years included a stint as a loaned executive to Special Olympics International headquarters in Washington, D.C. where I lived near one dome (the Capitol) and traveled back and forth to another – the gold dome of Notre Dame, host of the 1987 International Summer Special Olympics Games.

I returned to Atlanta after those Games to help coordinate Coke’s sponsorship of music video dance parties, and after paying my dues doing that for two years, finally, in December 1989, I became a card-carrying member of the Coca-Cola family and stayed for sixteen more years.

It was quite a ride. I had the opportunity to work on a number of Olympic Games, Super Bowls, the 1994 World Cup, the NBA and NASCAR. I was a spokesperson for the world’s best-known brand. I also worked on Biloxi-born Barq’s Root Beer, which was special for a “hometown boy,” and even earned my own Hip-Hop name – “M.M. Master PR” – during my years publicizing Sprite.

Like most jobs, it wasn’t all fun, by any stretch. Coca-Cola was a big target for anyone with a cause. As a spokesperson, I was on call 24 hours a day. And there were the typical corporate politics and challenging approval processes. But I’m not complaining – it was the job I had always wanted, and it was a dream job.

Then in my mid-forties, I hit a roadblock. I realized that all I had ever done was work, that I had no balance in my life. So I started going back to church and got involved in my community. Best of all, I met and married a wonderful woman who had a five-year-old daughter. But there was one more major change to make, and that’s where The Road to the Real Thing took a detour.

In March 2006, I left Coca-Cola and the
Practitioner by the federation. Accreditation Board. Partnership. the City of Hattiesburg and the Area Development and includes local clients such as Southern Miss, their clients. Their work spans more than 30 years.

Games. As a 20-year veteran of the Coca-Cola States Olympic Festival and the 1983 World Summer the director of public relations for the 1985 United

diplomate in Atlanta, Ga. He served as

times. He was also the director of the Southern Public Relations Federation and was named Senior

Chairman of the board at GodwinGroup in

relations and community affairs programs both

director of public relations for its North America division, Martin led

company and former director of public and media relations for its North America division, Martin led

and with the State of Florida.
• Donna Ritchey, APR, '87, partner and

effort for brands such as Coca-Cola, Diet Coke and Sprite and has worked on major events

executive, producer, and special events manager for GodwinGroup at

company subsidiary Mississippi Power, where he received the top spot in customer satisfaction and earned the Utility Communicator International’s (UCI) Communicator Award six
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• Dr. John Forde, APR, '84 and '88, who has led the Communications Department at Mississippi State University for 22 years and continues to teach online and in the classroom. In 1991, he was accredited in Public Relations through SPRF and currently serves as a representative on the Universal Accreditation Board.
• Reed Guice, '71, opened The Guice Agency in 2004 in historic Biloxi, Miss., with hopes to build exceptional brands through advertising, consulting, and public relations services. He is the winner of the American Advertising Federation’s highest honor for professional achievement, the Silver Medal Award, as well as its highest creative honor, Best of Show.
• Rex Kelly, '80, served as an executive for the Southern Company subsidiary Mississippi Power, where he received the top spot in customer satisfaction and earned the Utility Communicator International’s (UCI) Communicator Award six times. He was also the director of the Southern Public Relations Federation and was named Senior Practitioner by the federation.
• Mart Martin, '78, leads the creative division of Jackson Spalding in Atlanta, Ga. He served as the director of public relations for the 1985 United States Olympic Festival and the 1983 World Summer Games. As a 20-year veteran of the Coca-Cola Company and former director of public and media relations for its North America division, Martin led publicity efforts for brands such as Coca-Cola, Diet Coke and Sprite and has worked on major events like the Super Bowl, NASCAR, and the World Cup.
• Danny Mitchell, '70 and '71, the senior partner and chairman of the board at GodwinGroup in Jackson. He received the Silver Medal Award from the American Advertising Federation in Jackson in 2001 and was inducted into the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame in 2007.
• Lt. Col. Roger Steven Murray, '85, communications director for the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs in Tallahassee, Fla. He has had more than two decades of success in directing extensive employee communications, media relations and community affairs programs both stateside and overseas while in the U.S. Air Force and with the State of Florida.
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Thank you.

-- Mart Martin

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By Jesse Bass  
The Student Printz

The ring of his cell phone rustled USM photojournalism student David Jackson from his slumber. After the series of beeps slowly aroused him, his lips hung with lethargy as he looked at his phone through eyes squinted, heavy with sleep. The caller was Southern Miss photojournalism professor Clarence Williams. It was 9 a.m., Jan. 14, two days after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the areas surrounding Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Jackson answered the phone.

