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Pearce retires after 26 years of service to Miller School.

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SPRING 2012

Update

News From The A. Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Kansas State University

Remembering Todd
Miller School faculty, students and alumni reflect on the loss of a dedicated educator
STUDENTS WIN KAB AWARDS
Student broadcasters, including Dan Page (above) nabbed 27 awards in the 2012 Kansas Association of Broadcasters competition.

GREENSBURG RESEARCH
Faculty members study the state of community journalism in Greensburg, Kan., five years after the town was devastated by an EF5 tornado.

LINDEMUTH RETIRES
K-Stater editor Tim Lindemuth, right, retires after being at the helm for more than 80 editions of the magazine of the university’s alumni association.

FACULTY
Ross Beach Chair Louise Benjamin has been named interim director of the Miller School.

Charles Pearce, the professor who brought technological innovation to the Miller School, retires after 26 years.

STUDENTS
The student-run PR/Ad agency, TakeFlight, lands its first clients.

FACULTY
Todd Simon is remembered by friends, colleagues and students as a committed family man and teacher.

ALUMNI
Bill and Debbie Miller endow a scholarship for undergraduate students.


Lucy Reilly Fitch takes her knowledge from the Miller School to build a career reaching the highest levels of corporate communications.

April Blackmon is among the youngest USO center directors in the world.

ON THE COVER
Prof. Todd Simon arrived at K-State in 1997, serving as the director of the Miller School until 2004. He died on March 5.
Dear alumni and friends,

What an exciting and rewarding eight years! With your help, our excellent students, faculty, and staff have made great strides. What follows is an overview of our program and some of our commitments and accomplishments during my time as director. The starred items** indicate JMC Advisory Council contributions; however, you have all contributed significantly.

1. Broad and Comprehensive Program

- Graduate and undergraduate degree programs in advertising, publications and journalism and digital media, with about 6,000 alumni, 600 undergraduates, 27 faculty members, five staff members, and 30 graduate students
- Cutting-edge research such as readiness communication, risk, health and community media, media history with more than 250 peer-reviewed research papers and publications since 2004
- Student media including radio, television, newspaper and online
- Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media
- National headquarters for the Journalism Education Association (coordinate two conferences each year)
- Flint Hills Publications Workshop for high school students organized by Student Publications, Inc.
- UPDATE magazine, bi-annual alumni publication distributed nationally
- Manage endowment allocations with principle of about $2,000,000
- **ACEJMC: Accreditation, reaccredited with compliance on all standards 2007

We administer three undergraduate degree programs and a master’s degree program. Emphases and majors include advertising, journalism, crisis communication, digital media, and public relations. Our faculty are collaborating on research and presenting papers worldwide at major conferences such as the World Media Economics Conference. Our research productivity has doubled with more communications research being produced in our program than ever before.

2. Innovations, Collaborations

- **Convergence across curriculum integrating the Media Convergence Center in Dole Hall (Fall 2011)
- **New degree program in Journalism and Digital Media (hired faculty to implement media convergence, Fall 2011)
- **Reconnected journalism classes with student media, including the Collegian
- New minor in journalism and mass communications (68 minors as of Fall 2011)
- Raised $50,000 for student media coverage of biosecurity and food safety issues on campus (funds distributed in Fall 2011 for digital equipment)
- **JMC Advisory Council consisting of about 25 alumni and professionals
- JMC collaborations included courses with Communication Studies, History, Political Science, the Division of Continuing Education, Ag Communication
- Created Great Plains Radio Symposium, annual conference held at K-State, 2007-present
- Award-winning faculty and students

3. Fundraising

- **Raised $100,000 for Tools For Tomorrow campaign, securing an endowed fund for technology classes (endowed Fall 2011)
- Facilitated the renovation of Kedzie Hall, resulting in $2.5 million in 2011
- Received Knight News Challenge Award, $235,000, engaging faculty and students in development of social media, 2008-2010 (faculty member involved in the grant published article on project Fall 2011)
- **Created Friends of the School Giving Society in 2005 identifying more than 100 members who give to the School on an annual basis
- **Brought our endowed accounts out of debt in 2006 and have maintained a positive balance
- Secured grants for innovative programs including $96,000 from McCormick Foundation to host national 3-day conferences on risk communication and biosecurity in 2006 and 2010
- **Increased communications with donors nationwide: regular letters, emails, communications with alumni
- Faculty generated grants in excess of $5 million

4. Commitment to Students

- **Online mentoring program connecting alumni and students
- Hired a new undergraduate adviser
- Invigorated student ambassador program linking lower and upper level students
- Prioritized a student-friendly environment where the needs of students are put first
- In the process of creating a student lounge and welcome center where students can study and work on projects together
- Changing our courses and prerequisites to make our classes and majors more accessible and appealing to students
- Engaging students in student media as freshman
- **Yearly distribution of student scholarships in excess of $80,000 at our Honors Banquet
- Celebrated 100 years of commitment to students in journalism and mass communications with alumni in 2010
- Engaged Kansas high school in our media convergence center

We promote an environment dedicated to student and faculty success. Frequent interactions among students, alumni, parents, professionals and government officials enhance communications and build a strong sense of community.

5. Commitment to Diverse Populations

- Received 2008-09 KSU Outstanding Unit for Enhancing Diversity
- Increased faculty diversity from ten to 27 percent
- Increased student diversity from 10 percent to 16 percent
- Vibrant chapter of Diverse Mass Communicators, engaging minority students in the school
- Study abroad and international research projects engaging graduates and undergraduates

One highlight was to receive the Kansas State University Outstanding Unit Award for Enhancing Diversity 2008-09, and we continue to take our commitment to diversity seriously by identifying guest speakers and bringing them to campus and hosting events. These are just a few of our accomplishments. It has been an honor and pleasure serving as director, and I look forward to serving as a professor. As you will see in this edition of Update, we are one of the most vibrant schools of journalism and mass communications programs in the nation. Thank you for all your support to make this happen!

