

InterCom

THE COLLEGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ALUMNI MAGAZINE

The *100th* Year of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications





UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

**College of Information
and Communications**



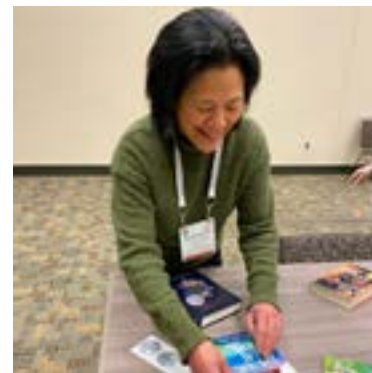
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Alumni and events that played crucial parts in the growth over the course of the J-school's 100 years.

MEET THE *Staff*

FROM THE DEAN



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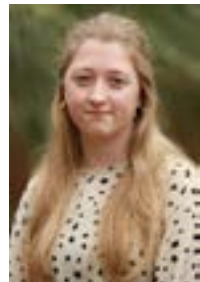
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A NOTE FROM THE DEAN

Tom Reichert

As our centennial celebrations for the School of Journalism and Mass Communications conclude, we reflect on a century of excellence, innovation and leadership. Our history is rich with stories of alumni who have shaped the media landscape, and our commitment to preparing the next generation of communicators has never been stronger. I highly encourage you to view the centennial video produced by faculty member Randy Covington. He captures the history while also underscoring the sweat equity faculty and staff have contributed over the years to make the school a leader as we pivot into our next century.

Looking to the future, we are embracing the transformative power of artificial intelligence. AI is reshaping just about every field — but especially our fields, those of information and communication.

Without hesitation, I can assure you that we are at the forefront of integrating these advancements into our curriculum. Our students are learning to responsibly harness AI to enhance storytelling, improve media production, and analyze data with unprecedented precision. This prepares them not just for today's industry, but for the rapidly evolving challenges of tomorrow.

We remain committed to ensuring that our graduates lead with integrity, creativity and a deep understanding of the ethical implications of AI in media, libraries, agencies and beyond. As we honor our past, we are equally excited about the future and the role our alumni and students will play in it.

Thank you for your continued support and for being a vital part of our story. As such, I'm confident you will enjoy this issue's stories of the positive work across our two fantastic schools as well as the success of our alumni and friends.

Forever to thee and the CIC!

Dean Tom Reichert



Watch the SJMC Centennial video!



Photo courtesy of Laura Wolff

FOLLOWING HER DREAMS TO THE *Best* SEAT IN THE HOUSE

by Jenna Doyle

Kendall Smith is already living her dream.

Since graduating in spring of 2023, the SJMC broadcast alumna has been on the sidelines as a team reporter and host for the Charlotte Knights, the Chicago White Sox AAA affiliate.

“But I do a million other things,” Smith says. She is also hosting and reporting for the Charlotte Checkers, top minor league affiliate of the Florida Panthers of the National Hockey League, and is a sideline reporter for the CW affiliate and ESPN+.

Smith’s career began by attending SJMC summer Media Innovation Academy, where she got hands-on experience making broadcast news “packages”, learning all things journalism and meeting instructors like Kevin Hull, Ph.D.

“Being in that environment when I was in high school, I knew I wanted to be a Gamecock and this is what I wanted to do,” Smith said.

Once a Gamecock, she became heavily involved reporting for a variety of school media outlets and served as an ambassador for the CIC, constantly pursuing opportunities with the camera and on the sidelines. She credits her drive to Hull’s support.

Smith has certainly not lost momentum since graduating.

“It’s been nine months now. Feels like longer because I was always working,” she said earlier this year.

Smith experiences exciting sports moments first hand with the “best seat in the house,” she says. She highlights the surreal feeling of holding an actual ESPN+ mic after growing up playing with the toy version and her experience as an alumna coming back and being behind the scenes for Game Day and hosting an event for Gamecock Central.

When asked about her plans for the future, she highlights her aspiration

for growth and to be an inspiration for young people.

“The path of success is not linear. You are capable of success at 20 and 75, you just have to be willing to give it your all and work hard,” she says. “I love all the sports that I work in. I’m so thankful to work in the sports that I do. So just continuing to do this and do what I love and I’ll never work a day in my life.”



Kendall Smith at Williams-Brice Stadium

SPORTS MEDIA MAJOR HAS ARRIVED



By Mary Catherine Brown

Asports media major has become part of the CIC this fall semester. Previously, sports media was only available as a minor or concentration where students learn a variety of sports-related job opportunities and determine which fits them best.

Kevin Hull, associate professor and sports media lead, is at the forefront of this new major creation. Previously working as a sports broadcaster, Hull realized he enjoyed teaching the interns more than covering sports. His real-world experience and network connections allow students to get a feel for which route they might want to take professionally.

“We have students working for teams, media outlets, major, minor, everywhere, doing different jobs, I mean, all sorts of different jobs,” Hull says “So that alone has helped our networking more than anything else, just our own students getting out and doing it.”



Prestigious alumni become guest speakers in Sports Media courses, giving students a

glimpse of what their future could hold.

Mannie Robinson, sports media instructor, and Greg Brannon, instructor, are two key contributors to what the sports media program is today at the university, Hull says.

There are 14 courses available for students to expand their knowledge of sports media. Some of the courses available are Sports Media and Society, SEC Football and Sports Media, Live Television for Sports Production, Social Media for Sports, and more.

Along with the sports-specific courses, this major also ensures students get a well-rounded education. Students will be required to take Carolina Core courses as well as some principles courses, including Principles of Public Relations, Principles of Advertising and Brand Communication, Principles of Visual Communications, and Principles of Journalism.

For the past few years, Hull has been collecting data on student interest in sports media within the minor and concentration courses — the foundation of proposing a sports media major.

Associate dean of academic affairs Kim Thompson works on the administrative side of creating this major. Many steps are needed to create a new major. First, the idea must be presented to faculty members, and they must agree that this would be beneficial to students. Then a pre-authorization file must be created and sent to the provost’s office.

The provost’s office deals with ensuring that all possible majors meet all curriculum standards at the university. After the provost’s office accepts the idea, then a proposal can be made including data collected on student interest.

The creation of the sports media major has passed the final stage. The sports media major received final approval in June 2024. Upon approval, students will be able to declare a sports media major in this past fall semester.



The creation of this major may lead undeclared students to be interested in what the sports media major offers, bringing more students to the CIC.

“I think that these undecided people are gonna come over, so it’ll be good for our college because we’ll have more students and more diversity of students, because it’s the people who haven’t gone their whole lives knowing they were gonna run to journalism,” says Thompson.

Students can examine many jobs available in the sports media world by taking these courses and listening to the experiences of alumni holding these jobs. The creation of the Sports Media major will benefit the CIC by potentially enrolling more students and gaining a more diverse student body.