"Are you on your way to Haiti yet?" the Pulitzer Prize winner and mentor of Jackson’s said. Following a brief exchange, Jackson decided a trip was in order and started to pack. He sent a joking text message to fellow photo student Eli Baylis, asking if he wanted to accompany Jackson to Haiti. Little did he know that Baylis got the same telephone call that morning.

They began making travel arrangements. They contacted the Red Cross, various humanitarian and mission organizations and even private charter flight businesses shipping supplies into Port-au-Prince – all to no avail.

The students headed to Miami that evening with the thought that a trip to Haiti would be easier from there, and got in touch with Carl Juste and Andre Chung, photojournalist friends they met through Williams.

Juste, an employee of the Miami Herald, had been in Haiti since the day of the quake, but his wife let the students stay with her until they found a way to the disaster.

Plans failed one after another until it looked like the best option was a flight to Jamaica, then a boat ride into Port-au-prince arranged by Chung, who was Haiti-bound to shoot photos for MSNBC.com. But then Jackson and Baylis heard from Dudley Brooks, photo editor of Ebony magazine, that the horror stories floating around photojournalist communities depicting vicious marauders chopping photographers to bits with machetes at the border of Haiti and the Dominican Republic were indeed false, as Brooks had just safely completed the land route through the Dominican Republic.

So they flew to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on a commercial flight filled with journalists and humanitarian aid personnel and stayed in a hotel until the next morning.

Chung said he was impressed with the students’ success in entering the country into which only aid transportation was allowed – quite the feat for two students with no media credentials who, essentially, left for Haiti on a whim. “Every time I called them, they were only a step, step-and-a-half behind where

Eleven days after the January 12, 2010 earthquake a young woman walks by rubble from the buildings behind the Presidential Palace in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. (Photo by David Jackson)
I was,” the 20-year photojournalism veteran said. David and Eli paid a taxi the next morning to take them into Haiti. The ride was uneventful, driving through mostly barren wilderness until the border, where helicopters dappled the Carribean sky and buses loaded to the brim with people entering and exiting Haiti clogged the roadways. The border was so inundated with traffic, officials didn’t even check their passports.

They had made it. They were in Haiti. It took them more than five days, an exhausted list of contacts and a total of about $600 in airfare, but they had reached their destination.

The first thing they saw in Haiti was a field of cacti amidst several houses in shambles, all underwater from 2008’s hurricane season. “The border looked like ruins,” David said. But the border was many miles from the destruction of the earthquake. The students found the trip into Port-au-Prince to look much the same as the border did, as the nation torn with strife hadn’t recovered from the last several natural disasters.

But the earthquake’s aftermath became apparent to the students when they got within ten miles of Port-au-Prince. Buildings lay in rubble. People lived from tents in the streets and piled bricks nearby to prevent being struck by passing cars. Dead bodies littered the landscape.

It became all too real all too quick. Eli said the disaster’s gravity hit him on the return trip from a funeral with Pulitzer Prize winning photographer Pat Farrell in a truck. The truck passed a pile of burning human bodies. Farrell ordered the truck driver to stop. Both photographers leaned out the window and snapped a few quick frames before the truck drove on.

“The funeral was so peaceful,” Eli said, adding that the pile of bodies was a stark contrast. “And that’s the first time I’d ever seen bodies being desecrated like that. It was so dehumanizing. The thing that shocked me the most was that we didn’t even get out of the truck. It was so nonchalant.”

David said one in every fifteen people died in the areas heavily affected by the earthquake. “Bodies were all over the place and people still had to live there,” David said. “Some people dealt with it by piling them in front of the morgue, some people dealt with it by dousing them in gasoline and burning them because everybody was living in the street at that point.”

But the danger wasn’t over by the time David and Eli got there. They dealt with hazardous conditions nearly everywhere and aftershocks on a daily basis.

The students stayed in the Villa Creole hotel in Pétion-Ville, an affluent suburb of Port-au-Prince. But they slept on the lawn, keeping only their gear inside, because the buildings in the area were structurally compromised, warranting a ban on sleeping indoors.

Even this once-well-to-do region of Haiti was brought to its knees by the earthquake, essentially equalizing social class by forcing everyone into the streets.

Eli recalls the first aftershock, which varies in measurement from source to source, when he was standing on a brick road between two concrete walls. The walls shook as if they were about to fall, and nearby palm trees ferociously swayed to and fro.

“The bricks were rippling like water,” Eli said. But nature wasn’t the only hazard. With police far outnumbered by looters, warning shots for the purpose of crowd control echoed through the air constantly.

“You’d hear two shotgun blasts an hour no matter where you were,” David said.

Williams said working under adverse and dangerous conditions while in Haiti was a good learning experience for the students, setting them up for what they can expect in the professional world of photojournalism.