Sincerely,

Angela Powers
Director and Professor

Miller School Director Angela Powers ends her eight-year stint as leader of the program.
Benjamin named interim director

By JENA SAUBER

Louise Benjamin, Ross Beach Chair for Mass Communications and professor of journalism and digital media, has been selected as the Miller School’s interim director for the 2012-2013 school year. As interim director, Benjamin will guide the Miller School through the first stage of re-accreditation, and continue to develop and expand the programs and facilities.

The need for an interim director became necessary after the search for a successor to Director Angela Powers was unsuccessful. The position is scheduled to last one year. A search for a new director will be launched in the fall 2012 semester.

“Lou will be a great interim director. She will provide good direction as we go through re-accreditation and look for a new director,” said Andy Nelson, member of the search committee and R.M. Seaton Professional Journalism Chair. “She is widely respected and brings years of experience to the position.”

One of Benjamin’s focuses will be leading the self-study for re-accreditation through the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). The self-study looks at nine standards including curriculum and instruction, full-time and part-time faculty, and resources, facilities and equipment. The school is currently one of two accredited programs in the state, and was last re-accredited in 2008.

Benjamin also hopes to focus on ongoing improvements to the school, including updating curriculums, expanding faculty, and renovating or moving facilities at Kedzie and Dole Halls.

“It’s very exciting, We are moving forward,” Benjamin said. “We have so much going on with the new classes that are being considered, the potential to refurbish Kedzie, and possibly moving classes to Dole and their multimedia classrooms. There is lots to be working on.”

Steve Smothers, incoming associate director for undergraduate studies, believes that Benjamin will be a positive asset as the school’s director.

Faculty study citizen journalism at Greensburg

By HERBIE TEOPE

From sharing campfire stories to deeds immortalized in medieval songs, citizen journalism has been a part of mass communications for centuries. The practice continues today in a technology-savvy world, leading to an opportunity for Miller School professors Bonnie Bressers, Sam Mwangi and Steve Smothers to study its evolution in Greensburg, Kan.

An EF5 tornado leveled the small Kansas town on May 5, 2007, but the community is rebuilding. Part of the recovery is the Kiowa County Media Center, which is designed to promote and foster education and training related to environmental preservation, community journalism, media, and the visual and creative arts, and to solicit funds and equipment to support the programs and activities of the center, according to the center’s website, www.kwksmedia.org.

Launched on Nov. 1, 2011, the center’s motto is “Innovative, Community, Video. Journalists.” It has HDTV production capabilities, a fiber HD signal backhaul system capable of linking remote events and a 3.65 GHz WiMax high-speed Internet wireless system. It also houses video edit suites and a recording studio.

Greensburg has a newspaper, the Kiowa County Signal, but what makes the media center unique as a supplemental news provider is its dependence on citizens for Internet- and community-based content. Still, ensuring citizens understand the center’s purpose offers challenges, said Janet West, president of the Kiowa County Commons.

“Everyone knows what a library is,” West said. “Everyone knows what a museum is. But when you say media center, often times people don’t really understand what that means.”

To help educate the community, the center offers classes and workshops to citizens interested in TV production, camera operations, video editing and news photography, among other traditional journalist duties.

There is a concern the media center could contribute to the demise of the local newspaper, but Bressers said an opportunity exists to share content, as Gatehouse Media, the parent company of Kiowa County Signal, has embraced new media and video.

The Greensburg media center is heavily involved with the local high school’s students with a video club.

“The idea is if they can train even the high school kids to take video of football game, then the newspaper could share that content,” Bressers said. “And the newspaper in turn could share things that it has with the media center for the sake of both, not to the demise of either.”

The Miller School faculty research team will pore through academic literature to identify predictors on how other community media centers tackled issues and if success is based on certain demographic features, Mwangi said.

Additionally, a survey will gauge the likelihood of community involvement in a community journalism program, Bressers said.

“When you have a philosophy of, ‘If you build it, they will come,’ you have to be careful about being a model for other communities if you build it and they don’t,” Bressers said. “We’re trying to see what the likelihood of consumer and citizen use is, what’s standing in their way and find the solutions to the obstacles.”

One of the goals for the Kiowa County Media Center is to become a blueprint of citizen journalism for other rural communities around the nation. But West understands what works in Greensburg may not apply elsewhere.

“I hope people understand while this is a wonderful model, it may not be replicable exactly as it is in all situations,” West said. “We’re just one manifestation of this possibility.”
The man who brought the Macs
Pearce ends 26-year era at Miller School

By ALLIE RUPP

Associate Director for Undergraduate Education Charles Pearce retired in May after a 26-year career at the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Pearce was an agent of change in the school, bringing digital technology to an analog world.

"Typewriters filled the two labs at Kedzie Hall that year of 1986," Pearce said. "But that was all about to change as I arrived with my five Macintoshes."

An additional lab was added and all three labs were filled with Apple computers. As the advertising sequence head from 1986 to 2003 and again from 2007 to 2010, he fine-tuned the curriculum. While keeping the core in tact, he incorporated more elective courses.

"Dr. Pearce has had an exceptional influence over the school especially in the development of technology," said Miller School Director Angela Powers. "He is known for being the right hand man; he has been invaluable in his calming presence and ability to juggle many tasks at once, all the while doing a job very well."