Kevin Hull is dedicated to creating opportunities for all students taking sports media courses and their journey to the professional world.

ONCE A GAMECOCK, ALWAYS A GAMECOCK



By Amanda Benzies

Going from studying in the SJMC to working at ESPN Connecticut headquarters “can be a bit intimidating,” says alumna Cleopatra Shabazz. She discovered news was her passion when she was a young girl, always analyzing what was on television.

The only girl, with three brothers, in a sports-loving family, she knew she had to join in on the family interest. “Being immersed in that family and seeing, you know, men and women that are engaged in sports content, I figured why not?” Shabazz says.

As a student, Shabazz majored in broadcast journalism with a minor in Spanish and graduated in May 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communications. She was very involved on campus, being a part of six different organizations while at the SJMC and also

doing a work-study program.

“To see somebody, who’s a Gamecock, who’s in front of a camera, who walked through this building, I’ve sat in this classroom, I’ve edited, I’ve done all these things you’re doing and I can be at ESPN,” Shabazz says, about a presentation she saw while at SGTV, a student-run news organization, by a fellow alumna speaking about her time with ESPN. It gave her inspiration.

At ESPN, Shabazz is currently an associate producer in the international department, covering events and producing studio shows for events such as the Super Bowl, U.S. Open and NCAA football, among many others.

Most of the events she covers are in Spanish; for English events she helps translate between different networks.

Her experience with the SJMC helps

her with editing at ESPN. One of the most impactful experiences she had as a student was attending the National Association of Black Journalists Convention in August 2023.

“It was like years, years in the making of accomplishing something I wanted for so long,” Shabazz says.

“I grew up loving the Gamecocks my entire life so then I knew that was my dream school,” Shabazz says, explaining her decision to enroll in the SJMC.

She is a proud alumna of the SJMC, saying one of her favorite experiences post-graduation is seeing other Gamecocks on the field.

“To have that connection with fellow Gamecocks, it is unbelievable,” Shabazz says. She is also an ESPN career coach, helping new content associates establish themselves.

Shannon A. Bowen: PIONEERING ETHICS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND AI

By Ella Rogers

In the fast-paced world of strategic communication and artificial intelligence, staying ahead of the curve is key. CIC professor Shannon A. Bowen, Ph.D., a leading voice in this field, offers insights illuminating the intersection of ethics, innovation and communication. “We’re hoping to push the field forward so that we’re not caught in a reactionary mode,” Bowen says.

From attacks on Tesla robots to fake news stories, Bowen explored the complexities and challenges facing professionals in the

evolving fields of AI at the conclave held by the Global Strategic Communication Consortium (GSCC) in Florida in March 2024.

Bowen founded the GSCC, a USC nonprofit housed in the CIC, as a group of senior-level, influential scholars studying and collaborating on strategic communication, AI applications and futuristic innovations. Twenty-four top scholars from around the globe met at the GSCC Conclave to discuss the implications of technology for our future. “I was ready for a new challenge and I wanted to be able to talk about ethics and artificial intelligence of the future with other innovative thinkers,” Bowen says.

Bowen’s journey into the realm of corporate ethics began during her professional time as a data analyst in the research industry. She was shocked by the absence of ethical guidelines governing data production and usage. “I didn’t find a way that I could use ethics to answer questions about the data that we were producing and how that data was used,” Bowen says. Lack of guidelines led her to study ethics in her University of Maryland doctorate in addition to strategic public relations management and marketing.

Witnessing firsthand the prevalence of unethical business practices, such as at Enron Corporation, Bowen recognized the need for ethical frameworks in decision-making processes. Enron was an energy-trading and utility company based in Houston, Texas, that perpetrated one of the biggest accounting frauds in history. “I worked to start creating ways for companies to build ethics into their decision-making,” Bowen said.

Bowen has refined ethics models and published them in refereed journals for public use based on the Kantian ethical framework that combines morality and rationality. “I felt like we needed something stronger than situational ethics and stronger than just utilitarian public interest, something really based on duty and examining our role in society. We need explainable AI with

human verification,” Bowen says.

Bowen explains how in machine learning, the algorithms and data inputs used are often highly complex, making it difficult for humans to know how AI arrives at its conclusions.

“Human oversight has to be part of AI oversight. If it’s getting off track and doing something dangerous or prejudiced or basing its data on something that’s flawed, we can stop that process and get back on the right track, avoiding disastrous outcomes.”

Bowen noted two examples where AI has failed. Tesla introduced humanoid robots on its factory floor, but a robot latched onto an engineer’s hand, injuring him before another person initiated an emergency shutdown. Another example is in aviation, when AI in Boeing planes prevented human pilots from taking control, resulting in a crash outside Paris. “So I developed a paradigm for our field, helping further prevention of issues that become problems and challenges, helping to solve conflict, especially in advance of the problems,” Bowen says.

The GSCC will release the “Handbook of Innovations in Strategic Communication,” with Edward Elgar Publishing in December. The book addresses issues involving ethics early in the AI development process, before disaster or loss of life occurs.

Bowen’s hope is that ongoing research will set the stage for fairer, safer and more ethical workplaces and communities in the future, particularly as AI becomes increasingly integrated into our daily lives.



Courtesy of Brett Robertson; Shannon Bowen at the GSCC Consortium



Photos courtesy of E.W. Scripps and ESPN Next Cohort Photos

EXPLORING PERSONAL BRAND INTEGRITY

New class in the SJMC prepares students to protect their persona.

By Christopher Sniffin

In this age where every scroll, click and tap leaves a permanent mark on the digital world, the boundaries between personal identity and public persona have blurred. Yet, nestled in legal intricacy lies a path forward — one illuminated by the guiding principles of ownership, empowerment and self-determination. All this is to say that a new class about these issues as applied to one's name, image, and likeness (NIL) was introduced to the SJMC in the fall of 2024.

Senior instructor Carmen Maye J.D., Ph.D., is creating a curriculum around NIL laws. A class like this has never existed in the CIC curriculum before. The recent spotlight on NIL makes USC students want to learn more.

"There's been a lot of attention on it recently," Maye says. "since student-athletes are now allowed to be compensated for the use of their name, image and likeness."

But these laws affect everyone. "You don't have to be a celebrity or an athlete."

Maye, a seasoned instructor in both media law and strategic communications, is uniquely positioned to teach on these issues.



She noted that anyone may be interested in learning about NIL law to help promote their own personal brand or to maintain their privacy. From aspiring entrepreneurs to budding influencers, the principles of NIL law offer a roadmap to safeguard personal brand integrity and navigate the complexities of virtual identity.

The course will be in survey format, covering the breadth of NIL laws. Maye says collegiate athletes will be one part of the course, but she'll also cover the history of NIL and dive into the actual legislation itself.

Looking ahead, the impact of NIL laws will extend beyond individual rights to broader societal implications. As students delve into

"You don't have to be a celebrity or an athlete... these laws affect everyone."

the historical context of NIL legislation, they will uncover how these laws have historically affected women and people of color.