Chung agreed. “The normal rules that really hold society together fall by the wayside, and you have to figure out how to navigate that,” Chung said. “To get an assignment like this under your belt at such an early point in your career sets you up to make great strides. I expect pretty big things from them in the future.”

Now back safely in Hattiesburg after spending six days exploring the disaster, both students say the trip was an enriching experience. But they say this through chesty coughs, which they speculate is either the flu or a consequence of inhaling concrete dust. “It had to be done because if I didn’t function and accomplish my goals while I was down there, I would’ve known I couldn’t do this for a living,” David said. “It was the undeniable acid test.”

Williams and Chung hope the students’ images will have an impact on the situation in Haiti. “What’s most important in situations like this is to bear witness,” Chung said. “We’re all talking about Haiti now, and that’s because journalists got down there and did their jobs.”

Above, eight days after the earthquake that destroyed much of Port-au-Prince a Haitian man demolishes part of a house to salvage building materials on Wednesday, January 20, 2010. (Photo by Eli Baylis)

At left above, a Haitian boy brushes his teeth in front of the Petionville country club which has become a tent city since the earthquake. Over 50,000 people have turned this 9-hole golf course into their new homes (photo by Eli Baylis). At right above, Haitian man who just had one of his legs amputated is comforted by his brother in a hospital bed outside the General Hospital in downtown Port-Au-Prince. Hospital beds lined the streets outside of hospitals because the buildings were not thought to be structurally sound. (Photo by David Jackson)
Graduate students rack up successes in 2009-2010

Graduate students have had another busy and successful year of comprehensive exams, conference presentations and graduations. Keep track of all the latest news on MCJ’s graduate program at the forum blog, www.mcjgraduateforum.blogspot.com.

Meanwhile, congratulations to all these graduate students for their outstanding accomplishments!

• Jae Alexander successfully defended her dissertation in 2009. Her dissertation, “The History of American Film Institute,” was directed by Dr. David R. Davies.


• Dr. Elizabeth Christian, who just received her Ph.D in Mass Communication from the University of Southern Mississippi in December, 2008, is going to have her dissertation published by the University Press of Mississippi. The title of her dissertation is: “Reading, Writing, and Rabble-Rousing: Willie Morris, A Good Old Editor.”

• Dr. David R. Davies and his PhD students enjoyed great success at the American Journalism Historians Association conference. Doctoral student Jason Peterson won AJHA award for best paper on minorities topic. Doctoral student Pam Parry won two AJHA awards (honoroble mention) for Best Student paper and best paper on a topic in women’s history.

• Muriel Everton successfully passed dissertation defense.

• Dr. Mary Green successfully defended her dissertation in 2009. Her dissertation, “Journalism Students, Web 2.0 and Digital Divide,” was directed by Dr. Kim LeDuff.

• Tim Nolcox and Pam Parry successfully passed dissertation proposal defense.

• Pam Parry, ABD, was recently awarded a major research travel grant. Parry is an associate professor of journalism at Belmont University, Tennessee. She received a grant from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Foundation to conduct research at the presidential library in Abilene, Kansas. The research is for her dissertation, “Re-chiseling Mount Rushmore: Eisenhower’s Use of Public Relations as Political Strategy.” Parry is working on her doctor of philosophy degree from USM, specializing in media history and public relations.

• Donna Stephens will to present her paper at the International Communication Association conference in Singapore in May, 2010.

MCJ well-represented at Symposium, SSCA, and in the new journal, Synergy

Eight students presented research papers at the USM Graduate Student Research Symposium on March 26, 2010. In addition, Alice Ferguson and Jim Coll submitted papers that were accepted for publication in the inaugural edition of Synergy, a journal for graduate student research published by the graduate school. Those presenting at the 2010 Symposium included:


• Thomas Broadus, “The Pay Wall, the American Newspaper and National Public Radio.”

• Alice Ferguson, “Ecological Affordances of H1N1 Pandemic News Coverage,” and “FCC to Citizens: Go Jump Off A (Digital) Cliff.”


• Sid Muralidharan, lead author, “Spoofing: Social Commentary or Effective Marketing Tool?”

• Pam Parry, “Second Fiddle, Not Second Rate: Associate Role Obscures Anne Wheaton’s Contributions to Public Relations.”


• Ferguson’s paper, “FCC to Citizens: Go Jump Off A (Digital) Cliff,” was also accepted for publication in the Graduate School’s new research journal, Synergy, published in late April 2010. Future editions of Synergy will feature research from various colleges on a rotating basis.

• Coll’s paper in Synergy and was titled, “Tackling General Nat: Newspaper Coverage of the Integration of Southern Miss Football.”