As Pearce looks ahead to the future of the Miller School, he foresees a new director bringing a new direction to the school. He believes the biggest challenge will be keeping up with ever-changing technologies.

"The basics of what is done in Kedzie as well as in Dole Hall don’t change," Pearce said. "Storytellers do just that, they tell stories. But there are now different ways of telling those stories."

He advises Miller School students entering the workforce to persevere.

"Although it may take months to find that job, sometimes the job finds you," Pearce said.

He suggests building a strong experience base before graduating, such as holding a part-time job, serving as a chairman of an organization, or writing for a publication. Although Pearce believes in achieving a balance between experience and academics, he realizes that experience holds precedence in the minds of employers.

"In a lot of ways, Dr. Pearce knows the whole system; he knows how the university works; he is a walking history," said Tom Gould, associate professor and Miller School advertising sequence head. "Not only that, he has a leveling personality and is just a nice guy. It is tough to see him leave."

With the K-State chapter of his life closed, free time revolve around photography, the Konza Prairie, and being involved with the church," Pearce said.

Soon after retiring, he plans on achieving his lifetime goal of traveling to Utah to photograph western landscapes. In the fall he plans to be in the Rocky Mountains to photograph aspen trees as their leaves change color.

Pearce is a docent at the Konza Prairie Biological Reserve where he gives educational tours to children and adults.

Ordained in the Episcopal Church, he is an archdeacon at Manhattan’s St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. He spends time traveling with the bishop and will continue being an active member of his church and intends to explore further opportunities for involvement.

Pearce looks back with pride to his 26-year career and his accomplishments at K-State. Among his fondest memories are the introduction of the Apple computers and having the opportunity to work alongside Todd Simon.

Not only is he responsible for creating change and moving the university and Miller School forward, he has also impacted students with his wisdom and knowledge.

"I would love more than anything to have my students, current or previous, reach out to and stay in contact with me," Pearce said.
STUDENTS

TakeFlight agency lands first clients

By HEATHER PERRY

Early in the Spring 2012 semester, paper airplanes were scattered on the bottom floor of the K-State Student Union after being launched from the Union’s balconies. Curious students plucked the paper airplanes from the ground and discovered that they were actually fliers advertising the “launch” of TakeFlight, a 15 member, student-run advertising and public relations agency on campus.

The new agency’s creativity has paid off with TakeFlight gaining its first clients. The agency is currently working on admission scripts to promote K-State to Wichita school districts, said TakeFlight Executive Director Carmen Brown, graduate student in journalism and mass communications.

TakeFlight has also created a communication plan for Vosh/International, a volunteer optometrist organization that provides eye care to needy people in the United States and developing nations. Brown expressed excitement about working with the agency’s new clients, stating that TakeFlight is a great way for public relations and advertising students to get involved on campus.

“We are trying to get the word out,” Brown said. “The more people who know about us the better.”

TakeFlight also represents Wildcat Watch, a student-run video production unit on campus. The campaign focuses on making Wildcat Watch a more prominent multimedia force on campus, said TakeFlight’s creative director, Andrey Ukarzhenko, senior in public relations. Ukarzhenko said that TakeFlight’s main goal is to raise awareness for Wildcat Watch and its video production projects.

Along with representation, TakeFlight has also partnered with Wildcat Watch to collaborate on campus video production projects. Both organizations use their strengths, with TakeFlight focusing on the advertising aspect of the projects, and Wildcat Watch concentrating on video creation. Both sets of students are able to gain practical experience and build credentials for their resumes.

“Tenure is a springboard to greater things,” he said. “Instead of individual projects, I want to take on projects that have longer life and the Greensburg, Kan., study is an example of one of those.”

Another area he wants to explore is a media innovation center at Dole Hall. The vision includes creating digital media products for the ever-changing media industry, Mwangi said.

Ultimately, Mwangi is humbled to achieve tenure at K-State and overjoyed to continue working with faculty and students.

“You don’t find acceptance in every place,” he said. “Here, it comes naturally.”

FACULTY

Mwangi's path leads to tenure

By HERBIE TEOPE

The official tenure notification arrived on Feb. 21 and is taped on an office wall a few inches above Dr. Sam Mwangi’s computer. The letter isn’t framed, but Mwangi, associate professor of journalism and digital media, prefers the simple display to enable daily reflection on how far he has come from his native Kenya.

“It’s a reminder that I’m 8,000 miles away from home,” Mwangi said. “I’m in a foreign culture, a foreign country. It’s difficult being in a foreign land. You go through a lot and finally this vindicates it.”

Mwangi holds a Bachelor of Arts from Nairobi University, a master’s degree from the University of Iowa and a Ph.D from the University of South Carolina. He taught at Rockhurst High School in Kansas City, Mo., before arriving at K-State in 2006.

Meanwhile, the last six months have been a high point for Mwangi.

He received an award in August 2011 from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for Top Research Faculty Paper, an examination on how traditional media has evolved with technology. But receiving tenure is a crowning moment and opens the door to bigger ideas, Mwangi said.