By examining case studies and engaging in critical discussions, students will gain insights into power dynamics and explore avenues for promoting equity and inclusivity in the realm of personal branding.

The course will cover a wide range of topics, from copyrights to contracts to the potential use of artificial intelligence in creating promotional materials.

The course is open to all students — it's technically part of the advertising curriculum but it's designed to be accessible to anyone. As a general elective, it offers flexibility for students from different disciplines to explore the topic. It will be delivered online for the first time so that students from across the university can take it.



The course has been in the works for quite some time; Maye started creating the curriculum last year.

"I suspect students may find the more theoretical stuff about persuasion most interesting," Maye says. "For a lot of courses, you learn what works and what's tried and true, but you don't necessarily learn why it works and what people are thinking."

However, there will still be plenty of examples and case studies as well. Students will engage online in discussions and collaborative work to glean a better understanding of the course content. Despite being online, those who take the class will find it to be more than just lectures.

Maye says that a lot is changing in the field of NIL law. In addition to compensating collegiate athletes for the use of their likenesses, a new collective structure has recently emerged. Collectives pool funds from donors and boosters independently of a university and help facilitate NIL deals for athletes.

With each new twist and turn, the course stands poised to equip students with the tools necessary to navigate the shifting currents of NIL law and emerge ready to understand personal branding.



J-SCHOOL GRAD ENCOURAGES COLLEGE STUDENTS TO TAKE RISKS

By Madelyn Weston

Jackie Alexander's favorite time to support students is after they graduate.

It may come as a surprise — she works hard to foster a supportive community as Director of Student Media at the University of Alabama Birmingham. But what she enjoys about her students' graduation is when they accomplish their goals.

"That's my crowning achievement that they get to graduation," Alexander says. "They find a job that they love, that they chose. Not that they were forced into, but a job that they chose. And they are giving back to our world in a positive way."

Alexander remembers her SJMC professors dedicating time, teaching her skills and supporting her career goals. She credits Scott Lindenberg, who was the Director of Student Media when she was a student, for setting up her career. He encouraged her to attend the College Media Association convention, and now she's president of CMA.

"I am so incredibly appreciative for all the people during my four years and even after that have poured into me as a student and as a professional," Alexander says. "Even once you graduate, you're always a part of the family."



Photos provided by Jackie Alexander

Having a reliable newsroom community helped her get through tough times.

Alexander was editor-in-chief of The Daily Gamecock when an Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, fire led to the deaths of six USC students. Her newsroom had the difficult task of calling parents, letting them know their child might have passed away.

"That really irrevocably changed my life and my outlook on journalism," Alexander says. "To be faced with our own mortality in such a catastrophic way while also having to report on it was hard."



Her staff relied on one another's support because they were still grieving while trying to produce news, she says.

"The way that that has impacted me as a professional and as a media adviser is encouraging my students to be mindful of their own mental health," Alexander says. "That no story is worth them being unwell, to be conscious and to be considerate of the people that are the subjects of their story."

Her experiences as a student reporter and editor-in-chief of The Daily Gamecock guide her empathetic approach to leading college media. Being an adviser for her students goes beyond teaching journalistic skills.

"That really irrevocably changed my life and my outlook on journalism."

"We have a good balance between our students' well-being and the need for news," Alexander says.

And students need a safe place like college media to take risks and fail, she says.

Alexander understands the pressure of managing classes, part-time jobs and a role in student media.

"Our students are superheroes," she says.

Alexander makes sure that her students are mentally and physically well, which sometimes means publishing a magazine late. She also avoids setting deadlines at busy times like the midterm to alleviate students' stress.



"Knowing how to build a community that's going to be incredibly supportive is a skill that I hope students learn," Alexander says. "No matter where you are in your career, having a team that you trust, that you can, you know, lay your

burdens down with, be your authentic self, is so incredibly important."

She confides in members of the College Media Association, who guided her at the beginning of her advisory role.

Being the first Black president of CMA is an enormous accomplishment, she says.

But it's also an enormous weight, Alexander says. The media profession is challenged by the number of layoffs while higher education is facing financial challenges from the impact of COVID-19 and the enrollment cliff.

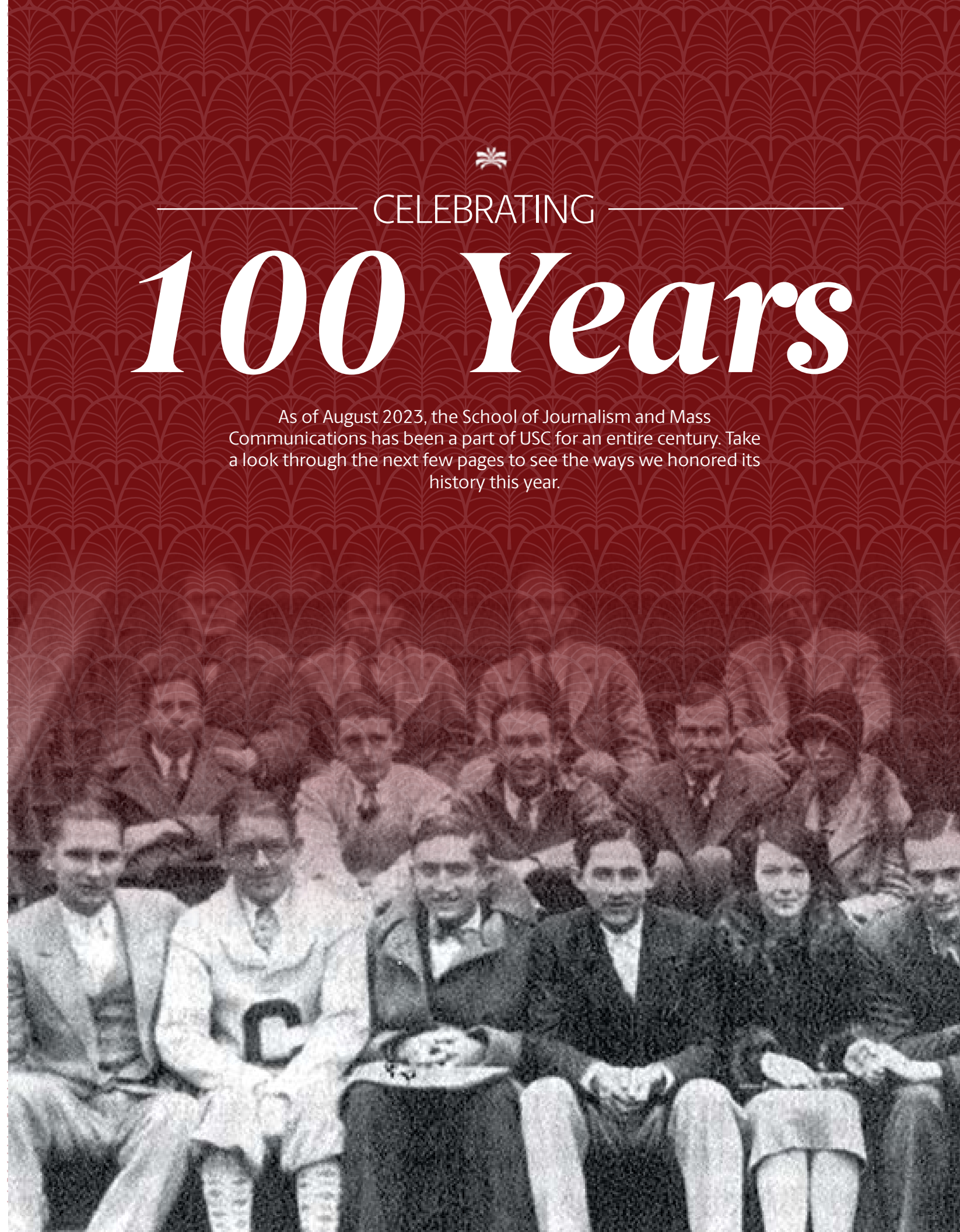
"Those two items collide in a way that impacts college media that is incredibly unique and challenging," she says.