MCJ graduate coordinator and faculty member Dr. Fei Xue took the Top Paper Award at the Southern States Communication Association’s meeting, held in April at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. Also presenting there was Ph.D. student Wilbur Justin Martin. He presented a paper co-authored with Alice Ferguson, “From Invisibility to Martyrdom in 24 Seconds,” about news framing of the Iranian presidential election and subsequent protests.

In addition, MCJ and the Department of Communication Studies hosted a reception for alumni, friends and students, during the SSCA conference.
Department announces top graduate honors

Doctoral students Alice C. Ferguson and Casey Hart were honored with departmental awards for the 2009-2010 academic year. They received their awards at the College of Arts & Letters Honors & Awards Ceremony held Friday, April 16, 2010 at the Joseph Greene Hall.

Ferguson was selected by the MCJ faculty as the School’s Top Graduate Student. She has served for two years as MCJ’s representative on the Graduate Student Senate, and was that organization’s president in 2009-2010. She has also presented papers at several conferences and is awaiting word on two papers submitted to AEJMC’s annual convention in Denver. She completed her course work in Spring 2010 and plans to complete her dissertation in the upcoming year.

Hart was named Top Graduate Teaching Assistant by the faculty of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism. He has also presented at a number of conferences, most recently, at the 2010 Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association annual meeting.

MCJ, Psychology Co-Host Katrina Documentarian

Pictured above from left are Dr. Alen Hajnal, assistant professor of psychology, documentary film maker Prof. Laszlo Fulop, MFA, of the University of New Orleans; and Dr. Chris Campbell, director of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism. Hajnal and Campbell worked together to co-host Fulop’s presentation last February as part of the Department of Psychology’s Brown Bag Lunch series. Fulop spoke about his experiences during Hurricane Katrina and subsequent clean-up efforts, documented in his two original films. (Photo by Alice C. Ferguson)

MCJ mourns the passing of advertising professor Keith Johnson

Keith Johnson, a popular advertising professor at the University of Southern Mississippi, died Wednesday, July 15, 2009.

Johnson, 59, joined the USM School of Mass Communication and Journalism faculty in 2003.

“He was a brilliant man with a very funny, very dry sense of humor,” Chris Campbell, the school’s director, said. “He was a great teacher and was notorious for being very demanding. But his students always seemed to rise to the occasion and produce great work. We’re really going to miss him.”

Campbell said that Johnson endured multiple health problems over the past several years and died from heart failure that was complicated by respiratory problems.

Johnson received his doctorate in mass communications from the University of Georgia, his master’s in advertising from Michigan State University and his bachelor’s in advertising/public relations from New Mexico State University.

He began his teaching career at his alma mater, serving as head of advertising and public relations at New Mexico State. He later taught at the University of Georgia, Louisiana State University and Texas Tech University.

Professionally, he worked as a communications director for a chain of motion picture theaters. He also worked in gubernatorial and senatorial campaigns and managed a congressional campaign.

Johnson left the industry to enter advertising education, serving as Director of Educational Services for the American Advertising Federation in Washington, D.C., where he was director of the National Student Advertising Competition and Alpha Delta Sigma Honorary Society.

Dr. Johnson co-authored numerous editions of Where shall I go to study advertising and public relations?, a national project that surveyed all university advertising and public relations degree programs annually.

He served as advisor to Golden Eagle Advertising, the USM Chapter of the American Advertising Federation, and also advised the team in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC).

Johnson was a decorated army veteran who served as a public information specialist in Vietnam in 1970 and 1971. He was awarded the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Medal and the Republic of South Vietnam Honor Medal.

A memorial service for Johnson was held in the Danforth Chapel on the Hattiesburg campus on July 22.
Alumni News

1950s
John W. Johnston ('57) is currently retired but still does some consulting work in Foodservice Sales and Marketing.

1960s
Tom Denman ('61) is retired as the public relations manager, media relations manager, government relations manager for Shell Oil Company.

Clay Swanzy ('64) is now chief of staff to Former Cong. H.L. (Sonny) Callahan, Sonny Callahan & Associates in Mobile, AL and Washington, D.C. Swanzy has worked 30 years with the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. In 2003, he became semi-retired in Fairhope, Alabama. He is the past President of Society of Professional Journalists, Mobile Chapter and a former reporter of the Mobile Press Register.

Burlian O’Neal Walker ('64) was recently inducted into the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa as an honorary member for his contributions to the chapter at Copiah-Lincoln Community College, where he worked for 32 years. Walker was executive director of the foundation, alumni affairs and public relations during 1967-1999 until his retirement. Walker chaired the Smoke Free Hattiesburg Council for five years before the ordinance passed in 2007.