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Prof. Sam Mwangi earned tenure in February.

by Emily DeShazer
2012 KAB student winners

UNDERGRADUATE RADIO

30 Second Commercial, PSA or Donor Announcement
1st Jared Clark, Eli Anderson, Jared Clark, Daniel Flores
2nd Jared Clark
HM Michael Pereira, Eli Anderson, Brandon Tadtman, Daniel Flores
Station Promotion Announcement
1st Dan Page, Jared Clark
2nd Jared Clark
HM Michael Pereira, Eli Anderson, Brandon Tadtman, Daniel Flores
Public Affairs Programming
1st Dan Page
2nd Daniel Flores
HM Jared Clark
Complete Taped Newscast
1st Dan Page
2nd Daniel Flores
Complete Live Newscast
1st Meredith Lindsey
2nd Dan Page
HM Jared Clark
Sportscast
1st Michael Pereira
D.J. Personality Air Check
1st Edward Bohannon
Sports Play by Play
1st Dan Page
Promotion Event/Activity
1st Kyle Lundy, Joey Lutz, Andrew Collingsworth, Edward Bohannon

GRADUATE / RADIO

30 Second Commercial, PSA
1st Mary Renee Shirk, Jared Clark
2nd Mary Renee Shirk, Jared Clark
Station Promotion Announcement
1st Mary Renee Shirk, Jared Clark
Sportscast
1st Mary Renee Shirk, Jared Clark

INTERN RADIO

Public Affairs Program
1st Meg Drake
Complete Live Newscast
1st Dan Page
Sportscast
1st Dan Page
2nd Jared Taylor
Sports Play-by-Play
1st Michael Pereira, Dan Page

Dan Page captured nine awards in the Kansas Association of Broadcasters contest.

Students nab KAB awards

By KELSEY McCLELLAND

K-State student broadcasters took home 27 awards in the 2012 Kansas Association of Broadcasters contest.

Dan Page, senior in journalism and digital media and news director at KSDB-FM, took home nine awards from the KABs.

"It was a surprise because I only turned in nine submissions and I have never won at this competition in the past three years," Page said. "I think the one that means the most to me is winning best play by play because it is a highly competitive category."

Because of the fierce competition at this year’s KABs, Page said he felt even more satisfied with his achievements.

"The University of Kansas has some great student broadcasters so to finish ahead of them meant a lot because I know some of them and they work very hard with their sports coverage," Page said.

Edward Bohannon, senior in journalism and mass communications and urban director for KSDB, earned two first place awards: first place DJ personality and first place promotion event.

"I'm definitely most proud of first place DJ personality because it has the highest competition," Bohannon said. "I have gotten honorable mentions before and this first place shows that I am progressing and they notice it."

Bohannon is co-founder with Joseph Knighten of the EnJ Show, which started three and a half years ago. A glitch was thrown into plan for the show when Knighten moved to Seattle in 2010. But the team found a way to keep their show alive.

"We collaborate by phone or Skype; he calls in every show if he can," Bohannon said. "He has 'EnJ All Day' tattooed on his forearm though, so at the end of the day he could never call again and it’s still 'EnJ All Day.'"

Bohannon reiterated Page’s sentiment when he said that his favorite part of the KABs was beating the University of Kansas.

Bohannon said his greatest struggle is trying to love school work as much as he loves radio.

Students, tower get upgrades, maintenance

By KELSEY McCLELLAND

The Wildcat 91.9 KSDB-FM has undergone upgrades to its studio facilities and broadcasting infrastructure.

"I was charged with several things, one was getting the radio station in complete compliance with all FCC rules and regulations and two, to upgrade the facilities to meet the educational requirements of the station," said Vern Wirka, instructor of journalism and KSDB-FM adviser.

Part of meeting the requirements was implementing a functional backup system for the station located in the K-State Student Union.

With support from engineers at Dole Hall, the studio in McCain can be a control point and backup for the Union studio.

“There is so much that students and others just don’t see that are so important to make the radio station happen, just last week we had major tower maintenance done,” Wirka said. “FCC rules and regulations are extremely rigid when it comes to the tower and right now the FCC is making it a priority to enforce those rules and regulations.”

An FCC violation could result in the station being fined $10,000. The tower got a fresh coat of paint to meet FCC standards.

“We’ve made several upgrades and there are still several plans yet to be accomplished, but we’ve made huge strides forward,” Wirka said.
Remembering Todd
Community, faculty, students reflect on death of Simon, respected colleague, teacher and devoted family man

By BRITTANY STEVENS

On a rainy Sunday evening in March, hundreds of people filed into the pews of All Faiths Chapel to an eclectic medley of cheerful tunes from Frank Sinatra and 60s era hippie bands. Bouquets of brightly colored daisies and sunflowers bedecked the stage, yet sorrow hung the air in the chapel as it had for days in Kedzie Hall.

Family, friends, colleagues, administrators, administrators,

I could talk about this brother of mine forever and I’ll tell you it would take even longer for me to accept this impossible thing that has happened.”

— Prof. Tom Gould

staff, alumni, students and members of the Manhattan community gathered together to remember the life of Todd Simon, professor of journalism, who passed away March 5, 2012.

“He wouldn’t want it to be all about himself and being sad,” said Courtney Boman, senior in public relations. “He would’ve wanted it to be uplifting.”

Students affectionately referred to Simon to as a witty, agreeable professor with a dry sense of humor. Since 1997, Simon had been walking Kedzie’s halls at his signature swift pace, coffee in hand, and a smile on his face.

It was here he taught and advised the students of the Miller School, researched for his scholarly journal and book contributions, ushered in new faculty and mentored the ones already present – and occasionally wearing his favorite Spongebob Squarepants shirt.

“Dr. Todd Simon was just an overall good person,” said Andy DiOrio, ’02 in public relations and professional adviser for PowercatPR. “He wanted the best for you, and he cared about you as an individual … He may have been a little quirky, but that’s what made him great; it’s what made him memorable and unique. While he may not have been that big of a person in size, his character and the way he cared about current and former students was larger than anyone could measure. Dr. Simon was certainly a character, but he was one that you would be honored to know.”