Alexander feels pressure to be perfect, but it also fuels her to reach her goals. She hopes that serving as CMA president will pave a way for others.

"I remind myself daily that everything I've done, everything that I've endured, has led me to this point," Alexander says. "It has prepared me for this leadership role, whether that's being director or being president. And a lot of that started in South Carolina."

CELEBRATING 100 Years

As of August 2023, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications has been a part of USC for an entire century. Take a look through the next few pages to see the ways we honored its history this year.



A Century of Growth: WE'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER BUILDING

From 8 students to 1800 students

By Sofi Burnette

1923 The SJMC's first home was on the third floor of a house on the Horseshoe built in 1806 for USC President Melton, who refused to move in after seeing its condition. The third floor had two classrooms, a newspaper storage room and an office. A fireplace was in one of the classrooms. In total, eight students were registered for classes that fall. There were 13 journalism courses in the first year.



The first home of the journalism school, a building meant for then USC President Melton.

1933 Ten years later, the university requested money from the governor's advisory board for two new buildings. One of the buildings would have housed the journalism school among the departments of sociology, Bible and economics. The current building did not meet fire safety regulations -- there was an influx of students.

1938 Students were eventually moved to the second floor of Legare. Afterwards, they moved to the Maxcy College basement, which was also known as the "Mole Hole."



Historic Legare College

1946, 1948 "Journalism might be called the orphan school of the university," The Gamecock wrote. The SJMC relocated to Davis-McCutcheon House, now known as McCutcheon. Two years later, the school was moved to a war surplus building between Davis and Currell.

1950 The school returned to Legare College. New typographical equipment and a darkroom were installed. A room in Legare College became a student lounge.

1969 The school found a new home in the basement of the Carolina Coliseum. Dean Albert Taylor Scroggins Jr. was proud of the school's move, saying the news space was one of the best "in the whole Southeast." The Coliseum held a news lab, a conference call system, photography darkroom, two radio studios and two television studio-control rooms. While there was more space and room for innovation, a history of the journalism school says students did not enjoy the building being so far from the center of campus.

"That commitment to excellence has not changed. That's one thing I'm very proud of. This program has a long legacy of excellence, and it continues." -Dean Tom Reichert



The Carolina Coliseum, the old home of the SJMC. The building housed the journalism school until 2015.

2001 The merging of the SJMC and iSchool was arguably a successful mission. However, the buildings were far from each other. The SJMC stayed in the Coliseum, while the iSchool lived in Davis College.

2007 There were several plans for the SJMC's next building, 800 Sumter Street, where the School of Public Health building was located, was identified as the future home of the SJMC.



The old Life Science Building, now the location of the USC School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

2014 In January, the School of Public Health vacated 800 Sumter Street and renovations of the building began. In 2015, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications relocated to its new home.

2015 Celebrating the SJMC's new home at 800 Sumter Street, former broadcast journalism students, Darius Rucker and Mark Bryan, from Hootie & The Blowfish, held a concert on the Horseshoe. The SJMC moved from less than 30,000 square feet of space to 55,000 square feet, including a roof terrace, student plaza, a television studio, a Social Media Insights lab and high-tech news and control rooms.



The front entrance of the SJMC, located on Sumter Street.



The SJMC atrium, located just inside the back entrance.



The back entrance of the SJMC, located on Greene Street.



Photo of the USC Journalism School class of 1927 provided by the University of South Carolina.

WHERE WE WERE...

By Jenna Doyle

“It’s about telling the story, taking complex issues and being able to communicate why they matter and what it really means,” says Dean Tom Reichert. That’s what journalism is to the college — true when the SJMC began and true today.

In 1923, the SJMC was established at the University of South Carolina, starting with eight students with 13 courses from reporting and news writing to advertising and trade writing.

By 1927, enrollment topped 50 students and continued to grow from there.

Today, between the SJMC and iSchool, the college has over 2000 undergrads, several different major and minor options, and numerous course options, Reichert says, explaining the growth is because of the college’s evolving with professional journalism.

For a long time, journalism was just about print for newspapers — this is no longer true. Journalism is



The McKissick Museum (once known as the McKissick Library) was the first home of the journalism school.

much more extensive than just print. Over the last century, world and demographic changes have changed journalism. The college responded accordingly.

“You have to evolve. I mean, media has changed. The way you deliver messages has changed. Storytelling fundamentals are the same, but the tools and technologies

have changed.” Reichert says. “We used to have a radio program for instance, right? We don’t have to have that anymore. Now the school has a minor in social media. Most people get their information from social media.”

By evolving, the college grew. For almost 20 years the college stayed at a consistent 1500 students but quickly jumped to 1700 in 2017. During the COVID-19 pandemic, numbers dipped in light of the uncertainty, as did most programs throughout the nation, but the college responded and adapted. Now, the enrollment is back to the highest point in the school’s history.

Over 400 students enrolling into the SJMC each year is evidence that the school is still growing. This isn’t the case for journalism schools across the nation. There is a direct correlation between a journalism school’s growth and its willingness to evolve and adapt.

“So most large state programs like ours have a variety of majors that are related to kinds of communication and journalism,” Reichert says.

The SJMC is making efforts to support and prepare students to be knowledgeable and adaptable. The school is developing a new major and new courses, and investing in the latest programs to stay current in the latest technology and innovation.

“We made the decision that every student should have access to Adobe Creative Cloud. You need to have it to be competitive.” Reichert says. “When you talk to employers, students have to know the fundamentals. You have to know the basics of journalism, the basics of public relations and basics of advertising. But you also need to know and have familiarity and be able to work with the latest tools and technology to get in the door.”