James Larry Hogue (M.S. '69) retired in 2001 as vice-president of development and alumni relations for East Central Community College in Decatur, Miss. Prior to that, Hogue took early retirement from MP&L (now Entergy Corp.) in Jackson as manager in educational services and public relations. He has also served as public relations director for Department of Education. Hogue has served 12 consecutive years (three terms) as alderman in Flowood, before retiring there also.

1970s
Ed Hinton ('70) is a senior writer covering motorsports for ESPN.com. He has nearly 35 years’ experience covering NASCAR, open-wheel racing and other major sports for several metro daily newspapers and two national publications. Ed joined ESPN.com in 2008, most recently having been senior reporter for motorsports at the Tribune Co. newspaper chain, where his work appeared in the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, Newsday, The Baltimore Sun, the Orlando Sentinel and other papers. Previously he was a senior writer at Sports Illustrated and a national writer

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Bill Phalen ('65), CEO of Cities West Publishing, was the commencement speaker for the May 8, 2009 graduation ceremonies in Hattiesburg. Cities West, which he founded in 1997, publishes two highly regarded regional magazines, Phoenix and Phoenix Home and Garden. Before founding Cities West, Phalen, a 34-year resident of Arizona, founded and co-founded three broadcasting companies that acquired 24 radio stations throughout the United States from 1970 through 1996.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

A.J. (Jim) Giametta, ('71) Tyler Courier-Times-- Telegraph Executive Editor, retired from his 48-year career in journalism on January 31, 2010. Giametta is also Vice President of News for T.B. Butler Publishing Co., Inc., and has worked as an editor for both the Tyler Courier-Times and the Tyler Morning Telegraph for more than 20 years, joining the newspapers in Nov., 1988.

Giametta has received numerous awards including four national awards for investigative reporting involving fraud in a five-state cheating ring involving big bass tournaments. Giametta has also been cited by the Associated Press President Lou Boccardi for his “total commitment to newspapers.” Newspapers under his supervision in both Longview and Tyler have won eight Katie Awards for excellence in journalism.

Giametta has served as director of the Associated Press Managing Editors, Texas Press Association (TPA), United Press International (UPI), North & East Texas Press Association (NETPA) and a member of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas (FOIFT). He has been committed to civic service and has served as director or officer to many of Tyler’s non-profit community organizations. Giametta was presented the “Golden Rule” award by JC Penney Co. for his work with Tyler’s underprivileged children.
for The National Sports Daily. Ed has written two books and won numerous awards for motorsports and general sports writing, including the Scripps Howard Foundation First Amendment award.

**Bill Kehoe** (’71) is the executive director of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Mississippi located in Jackson, Miss.

**Dennis R. Van Acker** (’73) is currently retired and a Disabled American Veteran. He is a season ticket holder at the Rock in the fall and a member of the Eagle Club and Alumni Association.

**Susan Myhres Griggs** (B.A. ’74, M.S. ’76) is a public affairs specialist at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. She is also editor of the weekly base newspaper, Keesler News.

**1980s**

**Melanie Atkins** (’80) writes romantic suspense for The Wild Rose Press, Desert Breeze Publishing and Cobblestone Press.

**Kevin Brislin** (’80) received a Masters of Fine Arts degree in Digital Cinema from National University, CA in Oct. 2009. Brislin released his third CD of original music on his record label.

**Pam Bass Finnegan** (’80) is a makeup artist for the television and film industry and has worked on projects for numerous national magazine covers and national news networks such as CNN, NBC, CBS and FOX News since 1990. She has also provided makeup for a new film shot on location in Greenville, Miss. called, “Beyond the Forest.”

**Susan Anderson Marquez** (’80) is now a freelance writer for several publications and is active in the Central Mississippi chapter of the Alumni Association (president-elect). Last fall Marquez was awarded the Outstanding Service Award by the Alumni Association. She is on the board of directors of the Crossroads Film Society, a member of the Public Relations Association of Mississippi and the Professional Women’s Association.

**Patti Page Wade** (B.S. ’83, M.S. ’90) has been elected vice president of programs for the Central Chapter of the Public Relations Association of Mississippi for 2010. She is Director of Communications and Marketing at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi.

**Rosalind Matteson** (’84) has been teaching for eight years. She is currently a second grade teacher.

**Mara M. Hartmann** (’85) is now working for Entergy Mississippi, Inc.’s corporate communications department as spokesperson and media liaison. She was recently named Outstanding Professional of the Year—Advanced Practitioner by the Public Relations Association of Mississippi-Central Chapter. Mara has been a public relations practitioner for 18 years, 14 of which were spent as the principal of Art & Letters, a marketing and communications firm she co-founded in 1990. She began her career as a television anchor and reporter, working for three different ABC affiliates over the years. She was also a long-time co-host of the Emmy-nominated “Mississippi Outdoors,” which continues to air statewide on Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

**1990s**

**Jeanne D. Maes** (’94) has served as editor for peer review for the Organization Development Journal for the past nine years. In January she was named 2010 Outstanding Organizational Development Consultant by the Organization Development Institute. She has chaired the international Information Exchange four times for the Institute and will be chairing it again this year.