According to those who knew him, like DiOrio, his will be big shoes to fill.

“Our students have lost a dedicated teacher,” said Steve Smathers, associate director for graduate studies and research, at the March memorial service. “Manhattan has lost a fine citizen who was politically and civically involved. Our faculty has lost a great colleague and mentor. The K-State women’s basketball team and the K-State baseball team have lost one of their most ardent fans. And, Kedzie Hall, at least for a little while, has lost its soul.”

After some 30 years of journalism experience, Simon came to K-State in 1997.

He started out his young career in high school working on staff at the youth section of the Omaha Sun. He went on to obtain his B.S. in journalism from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1974. Two years later, he became a part-time instructor at his alma mater and began a lifelong pursuit of freelance writing, public relations, photography and design.

In 1980, Simon went for his juris doctor, which he received from Boston College Law School. He practiced law for two years in Omaha before returning to his home university as assistant professor of journalism. After two years, he left for George Washington University Law School to fulfill a teaching fellowship and to receive his LL.M.

While Simon learned the rules of law, he developed distaste for the establishment. He came to live by the adage: “That which is not prohibited is allowed.”

“One of the things I always liked about Todd was his lack of respect for bureaucracy, which means he was willing to get things done because they should be done, not because they
had been done before, or allowed,” said Joye Gordon, associate professor of public relations.

Simon allowed Gordon to run with an online version of a class, fundamentals of public relations, for the Miller School.

“He let me do a lot of innovative things that hadn’t been done before in the journalism school,” Gordon said.

Simon came back to the Midwest in 1984 to occupy the position of assistant professor in the School of Journalism at Michigan State University. It was there he advanced to associate professor and then professor. While at MSU, Simon directed the College of Communication Arts and Sciences Media and Information Studies doctoral program for two terms.

Simon was a “damn good lawyer” among other things, according to Stephen Lacy, associate dean of graduate studies at the Department of Communication and School of Journalism at MSU, who spoke at the memorial. The two had been friends for 13 years. The best times, Lacy said, were spent with Simon in his office talking — over the school, research, family and popular culture.

In 1997, Simon left MSU for the directorship at the Miller School. It was here he went on to inspire seven years of change.

During his directorship at the Miller School, Simon increased the number of full-time faculty from 19 to 25. He hired many of the journalism faculty teaching today.

“He was good at selling the school to prospective candidates,” said Sam Mwangi, associate professor of journalism and digital media. “He sold it to me.”

Simon also encouraged current director Angela Powers to apply to succeed him as leader of the Miller School. Powers met Simon as a graduate student at MSU. She worked as his teaching assistant.

At the memorial, Powers recollected recording every lecture Simon ever gave to an introductory journalism course of 800 students.

She played them back over and over again to guide her through teaching the course herself.

“Todd was a colleague, teacher and friend for over 25 years,” Powers said. “One of his most unique qualities was a collector of people, or, maybe I should say, that people collected him. Everywhere I went, someone had something good to say about Todd. The way Todd spoke, the way he loved teaching, the way he
Todd Simon 1951–2012

...continued from page 7

wrote – I’ve never met anyone his equal.”

Simon stepped down from the director position in 2004 and became head of the journalism sequence until 2006. He then transitioned to head of the public relations sequence, a position he held at the time of his passing.

As public relations sequence head, Simon overhauled the curriculum. He founded the four courses: public relations strategy and planning, mass communications and political campaigns, economics of mass communication and seminar on political communication.

“One of his lasting impacts is in positioning our school to respond to the changes taking place in the industry, especially technological changes and the trends that are out there,” Mwangi said. “His footprint is all over our program and that’s why we all miss him so much … You can see the effect of his life – the impact of his life – in everyday things we do.”

Although he relinquished the title of director, students and faculty continued to seek out Simon throughout his time at K-State. They caught up with him after class standing outside Kedzie Hall on his smoke break or dropped by his office unannounced – which he rarely seemed to mind.

“Even after he left the director spot, he always served as a mentor in an unofficial capacity, but it was just as important,” Gordon said.

Simon counseled faculty in their day-to-day jobs advising colleagues on promotion, tenure, research and community involvement.

“He had seen it all,” Mwangi said. “This department has lost its father figure. Who else is there? No one.”

When Mwangi’s tenure was being decided this past semester, Simon was there to advise him. When the decision was made, Simon was the first person to give Mwangi the good news. Minutes after the department voted yes on his promotion, an email from Simon popped up in Mwangi’s inbox.

“He knew it was a sleepless night for me,” Mwangi said – the congratulatory tenure letter taped proudly on the wall next to his desk. “He knew that. Why? He had seen it through the years … To me, that’s how I will remember Todd. He could read you. He would move and use his experiences to guide you and calm you when necessary.”

Students also came to Simon for his wisdom. Many times they would be greeted with the infamous “Todd pause.” When asked a question, Simon would look at the person and wait calmly in silence before answering.

For DiOrio, who knew Simon for 11 years, one “Todd pause” stands out above the rest.

On the Tuesday morning of 9/11, DiOrio had law of mass communications class with Simon at 9:30 a.m.

Simon began the class with an unusually long pause as students sat in shock and confusion in a Cardwell Hall classroom. Instead of proceeding with his lecture, Simon allowed the class to discuss the morning’s events.

“Y es, he did tie in some PR topics to what was occurring that morning, but instead of strictly serving the role of teacher, he easily transitioned into the role of counselor,” DiOrio said. “While we were all still in shock, Dr. Simon handled that morning with great poise and reassurance and showed a very human, caring and compassionate demeanor that may not often get the chance to be on display in a collegiate setting … It’s something I’ll never forget.”