The options available within the college are extensive and match the climate of the industry.

“Only when you get here and you get exposed to other majors through classes, electives and your fellow students, do you see that there are more options,” Reichert says.

In 2023, 9 percent of all majors at USC were in the SJMC, today that number is down to 6 percent. The college is seeking to increase this number back to where it was in 2023 by targeting groups currently not highly represented.

“Seventy percent of undergraduates in the college are female and that’s tracking with trends in the university overall,” Reichert says. “More men used to enroll in college than women in the ‘70s and that’s totally flipped.” The college is seeking to answer the question of where the men have gone and how to get them here while also focusing on increasing the number of women and minorities.

“I would say for our college we’re doing all we can to support students. I think every student would benefit from having exposure to our classes at some level,” Reichert says.

...WHERE WE’RE GOING



A group photo on the USC Horseshoe of the Journalism 534 students from the Spring 2024 semester.

Photo by Savannah Nagy

A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION

SJMC Centennial Gala – Dance through the Decades

By Alicia Caracciolo

One hundred years – a century of constant innovation in education. All of the work was put on pause on April 6, 2024 – it was time to celebrate.

The SJMC welcomed more than 130 alumni, faculty, staff and guests to the Pastides Alumni Center for the SJMC Centennial Gala – “Dance through the Decades.”

Photos by Savannah Nagy

“This is truly celebratory, truly the culmination of this year.”

Director of the SJMC, Damion Waymer, Ph.D., began working on the gala soon after arriving at the SJMC in 2023.

The goal?

“To just have a night of fun celebrating the history of this school,” Waymer says.

Showcased work from the last 100 years decorated the gala – papers and pictures depicting a century of education and growth for students and the school.

SJMC educational initiatives and innovations were reserved for a different time. This night centered on great music from Right to Party, great company and dancing.

The SJMC community offers support and encouragement. A video captured the spirit

of the J-school, created by retired Director of Special Projects Randy Covington in collaboration with an alumnus.

“I can’t thank you guys enough,” said ABC Correspondent Eva Pilgrim in a clip from when she was honored as an Outstanding Alumna in 2016. “I look at where I’ve been able to get, because of the people in this room, because of the friends I made here. The people who picked up the phone and called you... and said you are going to keep doing this.”



KEEPING AT IT

Wise words from an American journalist

by Isabella Kamenszky



Photos by Alicia Caracciolo

Bob Woodward, investigative journalist of Watergate fame, started his career in 1971 as a reporter for The Washington Post. Today, he is an associate editor and Pulitzer Prize winner. When navigating his career, Woodward knew that being a successful journalist wouldn't come easily — but rather, he had to keep at it. He greatly encourages young aspiring journalists today to remain resilient in their work and do the same.

On Feb. 28, Woodward was featured at the SJMC's Buchheit Family Lecture held in the mock court room at the University of South Carolina's Joseph F. Rice School of Law.

Woodward studied history and English literature at Yale University. After receiving his B.A. in 1965, he served in the United States Navy for five years. In 1970, he was discharged as a lieutenant and was admitted to Harvard Law School. Though he elected not to attend, this didn't hinder him from furthering his education.

While applying for a job at The Washington Post, Woodward enrolled in graduate courses at George Washington University. Despite investing profoundly in his learning, he was declined a position at the Post because of his lack of experience with journalism. After gaining exposure publishing weekly local

newspapers in Washington, D.C., he was hired as a Post reporter in 1971.

In 1972, Woodward and his colleague, Carl Bernstein, were assigned to cover the Watergate scandal. They made a discovery that exposed the Watergate break-in, revealing the ulterior motives of the Nixon administration. This in-depth investigative reporting catapulted his career to a new level.

Woodward has been an associate editor at The Washington Post for over 50 years. He has written about the last 10 U.S. presidents, and is the author of 22 nonfiction, best-selling books. He has won nearly every American journalism award, including two Pulitzers.

At the SJMC, he spoke about his work throughout the years, and his beliefs and values as a journalist, answering questions from students wishing to pursue a similar career path.

Woodward gave simple advice — “Don't be stumped if it's hard... if you really want to do it, you will do it.”

While pursuing a career he was greatly passionate about, he decided not to let

setbacks determine his future; rather, he chose to extract the lessons learned on his journey. Though being a journalist often comes with various challenges, Woodward believes that it is the best job.

“I think if someone from Mars came to America, standing here, and asked who in America has the best jobs, the answer would be the journalists.”

In his first week working at The Washington Post, he learned quickly about the sacrifices necessary to be a successful journalist. Despite making both large and small sacrifices, he learned that he loved journalism.

“You may be late for dinner. You might have to make some calls from home. You may have to get up early the next morning,” he reiterated during the lecture. “Time against the problem.”

Woodward is best known for his work as an investigative journalist, specifically surrounding politics. When he was asked about how his personal bias changed after pursuing journalism, he responded with “Your own bias... that's gone. Gone. Flushed.”

Woodward recognizes that his profession covers topics that may be sensitive. He instructs reporters and journalists to “calm it down, listen more, be on the surface respectful. But as reporters, be as aggressive as possible and never stop the inquiry.”

Woodward's lecture at the University of South Carolina ultimately encouraged the Columbia community and its students to continue striving for what they wish to achieve — keeping at it.



— HERE'S TO —
100 More

SJMC CONTINUES 20 YEARS OF PHOTOJOURNALISM INNOVATION

By Madelyn Weston



Photo provided by Gillian Thomas

The world of photojournalism is constantly evolving, with the newest technologies being drone photography and artificial intelligence.

Skills that were specialties 20 years ago like animation, videography, photography and website design have become accessible for everyone, associate professor Van Kornegay says. He adapts to new technology and first fell in love with visual communications when he bought a Mac as a graduate student in the SJMC M.M.C. program.

Now visual communications resources have “become more democratized,” he says.

When the SJMC hired Kornegay to buy and install Mac computers, he began developing graduate courses, which quickly gained popularity. CIC alumni said they needed more photography, graphics and layout courses because advertising, public relations and journalism fields require those skills.

Kornegay worked with photography and graphic design faculty to found the visual communications major in 2004. The program grew from 30 students its first year to about 250 within six years, he says. Since then, visuals have become

more interactive with augmented and virtual reality products.

AI creates graphics, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity. Kornegay sees it as a supplement for graphics and design, not a substitute.

“Now you won’t have to have all the hand-eye skill set to perfectly do it; the app will do it,” Kornegay says. “However, you do have to frequently bring them into a program and then edit it to make it just the way you want it.”

AI-produced visuals are not copyrightable, making it less appealing to companies and brands that want a distinct look, he says. Some people may create their own logos, resulting in a raft of bad designs.

Drone photography is still a novelty in visual communications because the pilot needs an understanding of photography, videography, flying and risk-taking.

Versatility makes drone photography a valuable and unique skill.