**Amanda Leesburg** (‘97) recently launched two new national internet ventures. “Pet News Now” is the nation’s first newswire/press release distribution service catering solely to the pet industry. Pet News Now aims to connect journalists with the latest breaking pet news, trend reports and expert insights, ultimately giving members of the

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

**Ted Fortenberry** (’87) is the president and general manager of WMBF News, a Raycom Media station in Myrtle Beach, SC. He was named GM of the Year by Broadcasting and Cable Magazine. This award honors local station executives who have provided exceptional innovation, great leadership and flawless execution through this exciting and challenging time in the television industry. Fortenberry has served at a variety of news stations including WDM of Hattiesburg and WLOX of Biloxi.

**Stacey Reid Duke** (B.S. ’88, M.S. ‘89) is currently teaching journalism, mass communication and public speaking courses at Hinds Community College in Raymond, Miss.

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

**Donna Vincent Roa** (’93) has recently launched her own company, Maryland-based Vincent Roa Group, LLC. Roa’s company provides executives with world-class strategic communication, brand management and public relations services. This woman-owned firm “is a strategic alliance of communicators that know the business of communication inside and out, and are passionate about its role in improving the environment and public health,” explains Roa. She has also become the City of Rockville’s newest Environment Commissioner.

Stacey Reid Duke (B.S. ’88, M.S. ‘89) is currently teaching journalism, mass communication and public speaking courses at Hinds Community College in Raymond, Miss.

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Crystal Smith-Fleeton ('03) is currently completing doctoral courses at USM in Adult Education, with an emphasis in Higher Education Administration. She is a speech communication instructor at Alabama Southern Community College in Monroeville, AL and teaches adjunct for Amridge University in Montgomery, AL. She married Rev. Terrence Fleeton in December of 2008. The two are ministry partners at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Jackson, Alabama where she serves as youth coordinator.

Mike Martinez ('03) graduated from Middle Tennessee State University in May 2009 with a Ph.D. in Human Performance and an emphasis in Sport Management. He currently serves as an assistant professor of Sport Management with Troy University. Martinez also serves as the assistant editor for publications for the Journal of Sport Administration & Supervision.

Keith Wilson ('04) volunteered as president of the Biloxi-Edgewater Civitan Club in 2009 and received Most Outstanding Club President for the Magnolia District (LA and South MS).

Lauren Ashley Wilder Dupree ('05) is the administrative assistant to the dean for the School of Education at the University of Mobile. She has also started her own wedding photography business, Ashley Dupree Photography.

Dana Elise Smith ('05) is currently in the post production of her feature film “Cagin of Chrysaint,” which will debut on June 26, 2010. Smith works as the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center videographer for public affairs.

Don Smith ('05) is the production associate for the Mississippi Business Journal in Jackson. His work includes designing various aspects of the weekly paper, photo editing, updating web content and some writing.

John Stiles ('05) spent two years as dean
at Hannam University and is currently the USA director in the International Relations Department of Hannam University. Here he coordinates sister schools and facilitates exchange students to and from the university in Korea. He returns to Korea once or twice a year lecturing at this and other university international programs and summer sessions on intercultural communication.

Maureen Thompson (’05) built an ad for the Enterprise-Journal submitted to the MS Press Association’s contest, which won first prize for Best Institutional Advertisement for its division. She and the sales representative shared an award for the ad at the Mid-Winter Conference held this January in Jackson, Miss.

M. Scott Anderson (’06) is a graphic designer for Parents & Kids Magazine in Jackson, Miss.

Paige Bennett (’06) served as a news producer with WLOX News in Biloxi. Bennett then worked as a marketing and public relations specialist in the country of Oman for two years. She recently relocated to Austin as a marketing associate with bluedoorway.com. She hopes to begin law school in August and focus on International Law. She hopes to return to the Middle East after law school and work in diplomacy.

Jessica Bueto Breazeale (B.A. ’06, M.S. ’09) works for tobacco prevention efforts in Calhoun County, Alabama. This is her second year as a mini-grantee through the Alabama Department of Public Health Tobacco Control Branch. Breazeale has an extensive media campaign throughout her county as well as daily public speaking engagements.

Holly Graves (’06) is a marketing assistant at Robert Silman Associates in New York, NY.

Danielle Breedlove (’06) is currently employed as the office secretary at Stinson Petroleum Company in Laurel, Miss.