Those hushed moments encouraged students to think.

“It’s something I think that drove a lot of students crazy because they never knew how to react to it, but for me it really helped build my confidence and my ability to ask questions,” Boman said.

Boman went to Simon, the faculty adviser for PowercatPR (K-State’s chapter of the Public Relations Student Society for America) for advice on running the chapter. Boman acted as president this year.

“A lot of it had to do with the chapter, but I was able to take what he said and put it in my own life – how to deal with conflicts,” Boman said. “He was so good about how to deal with people and how to communicate with them.”

Not unlike the motivation behind his ruminating pauses, as faculty adviser for PowercatPR, Simon took a hands-off approach.

Katie Niederee, ’10 in public relations and previous PowercatPR president, said he allowed her and the members to take charge of the organization imparting “snippets of wisdom” and nods of approval when needed.

“He wanted us to own it,” Niederee said.

Many of the lessons learned from Simon, students were unaware they were being taught.

Simon’s frequent assigning of group projects and 10-minute coffee breaks for 8:30 a.m. classes had an underlying purpose.

“He really encouraged camaraderie within the classes,” Niederee said.

Simon’s stories of his life experience had lessons, too – lessons that would not sink in until a story’s end.

Boman recalled when Simon taught her guerilla advertising class. A different professor taught the course every two weeks.

Simon told a story of his youth. While in high school, Simon and his pals dressed in head-to-toe black like Johnny Cash, “The Man in Black.” Reflecting, Simon explained they were promoting Cash’s birthday, an example of guerilla advertising.

“Sometimes when he told them [stories], you would wonder how they related back to
Simon was also passionate about the community in which he and his family had lived. “I knew him long before he was a colleague,” Mwangi said. “I knew him as someone who wanted to make this a better community for all of us through his public service.”

Simon toiled to bring public transportation to Manhattan and lobbied for a local fair minimum wage.

Simon served on the board of the Manhattan Public Library for seven years with four years spent as president. While on the board, he increased the library’s public relations efforts and completed strategic planning. Under Simon, the library expanded, Linda Knupp, library director, said.

In Simon’s honor, two funds have been established: one for the Manhattan Public Library children’s library expansion project and another in Simon’s name for K-State students through the KSU Foundation.

“I could talk about this brother of mine forever and I’ll tell you it would take even longer for me to accept this impossible thing’s happened,” Prof. Tom Gould said at the memorial service.

Although the grief remains, reminiscing about Simon has stirred the healing process. “You get numb,” Mwangi said. “I didn’t realize this, but when you get numb, something happens psychologically – you step outside yourself – and you create a distance between yourself and the event. You slowly walk back to the event when you develop the courage to go close to that.”

Simon’s passing has given those who knew him his final teaching moment.

“What I learned from it all is the only time you have is now. And in a way – this may sound bad – but in a way, it has made me a better person,” Mwangi said. “How? I don’t want to postpone things. Just the other day he was just sitting outside talking about things he was going to do. He doesn’t have that opportunity anymore, but I do have that opportunity.”
Millers endow new scholarship with $25K gift

Miller School alumni Bill Miller, ’74 radio and wildlife biology, and Debbie Leckron Miller, ’75 print journalism, have donated $25,000 to endow a scholarship to assist Miller School undergraduates.

“Our youngest daughter [Christina Miller] graduated from K-State this spring, so we thought this would be a good time for us to help someone realize their dream of getting a college degree,” Bill said.

The success they found at K-State, and after, is one reason Debbie wanted to donate.

“I have K-State to thank for helping me find a major I felt passionate about and a career that I’ve enjoyed ever since,” Debbie said. “We’re hoping our contribution will let other students experience that same passion, encouragement and success that K-State gave us.”

The Millers felt that now was an appropriate time to donate and give back to the school.

“It is time for us to return the favor and help others,” Bill said. “In reality, creating an endowed scholarship at K-State isn’t likely to significantly change most donor’s financial situation, but it can make a real difference to a young person trying to get through college today.”

Sheila Walker, director of development for the College of Arts and Sciences at the K-State Foundation said donating to a scholarship fund can provide fulfillment for alumni.

“Giving back to the university that helped you become successful can be extremely rewarding,” Walker said. “Introducing alumni and friends to students they help support with scholarships, or faculty they help retain with an endowment, or a classroom of students who benefit from renovated space, often brings tears of joy to those who made it possible.”

K-Stater editor Lindemuth retires

By KAYLA SLOAN

After 19 years, K-Stater magazine editor Tim Lindemuth reached 30.

The summer 2012 edition of the award-winning periodical of the K-State Alumni Association is the last for the affable leader.

Lindemuth, ’77 public relations, has guided the evolution of the magazine’s production from typewriters and pencil-drawn layouts to computer-based desktop publishing.

“These changes have put more responsibility on the writers and editors of magazines and less on the printers,” Lindemuth said.

As he looks back on the more than 80 issues he has edited, some stories stand out.

“The most memorable story I have worked on was ‘Willie at 50,’” Lindemuth said.

He described the story from a 1997 edition of K-Stater magazine. The first appearance of Willie the Wildcat at a sporting event was in 1947. Lindemuth spent weeks calling alumni, searching through archives and dusty yearbooks, but was unable to identify who was behind the first papier-mâché Willie head.

“I made more than 30 long distance calls to try and identify Willie,” Lindemuth said. “I decided to run the story without the identity.”