Jeff Blake instructed the SJMC Media Innovation Academy summer course in 2022 and 2023 and does freelance photography. He has been hired by real estate agents to

showcase a property. Blake also recorded drone footage of the Riverwalk after a shooting as evidence for prosecuting lawyers.

Blake’s photograph of a Cayce train wreck in 2018 for the Associated Press became one of his most influential photos.



Photo by Jeff Blake/Associated Press

A nurse told Blake that some of the train wreck survivors had his photo in their hospital rooms.

“It kind of inspired them that they were able to survive this terrible accident,” Blake said. “That meant a lot to me.”

Without the drone, the photo wouldn’t have been possible.

When shooting video and taking photos, Blake varies the height and angle of the drone

to capture various perspectives. His drone photography class met at multiple locations around Columbia, like the Thomas Cooper Library’s reflection pool and Williams Brice Stadium.

One of Blake’s students, Xavier Martin, first learned drone photography in high school. Now he shoots drone videos for The Daily Gamecock. One of his videos showed a representation of the students attending First Night Carolina.

“It gives you a sense of scale with your photography or with their journalistic work,” Martin says about drone photography.

Kornegay’s courses teach the basics: altitude changes (moving up and down), panning left and right, rolling left to right and pitching (zooming by moving forward and backward). His students also learn to be careful about obstacles and the risk of crashing.



Photo provided by Gillian Thomas

Before students go out in the field, Kornegay tests them by flying in a box pattern. During the summer courses, he creates the Game of Drones, which is an obstacle course made from pipes. Students fly by watching their drone visually, then turn around and use only the screen.

“It’s always fun to go watch students’ eyes light up,” Kornegay says.

Martin hopes the SJMC adds more advanced drone photography courses in the future so students can continue to hone their skills and build a portfolio. The course could include aeronautics, which is the science of air travel, and its history and laws, he suggested. Students would benefit from learning to use proper flight maps to chart a flight course.

Martin was accepted into the Eddie Adams Workshop, which is an annual prestigious photojournalism workshop in Jeffersonville, New York, taught by industry professionals.



Photo by Xavier Martin/The Daily Gamecock

He normally covers sports and live event work, so the workshop assigned him to a quieter, more detailed-oriented story on a liquor store, Martin says. When he went back to get photos on a Sunday, the store was closed. He thought creatively, incorporating a local church because of blue laws that prevent the sale of alcohol on Sundays.

“Everybody there got experience in some form of photojournalism, whether they’re telling a story with using, like, portraits or whether they’re telling it with covering a sporting event or covering a local business or person,” Martin says.



Scan the QR Code to see more of Martin’s work.



Photo by Xavier Martin/The Daily Gamecock

“IT BASICALLY TAUGHT ME HOW TO DO EVERYTHING”

By Amanda Benzies

College students do not expect to be offered a job while standing in the hallway outside their classroom. That's just what happened to two JOUR 499 Media Selling and Technology students when they accepted a job at Cumulus Radio. Many other students have been hired directly because of the 499 class.

It is taught at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and offers insight into the world of media selling, such as selling advertisements to companies and how to complete a sale.

One of these students is alumna Faith Bethea, who graduated from the SJMC in December 2023 with an advertising degree. Bethea began working in October — before graduation — as an account executive for

ABC Columbia, being both a full-time student and working full-time in advertising sales.

Bethea attributes her interest in media selling to what she learned in the 499 class.

She had no interest in that side of advertising before enrolling in the class. She was inspired by the class to join The Daily Gamecock as an advertising representative, selling ads for the magazines on campus.

“So since I had the experience with the school,” Bethea said, “I ended up doing three interviews with ABC Columbia, and I loved it and I am the youngest on the team, so that's really cool.”

Bethea stumbled across the class description for Media Selling on

DegreeWorks, a website to view courses, and thought it looked interesting and chose to enroll.

The class is also a capstone course, fulfilling one of her requirements for graduation. It turned out to be her favorite SJMC course, she says. “With this class, like I said, I mean it's my job now. So it basically taught me how to do everything,” Bethea says.

On her first day on the job, her boss gave her a presentation. It was a summary of what she learned in the media sales class.

One of the courses main teaching forms is hands-on practice with media selling. “I would say that the best thing about the class is that anybody that takes it works as an ad representative for the day,” Bethea says.

For example, students had to create a five-minute video in which they practiced closing a deal with a client. They had to go over recommendations, costs and audience exposure they would receive, and answer client objections to the sale.

The class focuses on learning media sales, including ethics, and stressing the importance of the digital aspect of media sales. Students learn multiple aspects of sales, such as the nine steps of selling. In the class's first semester, around 20 students enrolled.

Now, the class has grown to over 50 students and has to be moved to a new classroom with more space.

The media sales class also invites a wide variety of executives in the media selling industry to speak to the class about the aspects of media selling work.

“I think the guest speakers really show what the real life job force is like out there and you know there are jobs out there,” Bethea says. Visitors explain how to sell to clients, show examples of the presentations they give to sell and how to answer objections to their presentation.



Photo by Amanda Benzies

EXPLORING AI INITIATIVES

Transforming education at the iSchool

By Morgan Liotti

“So how much am I going to out myself about how much AI I use every day?” Lyda McCartin, director of the iSchool, begins by reluctantly answering a question about the extent of her artificial intelligence usage in her everyday life.

When asked about usage of AI, it's important to note that this new wave of technology is something many people are suspicious of.

AI, specifically in a collegiate setting, can be a particularly difficult conversation. McCartin touches on ways she believes schools should be working with AI, “Why don't we think about how it can help students start a project? Or instead of being upset that ChatGPT can answer exam questions, why don't we think about rewriting exam questions?”

“If AI can answer the question, maybe we're asking the wrong question,” says McCartin.



McCartin explains the lack of creativity unveiled by AI and how it's a potential threat to students. She mentions Sabrina Habib, P.h.D., who teaches the CIC's creative thinking class, explaining that when brainstorming, you stop at the first idea and don't go beyond that. However, if it's the first idea, it's probably not a creative idea. “You kind of have to think beyond the AI as human who is bringing in lived experience,” McCartin says.



Alamir Novin, P.h.D., pioneers AI at the iSchool with many initiatives to incorporate AI in the iSchool and the AI Lab is the biggest.

The CIC's AI and AGI (Artificial General Intelligence) Lab researches experiments with AI simulations in interdisciplinary collaborations with the academic community.

The lab is partnered with Interpares, a major international research initiative, allowing it to be networked with over 50 universities across six continents. The lab also partners with MethodsAGI's simulation software giving researchers assistance in their experiment in their AI learning and cognition experiments.

The CIC Biometrics and User Experience Lab cooperates with the AI lab, enabling experiments that measure human bioical responses to AI.

Finally, the AI and AGI Lab works with the CIC's Social Media Insights Lab allowing experiments on the interactions between AI and society using big data compiled by the Social Media Lab.