Lauren Byrd (’06) is the educational liaison for the Mississippi Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command headquarters in Jackson, Miss. Some of her recent accomplishments include marketing Sally Jayne, the Guardfit Challenge Program for all high schools and showcasing her work at the George Ohr Museum of Art in the “American Heroes Firemen after Hurricane Katrina” exhibit.

Adam Buckalew (’06) serves as communications director and legislative assistant for Congressman Gregg Harger in Washington, D.C.

Toria Chatman (’06) is currently a sales associate at the Army Air Force Exchange Services. She plans to begin graduate classes at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco in spring 2010.

Brittany Fryogle Green (’06) is owner/photographer of B. Green Photography, LLC out of Mandeville, LA.

Markus Jones (’06) has been working for United Way of South Mississippi in Gulfport since 2007. He is a program and resource development associate and works primarily in the Marketing, Resource Development and Volunteer Center departments.

Ray Coleman (’06) is a photographer and sports reporter for WAPT-TV, the ABC affiliate in Jackson, MS.

David Matthews (’06) was the director of photography (DP) of Eyevox, a film and video production company in Ridgeland, Miss. since January of 2008. Eyevox has recently merged with their advertising agency and taken on their name, Mad Genius. Matthews is now working as a DP with Mad Genius in advertising and production.

Shannon Meadows (’06) is work as a page designer with the Clarion-Ledger.

Kelly Roberts (’06) is currently employed at WFFF Radio Station in Columbia, Miss, working everything from the office to on-air. She also has a photography business on the side, Kelly Reed Photography.

Sarah Stone (’06) serves as production coordinator for Bunim-Murray Productions, working in Washington, D.C., with the 23rd season of “The Real World: DC.” Previously, Sarah worked with the production crew of The Learning Channel’s “Home Made Simple.”

Benjamin Joel “Geotis” Alston (’07) is the production assistant to video journalists for WLOX 13 in Biloxi.

Amy Beets (’07) is the lifestyle editor at the Laurel Leader-Call.

Ethan Bratton (’07) is the assistant editor of real estate at SNL Financial in Charlottesville, Va.

Patrice Gagliano (’07) is currently working as...
Alumni
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a real estate consultant for Keller Williams Realty in Mandeville, LA. Its focus is in St. Tammany Parish but also serves the Metairie and New Orleans areas. She is the buyer specialist on a team of three.

Adrienne Hinton ('07) is currently a student at Mississippi College School of Law. This summer she will be working for the Departmental Appeals Board for the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

Veronica Gilbert Romano ('07) is working for the Sun Herald as a Marketing Consultant in the advertising department.

Kate Robison ('07) is currently employed with Mississippi Public Broadcasting where she is an associate producer for the show writers.

Rafael Sanchez ('07) is the general manager of Fastenal Company in McComb, Miss.


Megan Smith ('07) will graduate in May with a Masters in Public Policy & Administration (MPPA) from Mississippi State University, where she is a graduate assistant in the Office of the Graduate School. She will be interning this summer with the Mississippi Department of Health, District IV educating children on the West Nile Virus epidemic.

Darlene Cramer Adams ('08) is the executive director of The Senior Center of South Pearl River County.

Kenya Adams ('08) is a graduate student at The University of Southern Miss in the Counseling Personnel Program with an emphasis in College Student Personnel (M. Ed). She is also the graduate assistant in the Child and Family Studies Department. Her anticipated graduation date is summer 2010.

Alex Geriner ('08) is working as the project manager in the print production department at Peter Mayer Advertising in New Orleans. She works on various accounts such as Zatarain's and the Audubon Nature Institute and has also done some public relations work at Peter Mayer. Geriner has worked on the grand opening of the new Macy's store in New Orleans and also the grand opening expansion of the World War II museum.

Nick Payne ('08) is the production manager at Peter A. Mayer Advertising in New Orleans.

Katharine Rudzki ('08) graduated from the master’s program at the University of Texas at Austin in Advertising and moved to New Orleans, LA in December. She recently accepted a job at CPR+Partners in New Orleans.

Nicole R. Ruhnke ('08) is the communications coordinator for the South Mississippi Electric Power Association, where she handles employee publications, event planning and community involvement activities. She was the 2009 recipient of the PRAM Promise Award, and she is actively involved in her local PRAM chapter serving as the scholarship chair.

John W. Leek ('09) was admitted to Asbury Theological Seminary to pursue a Masters of Divinity.

Maggie Mays ('09) was offered a job as a marketing assistant at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson, a month after graduating. In November she was promoted to marketing coordinator.

Laura Messer ('09) is currently working at USM in the International Programs Office as the student coordinator, where she recruits, advises and assists students who are preparing to study abroad. She will be leaving Mississippi in August to begin her graduate studies at the University of Texas at Austin in the Graduate Advertising Program.