Then one evening, Lindemuth was in his yard gardening, when two of his neighbors stopped by on an evening walk. Lindemuth explained his struggle to find Willie’s identity when one neighbor said she knew the identity. After all of his searching, Lindemuth’s answer was found next door.

Adrea Simmons, a Manhattan High School cheerleader, was the first Willie in 1947. Simmons mother teamed up with the wife of K-State football Coach Sam Francis to increase student support at football games. Willie was at all the games in 1947. But when the coach left at the end of the season so did Willie. He did not appear at a K-State sporting event again until 1964.

Lindemuth will be missed at the alumni association and K-Stater magazine.

“I can’t imagine anyone else in this position bringing the same passion for K-State,” said Steve Logback, assistant vice president for communications and marketing and former director of communications at the K-State Alumni Association. Logback commended Lindemuth on his ability to build contacts with everyone on campus.

Lindemuth has decided on a new path after retiring.

“I want to reinvent myself,” he said.

He is opening a boutique bed and breakfast in his home. Lindemuth will market his one room to university guests and travelers. He believes the B&B will keep him connected to K-State and keep him busy.

The bed and breakfast, which Lindemuth plans to open by mid-August, will be named “Moore House” after Helen Moore who owned the home from the 1930s to 1960s. Moore was the second dean of women at K-State.

“This is a way to honor Helen,” Lindemuth said.
Andy Gilchrist is a man of influence. Twain's musings hang like a plaque on Gilchrist’s website, AskAndyAboutClothes.com, which has more than 1 million hits each day.

AskAndy is a clearinghouse of advice on men's fashion – what men should wear, how they should wear it and the history behind menswear.

"Men are not supposed to care about their appearance – it's unmanly, but more and more men are realizing how important the way they look is," said Gilchrist, '65 journalism and sociology. "That's why the AskAndy website has been mushrooming in traffic."

Gilchrist’s articles address how to achieve the perfect shoe-shine, when to doff a hat and how to dress for everything from a job interview to a date, among other men's fashion topics.

"It's a scientific fact that people who don't know you make up their minds about you on a subliminal/prehistoric basis in 30 seconds or less...80 percent of what others see is our clothes," according to Gilchrist's article on fashion mistakes.

Gilchrist, 68, was born in Kingman, Kan. His father was a seismograph oil driller. His mother was a homemaker and Sunday school teacher. Gilchrist's father was a dapper dresser even though it was not essential for his job.

"He was always intently interested in fashion," Gilchrist said. "We took Esquire magazine for the men's fashion. It was a little 'racy' at the time. I remember having to find and hide a copy when the minister came to visit."

Although he said fashion was in his genes – with a 'g' not a 'j' – the moment he realized fashion was in his blood was in 1963, when he bought a Thunderbird while at K-State.

Andy Gilchrist influenced website that receives more than a million hits a day.

“Guys wanted to hang out with me and girls wanted to hang out with me,” Gilchrist said. “It was a revelation. Image is really important.”

He shopped at Woody’s in Aggieville, a purveyor of Ivy League fashion, and donned a suit to watch K-State football games.

While attending K-State, Gilchrist concentrated on advertising and marketing. His fondest memories of the school were his fellow students, professors and Kedzie Kapers, off-campus parties held every Friday.

Today, from his southern California home, Gilchrist describes his style as “very conservative and attune to the rules of men’s fashion.”

Gilchrist contributes to Esquire and Wealth TV, has been quoted in The Wall Street Journal, Money Magazine and Men's Health, and has been recommended by Playboy and Menswear magazines.

Despite his success, Gilchrist had no big plans for the AskAndy business. The popularity, he said, was due to “dumb luck.”

The website went live in 2001 after Gilchrist retired. In 2002, Gilchrist published his book, The Encyclopedia of Men's Clothes, and in the same year, added an AskAndy forum – the catalyst that got men all over the world talking – to one another.

The forum has 57,000 active members and 1 million posts from designers, fashion editors, tailors, dandies, and men the world over looking for guidance.

This past January, Gilchrist took an Italian fashion tour making the rounds at Pitti Immagine Uomo fashion events in Florence and Fashion Week in Milan. He watched the catwalk with the Ferragamo family with Italian and British royalty in attendance.

Umberto Angeloni, former CEO and co-owner of Brioni fashion house, founder of Uman Italian ready-to-wear brand and CEO and co-owner of Caruso menswear, co-hosted Gilchrist’s trip.

Gilchrist, Angeloni said, “stayed for eight glorious days of sunshine, events, wine and food tastings, interviews and factory visit near Parma. We stayed together most of the time and it was so pleasant and relaxing that I felt I had known him forever.”

Looking ahead for AskAndy, Gilchrist has a website redesign in the works, wants to write a book on wedding fashion and plans to multiply AskAndy events.

As generations brought up on fast fashion realize the importance of quality clothing, they will look for advice, possibly by “Ask Andy.”

“I believe that AAAC is performing a very valuable cultural and social function through its daily exchange: experience is transmitted from one generation to the next, and a new breed of quality-literate and style-conscious men is being nurtured,” Angeloni said. “Change in the way people evaluate, acquire and consume product has accelerated in recent times. This is very tangible at AAAC, where you can feel the beating pulse of such energetic, intelligent evolution, and the site is both a window and a vehicle for its expansion.”
Fitch's passion finds a home in defense

By KATIE LEINHAUSEN

Long before she was senior vice president for corporate communications at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), the eighth largest defense contractor in the U.S., Lucy Reilly Fitch was roaming the corridors of Kedzie Hall. A 1985 graduate of the Miller School, Fitch took a spark of enthusiasm and turned it into a career that has seen her reach the top of her profession.