McCartin explains the importance of the mix of undergraduate and graduate students working together. “It's a faculty led thing, but

student-driven.”

An AI in society course is in development for the iSchool. “That's really going to be exploring these questions around the technology and its impact on people, and what it means for how it's impacting humans,” McCartin says. In addition, there is an AI track through the schools bachelor's program. Essentially, if you major in information science you can do an AI in society track.

From a broad standpoint, McCartin thinks the conversation about AI is still in its beginning stages. She believes that there will be many conversations around policy and cyber ethics, and updating and controlling the university's standpoint on those will remain consistent.

“So the question about it becoming something bigger than this... the AI conversation will evolve with the technology,” McCartin noted. “We'll see both positive and negative impacts, deepening our understanding. There may be more challenges before widespread benefits, but that's typical with transformative tech. We'll need to stay vigilant and adaptable as AI takes shape.”

EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE *Every time*

Library access for all

By Eliza Mullen

School faculty member Clayton Copeland's work comes from her heart and is making a difference for those who are differently abled. The term differently abled focuses on the individual's autonomy.

During her time at the iSchool, Copeland strives for progress in ensuring equitable access to information. Her research is fueled by the belief that every person has unique abilities that should be accepted.



Photo by Elizabeth Grushkowsky

"I'm just Clayton and I happen to use a walker," Copeland says, never having thought of herself as having a disability or being disabled.

From an early age, Copeland was taught to celebrate her own unique abilities and the unique abilities within all human beings. She learned that everyone has challenges – some more visible to the outside world than others. She was born three months prematurely and, as a result, uses a walker. Uncorrected, she has vision in one eye.

Growing up, Copeland fell in love with the library. She attended the Thornwell School in Clinton, South Carolina, working in the library until she graduated. She was deeply inspired by her school librarians, Ellen H. Ramsey, and Vicky Culbertson, who are also alumnae of the iSchool. Ramsey and Culbertson always

made sure that every student felt welcome. Copeland's desire to make the kind of difference they had made for her for other children, eventually led her to earn a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science from the CIC.

"I wanted to do something in life that would make a difference, and Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Culbertson had certainly made incredible and innumerable differences in my life," Copeland says about why she chose this field of study, "I thought if I could give what they had given me to just one child that would be an amazing privilege and honor." And she certainly has.

In 2007, she received a fellowship for the iSchool's Ph.D. program from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and moved to Columbia. Her goal was to delve into a topic that would really make a difference for others. Literature in library and information science was well-intentioned but there was an exceptionally limited amount of scholarship exploring the lived experiences of library patrons with disabilities, Copeland says.

People were being written about but their own voices were not being included.

The people who experience challenges firsthand know most of all what their needs are and how they can be met.

With these ideas in mind, Clayton Copeland got to work.

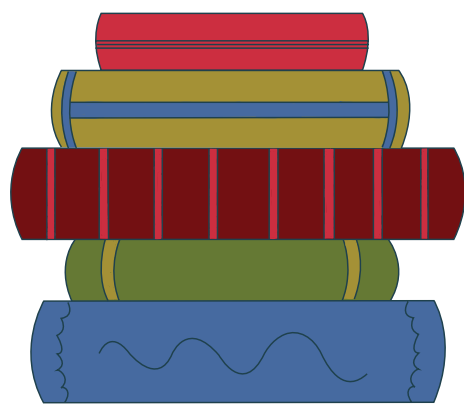
Her dissertation focused on the lived-experiences of differently-abled and typically-abled people to understand the extent of library accessibility. Throughout the process, she determined that many aspects of disability are socially constructed by architectural and societal barriers and misperceptions, among other factors. Through fostering awareness, we also have opportunities to foster greater accessibility.

"It's not that a person is disabled innately,"

Copeland said. "Does the disability exist because the person needs to use a walker? Or does it exist when the environment is not accessible?"

Copeland's current research collaborating with professors Dick Kawooya, iSchool, and Eric P. Robinson, SJMC, uses the universal design concept. Their research focuses on equitable access for blind, visually impaired, and print-disabled students (BVIPD). With grants from the CIC, the Provost's Excel Grant Program, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, they are working to build a campus accessibility partnership model between Disability Services Offices, academic libraries in the Southeastern Conference, and institutions of higher education.

The goal is to "improve equity of access for BVIPD students and directly impact their degree completion rates and the overall quality of their educational experiences," Copeland says. The goal of this groundbreaking work is to help ensure that everyone has access to education everywhere and every time.



Kayla Hupton with Colonial Life team in 2023

"SAY YES AND STAY CURIOUS"

By Ella Rogers

If you've spent time in Columbia, you've likely heard of Colonial Life, originally founded in 1937. At the time, the sales team was comprised of mostly local women, and since then has grown to approximately 12,000 independent agents across the country.

"Supporting others, particularly supporting other women, is something I've always been passionate about," says Kayla Hildreth Gupton, SJMC alumna (2010, 2012) and Assistant Vice President of National Sales Operations at Colonial Life.

Gupton has been with Colonial Life for 10 years. She has served in various roles and departments across the enterprise, including corporate marketing, market development and the Colonial Life sales organization.

"Throughout each of my roles, I've been able to leverage the skills and knowledge that I learned at USC. My time there provided me an incredibly strong foundation in which I could build my career and contribute to the company's and my colleagues' goals," Gupton says.

Gupton's connection to her alma mater runs deep. For the past few years, she and

her team have had the opportunity to work with a student and a recent graduate of USC.

"It's been very fulfilling and rewarding for our team to help this scholar advance and develop skills while also having real impact on our team and the broader company," Gupton says.

Beyond her professional duties, Gupton is committed to community engagement. She has honed her leadership skills and championed initiatives uplifting women and empowering future leaders through her involvement with Leadership Columbia and the Junior League of Columbia.

"Throughout my tenure as a member of JLC, I've had the opportunity to work with other League leaders to help our members challenge themselves in new ways, further developing their leadership skills and driving the League to achieve more and have a greater impact in our community," Gupton says.

Gupton was recognized with The State newspaper's 20 Under 40 award. "Leadership is about leading by example, motivating, enabling, and investing in and developing others for cumulative, positive impact," Gupton says.

When asked about what advice she would give to current students at the SJMC, she says, "Say yes, stay curious and don't discount the value of living in a state of discomfort."



Photos courtesy of Kayla Gupton

FROM BUCKET LIST TO REAL LIFE

Children's books essential to the health of the community

By Abbie Mott



Photo provided by Beatriz Pascual Wallace

Beatriz Pascual Wallace graduated in 2001 and was an iSchool student when she attended her first award ceremony for children's literature. The excitement in the air made Wallace add "serve on Newbery committee," to her professional bucket list. The John Newbery Medal is a children's literary award given by the Association for Library Service to Children.