Michael Williams ('09) worked as a first assistant camera, script supervisor, boom operator, camera operator, and assistant director on various short and feature film projects. In February 2010, he opened a store front for his production company, Shendopen Productions, which had been run from his home since 2005. His senior thesis film from USM, “Parted,” has been accepted into four film festivals and is awaiting notification from several others.

Alum’s film featured in campus showing

By David Tisdale

An award-winning independent film co-written and directed by a University of Southern Mississippi alumnus was presented by “Eagle After Hours” Wednesday, Feb. 10 at 8 p.m. in the Thad Cochran Center. Admission was free to the public and students with identification; refreshments will be provided.

“I Ran Against Us” is an off-beat comedy flick intended for mature audiences and produced in part by Jared Hopkins, a 2000 graduate of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism’s radio, television and film program. It was named “Audience Choice Winner” at the New Orleans Film Festival last October.

“I Ran Against Us” is the story of a couple’s breakup but with a twist – former lovers Jon and Sandy must reunite to prevent the United States from threatened destruction by Iran, even though both have moved on with their lives. Analogous to the inability of nations to get along, the plot thickens after the two have another falling out while attempting to reconcile, which is broadcast worldwide and ratchets up an already tense situation.

Hopkins and co-writer/director N.T. Bullcock were on hand to answer questions from the audience after the show.

To learn more about “I Ran Against Us,” visit www.iranagainstus.com

Messer
Horne joins CoAL faculty

Jed Horne, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and award-winning author of a book about Hurricane Katrina’s impact on New Orleans, served as a visiting distinguished lecturer in the University of Southern Mississippi College of Arts and Letters during the 2009-10 academic year.

Horne is the former metro editor of The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune, where he oversaw the newspaper’s Pulitzer-winning coverage of Hurricane Katrina. He later published “Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City,” named Book of the Year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and one of six works of nonfiction nominated nationally for the 2007 Helen Bernstein Award.

A graduate of Harvard University, Horne spent the fall semester in Hattiesburg, teaching seminars to undergraduate and graduate students on literary journalism and non-fiction writing offered through the Department of English and the School of Mass Communication and Journalism. In the spring semester he taught the seminars on the Gulf Coast. Horne also offered an interdisciplinary seminar during the January mini-session examining the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast from a variety of perspectives.

“Mr. Horne brings a wealth of talent and experience to the college,” said Denise von Herrmann, dean of the College of Arts and Letters. “We were pleased to have him join us for the academic year. What a great opportunity for our students.”

Horne served as metro editor, city editor and foreign correspondent at The Times-Picayune from 1994 to 2007, when he retired to work on book projects. Before his career there, Horne worked in the “alternative press” at the Boston Phoenix and The Real Paper, legendary alternative weeklies in Boston. He later worked as an editor for several magazines owned by Time Inc.

He is also the author of “Desire Street, a True Story of Death and Deliverance in New Orleans,” which was a close study of a death-row case that had come to his attention as city editor. “Desire Street” carried readers deep into the subterranean depths of New Orleans crime culture to examine a case declared by the U.S. Supreme Court to involve prosecutorial misconduct. Singled out for high praise on the front cover of the Sunday New York Times Book Review, “Breach of Faith” was declared the best of the Katrina books by National Public Radio.

Sanders to lead Student Media Center

Stanley Sanders has been named director of the newly formed Student Media Center in the School of Mass Communication and Journalism at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Sanders has more than 26 years of broadcast journalism experience and previously served as director of news and operations, managing editor, news director, videographer and assistant manager while employed at WCWMH-TV in Columbus, Ohio. He will oversee operations to combine The Student Commercial media to align the new center’s operations with current standards and practices found in today’s media world.

“The recent Extreme Home Makeover: Home Edition project (held in Hattiesburg) is a good example of everyone working together to successfully complete a major project, and complete it with excellence,” Sanders said.

Public relations graduate student and Brandon native Samantha McCain helped coordinate the online communication forum between the media tent volunteers who worked on the site with Extreme Home Makeover: Home Edition.

She and other Southern Miss students worked side by side with the Extreme Home Makeover: Home Edition crew and local media to promote the event which took place in early December.

“We can only learn so much in class. By allowing students to work in a real environment regarding their disciplines, we learn pivotal tools to take into the real world and be successful. I think the center is an impeccable opportunity for Southern Miss students,” McCain said.

While the formation of the center has not yet been finalized, the school intends to move all of its student media operations under one roof in the near future. In the meantime, Sanders is working intently to utilize existing resources within the center.

“The students, faculty and staff are a very talented group,” Sanders said. “The center hopes to use their talents to support projects within Mass Communications, the College of Arts and Letters, the university as a whole and within Hattiesburg.”
20,000 in 2010!

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