“I wanted to be a foreign correspondent. I wanted to cover politics,” Fitch said. “I remembered one night in high school, sitting down with my dad to watch a press conference with President Jimmy Carter. I remember being fascinated with the whole thing and thought, ‘that is what I want to be doing.’”

After attending first Benedictine College on a basketball scholarship, she transferred to K-State in September 1982. Four of her six older siblings had attended K-State, with two of her brothers, Terry Reilly and Sean Reilly, both having studied journalism in the Miller School, playing a role in her decision.

Terry, ’77 print journalism, worked on the Kansas State Collegian as the sports editor and hosted spots on KSDB-FM radio. He also played football for the Wildcats for one year. Sean, ’83 print journalism, also worked at the Collegian. He gained valuable writing and reporting experience and had the added bonus of finding love. He met his wife, Judi Wright Reilly, who worked as the assistant sports editor while he was the sports editor.

Her brothers’ experiences at K-State helped Fitch find her niche in journalism. She saw the value of getting practical experience and began working on the Collegian.

“I loved to write so I got involved in the Collegian, probably earlier then most of my classmates,” Fitch said. “Part of it was because my brother Sean was already working for the paper. He kind of helped open a few doors for me since he was a year and a half ahead of me at KSU.”

Sean saw his younger sister’s talent and enjoyed watching her grow into a journalist.

“Lucy has always had the ability to write. She is a lot more creative than I am. I sometimes wondered if I was following her path,” Sean said.

Terry recognized how communications appealed to Lucy like it had to Sean and himself. The three were attracted by the variety it appealed to Lucy like it had to Sean and himself. The three were attracted by the variety appeals to me and I think it did to her, too.”

After graduating from K-State in 1985, Fitch spent several years as a business reporter on the East Coast, eventually specializing in the defense and technology industries. Her reporting of the two sectors required her to cover proceedings in the White House, Pentagon, other federal agencies, and Congress.

Companies recognized her skilled reporting and knowledge and called constantly with job offers. Fitch spoke with them to be gracious and to learn as much as she could about them but she had no intention of leaving journalism. It was not until Hughes Aircraft Company, a major aerospace and defense contractor at the time, called to offer her an analyst position that she decided to leave her first love.

“To this day, that was the hardest decision I ever made. Ianguished over it,” Fitch said of accepting the job offer.

Fitch said that she turned to both Sean and Terry while making the decision to leave journalism. Sean made a similar decision when he became the communications manager for Overland Park, Kan.

“I don't think he ever looked back and he loved journalism too,” Fitch said.

She accepted the job after receiving a commitment from Hughes Aircraft to help between some of my senior bosses and President Clinton, and the Secretary of Defense.”

Fitch loved her new job. It set her on a path that would lead her to success in the global defense industry.

Fitch joined SAIC in 2011 as senior vice president of corporate communications and says she is still able to get a rush from communications like she did when she broke big stories as a reporter. The urgency to meet deadlines on major projects in a powerful industry is thrilling to her.

Fitch’s journey is not over, and she says she always has a hunger to learn more. She said she believes there is still more she can achieve and hopes to inspire others to push themselves to reach their goals.

“Don't settle for anything less than your highest aspirations. Keep trying,” Fitch said. “You may not get there, but it is amazing where it will take you along the way.”
Miller School alum Blackmon runs 'home away from home' for Fort Riley soldiers, families

By SHELBY DANIELSEN

As April Blackmon sits back at her desk at the United Service Organizations Center at Fort Riley and talks about the “home away from home” that is her passion, her compassion for the men and women who come through her door is revealed by the smile on her face.

As one of the youngest USO Center Directors in the world, Blackmon, 33, ’02 public relations, ’08 master’s in journalism and mass communications, is one of only two employees for the USO at Fort Riley; everyone else is a volunteer. In 2011, volunteers gave over 12,500 hours of service to the USO. The center has been such a success under her management that the Department of Defense has said it should be seen as a model for future USO centers.

When she interviewed for her current position as center director, Blackmon remembers her boss saying that she didn’t need a business background. She needed a mindset, and the stamina, to provide soldiers with the best assistance and support on a daily basis. He told her she had the “it factor.”

After starting her new role, her boss gave her one last piece of advice. He told her she should try to only work 40 hours a week, which, at the time, seemed an easy task. Now, April laughs light-heartedly at the suggestion. “I often work fifty or sixty hours a week, sometimes more,” she said. “This isn’t a job; it’s a lifestyle.”

She uses her journalism background when she is raising awareness about the center which open in May 2010.

“What I want to do is tell a story, and paint a picture with words to convey our passion throughout the community,” Blackmon said. She writes press releases, creates brochures, takes photographs, gives public speeches and organizes monthly events.

The center is open 365 days a year. Troops and their families have free wireless internet access, library books, snacks and drinks, a lounge, kitchen, playroom for children and a living room area. They also have access to an entertainment area with video games, poker tables, large screen TV’s, air hockey, pool, foosball and a “Movie Theatre” room.

Blackmon says that they try to provide the soldiers with as many amenities as possible in order to give them an escape, even if just for a little while.

“Work doesn’t seem like a four letter word when you are doing something that you are very passionate about, and that you are good at,” she said. “If I had stayed with my government job I could’ve been promoted and making more money. But I wouldn’t give this up for the world.”
Kristina Castillo gives her son, Jah’ Tori, a kiss goodnight after tucking him into bed. Castillo was the subject of a picture story in the spring 2012 Photojournalism class. Student Kristen Brant documented Castillo over the course of 26 days as Castillo transitioned from single mother to newlywed.