Wallace is a children's librarian at the Seattle Public Library, describing libraries as,

"essential to the health of a community." Not only does she help children within her community, but she also promotes diverse books by serving on different children's book awards committees.

Currently Wallace is serving on the Pura Belpré Awards Committee. In this position, she is working with six other colleagues helping to choose picture books, chapter books and fiction for children and teens written by Latino authors. After a lot of deliberation, and sifting through hundreds

of titles, they choose what they feel are the strongest books, and recognize them at an awards ceremony. This is also given by the Association for Library Service.

While she is proud of her work in the Pura Belpré Awards Committee, she will forever be grateful for her chance to serve on the Newbery Committee.

In 2020, Wallace finally checked off something from her professional bucket list, when the vice president of the Newbery Committee asked her to join. Her answer was, "Ummm, Hello? Yes!"

While she was serving, the committee made a historic choice — picking the first cartoon style graphic novel, "New Kid" by Jerry Craft. Wallace was so excited to attend her first award show, describing it as, "Sort of like the Oscars if you're a children's librarian."

“ Sort of like the Oscars if you're a children's librarian ”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Newbery Awards banquet was canceled the year that Wallace served on the committee. She was still glad to have had the opportunity to be part of the selection process.

But nothing beats the time she was an iSchool student at the children's book award ceremony when the, "excitement was so palpable, and my heart was racing so fast," Wallace said.



iSchool Insights

By Jenna Doyle

Margaret Cook Storytelling & Spectacle

"I'm constantly trying to bridge storytelling and spectacle, and using it as a way to get kids really excited about learning," Cocky's Reading Express Coordinator and iSchool instructor Margaret Cook says.

Cocky's Reading Express is the CIC's literacy outreach initiative that Cook coordinates and leads — partnering with college student volunteers and Cocky, going into Title I elementary schools. Delivering a high-energy storytime, students sing songs, dance and read stories. Every student takes home a giveaway book. Reading Express gives children access to books and fosters a love of reading.

Cook also instructs a course for future educators to teach them how to be engaging storytellers and giving them tools for classroom library building.



Rachel Williams Ideas Into Research

"Taking students through that journey of okay, well, I have this idea of this thing that's just kind of nagging me, hanging out in the back of my mind, how do I take that and turn it into a research project?" iSchool assistant professor Rachel Williams says.

Her primary interests and research are in public libraries because of the role they play in their communities. Her research analyzes the relationship between librarians and social workers and how they work adjacent to each other in the community.

Her research has also led to training public library workers. Williams' background in librarianship and community development, along with her research, helps as she teaches students in the classroom.

She utilizes AR/VR to train and educate students, especially around crisis communication skills. Williams believes VR has a lot of potential for teaching, learning and has VR space available to students.



Alamir Novin Virtue Without Bias

"How do we even define or know what virtue is? Right? You know, in the CIC, we're always looking at social good, and things like that. But what is good?" iSchool assistant professor Alamir Novin says.

His question is the basis of Novin's career, being drawn to the way virtue influences handling information, recognizing data and utilizing technology to improve journalism against bias. Novin focuses his research on artificial intelligence, cognitive science, data science, cybersecurity, network analysis, communication and information science.

Novin comes to the CIC from a Canadian research team that studied science models using data, leading him to build a software facilitating these models. His research combines cognitive science and data science, experimenting with computer systems and AI.

Going forward, Novin will research and instruct on AI and society. He will continue searching for virtue without subjectivity and ways technology can aid against human bias.

ALUMNI *Notes*

1990s

Jennifer Marie Wiggins, BA, '98, is a freelance writer and author of "Married AF: A Funny Marriage Guide" (Sourcebooks, 2022) and recently "The Good Bride". A USC Journalism graduate with an MAT from The Citadel, her work appears in *Southern Coastal Weddings*, *Savannah Magazine*, *Literary Mama*, and more.

2000s

Laurie Walters, MLIS, '02, was recently promoted to the Head of Youth Services at Brighton District Library, Brighton, MI.



Trish Munn, BA, '03, is the 12 p.m., 4 p.m., and 5:30 p.m. News Anchor for WBTW News13 in Myrtle Beach/Florence, SC. After 10 years in photography, marketing, and PR, Trish returns to WBTW, where she was Anchor and Bureau Chief from 2004-2014.

2010s

Abbey Barrows, BA, '16, was promoted to Assistant Director of Digital Content and Social Media at Kennesaw State University. She oversees the university's main social media accounts, develop strategies and create multi-media content for the KSU news site. Previously, she was a PR multimedia specialist, producing news-style videos showcasing KSU achievements.



Jo Jo Winkelmann, BA, '17, served as Club Chair for the USC Alumni chapter in Chicago (2021-2023) and still consult for the USC Dance Marathon alumni board. She's excited to continue on the Board as Communications Chair, focusing on expanding our social media content and reaching more members through email and phone.

2020s

Jesse Breazeale, BA, '22, had the privilege of capturing the 2024 Women's Final Four, where the Gamecocks won their third national championship. His photos, shared across social media, garnered 13 million+ impressions and were featured on sc.edu and Alumni materials. This is his greatest professional accomplishment—and he's looking forward to doing it again next year!

Emma Gerraughty, BA, '22, has gotten involved with the American Advertising Federation Midlands Chapter and other local organizations, with her time at ADCO turning into a great start to her career after beginning as an internship through CIC Career Services.



Constance Caddell, Ph.D., '23, has been appointed University Archivist at Tuskegee University, where she is honored to serve her alma mater. With degrees in library science, business administration, and history, she is committed to preserving Black history and amplifying marginalized voices.



ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP NAMED IN HONOR OF VISIONARY JOURNALIST DON BROWNE

The University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications has established a scholarship in honor of Don Browne, the visionary journalist who led Telemundo, WTVJ in Miami and held senior positions with NBC News.

The Don Browne Scholarship will benefit students from underrepresented groups in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Preference will be given to students with financial need. Browne attended USC, where he once lettered in football, and was a lifelong supporter of the school.

"I knew Don for almost 50 years. This scholarship reflects the importance he placed on mentoring young journalists, especially women and minorities," said Randy Covington, retired director of special projects for the College of Information and Communications.

This scholarship has been endowed thanks to the generosity of:

- The Donald V. Browne Trust
- Comcast Corporation
- Foundation For The Carolinas
- Gartner Family Foundation
- Stuar Sucherman
- Joseph Fleming
- Karin Bain & John Kukral Foundation
- Jeffrey Zucker
- Phil Griffin
- Dianne Festa
- Robert and Lisa Jordan
- Randy and Laura Covington
- Mark Hoffman
- Dennis Murphy
- Elena Nachmanoff
- Kerry Sanders and Deborah Sharp
- William and Kathleen Seider
- Nancy Cole
- Daniel Noa
- Phil Bremen
- Pat Kopco
- Susan LaSalla
- Leibner Cooper Family Foundation

If you would like to contribute to this scholarship, scan here:



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