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Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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INSIDE JOURNALISM

June 1988

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

NEWS INDUSTRY DISCUSSES MINORITY PROGRESS

There Ain't Much

For budding journalists who are members of a minority group, there's bad news and good news.

The bad news, judging by a full day of gut-wrenching discussion at the spring meetings of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), is that the industry has done a poor job of recruiting blacks and other minorities.

The good news is that most responsible members of ASNE appear to feel suitably guilty about their negligence. And many vowed to improve the records of their organizations.

Concurrent with the meetings of the editors, the National Association of Black Journalists blasted the profession for its poor performance and, according to *The New*

York Times, called on newspapers to double the number of black journalists by 1991.

The chairman of the Minority Affairs Committee of ASNE commented on this goal: "I don't know if that's realistic. I would love to see it done, and we'll certainly work our tails off to do it."

An ASNE report indicates that 7.02 percent of the newsroom work force is made up of Black, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian professionals, up from 6.56 the previous year. The number of minority journalists employed at dailies rose from 3,600 to 3,900 this year, while the total journalist population grew from 54,700 to 55,300. Of the 600 new positions, half were filled by minorities—a significant improvement over past hiring practices.

The ASNE report also says that the majority of U.S. dailies still have no minority professionals on their staffs. However, the number of newspapers in this category improved from 56 to 55 percent since last year.

In all newspapers, only 4.1 percent of managers are minorities, a meager improvement over the 3.9 percent of the previous year.

The implications for minority journalism students should be obvious. Their best shots at papers that are predominately white are in the big cities, where most publishers have well-organized affirmative action plans.

Unfortunately, the chances at management for minorities are slim to slimmer. Hopefully, media owners will remedy this shortcoming by the time Columbia students are ready for the big time.

What is encouraging, of course, is that any minority student with a good college record has a better than average chance of landing an entry level-position or internship. The papers are looking to improve their hiring records, and any student who doesn't take advantage of this isn't using all the weapons in his or her arsenal.—Nat Lehrman

GRADUATE JOB PROSPECTS

According to a study done by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund on career opportunities for graduating journalism students, the media is opening its arms to babes in the field. Dow Jones reports that hiring has increased significantly for students with news-editorial backgrounds. About 65% of journalism graduates offered newspaper jobs majored in news-editorial studies. Approximately 66% of graduates now working in the field had prior internship experience, and 84% of graduating journalism majors with journalism jobs had been involved with the college press.

Students with a news-editorial background had the best luck of all, according to the report. Four to six months after graduation more than 50% of journalism majors obtained media jobs. In 1987, Dow Jones reported that there were more journalism students hired in 1986 than in 1985, and they reported recently that the pace has continued to accelerate, especially in the newspaper field. —Josephine Gibson

GRADUATES LOOK FORWARD TO PROMISING CAREERS

This month many of Columbia's students will bid the college farewell when they walk across the stage to receive their diplomas. Some of Columbia's most outstanding journalism students will be among them, as seven members of the *Chronicle* staff bid adieu to Columbia. These budding journalists worked to the last day; the ink on the final issue of the semester issue was barely dry as

they began to plan their futures.

Dena Smith a reporter for the **Chronicle**, is contemplating graduate school at Howard University or moving to Savannah to pursue a career in broadcast journalism. Dena, 23, says she is looking forward to the opportunities that graduation will offer her as a result of her work on the **Chronicle**. "I've become organized writing for the **Chronicle**," says Dena. She also stresses that the real-life experience she got in class and on the **Chronicle** has been very beneficial.

Victoria Pierce, 22, is Managing Editor of Features for the **Chronicle**. Victoria says she would like to work for the City News Bureau after graduation, but is leaving other options open. Victoria points out that working on the **Chronicle** is important because various aspects of journalism are taught. Besides being published, you gain experience in reporting, writing, layout and typesetting. "Working on the paper gives you realistic training. The whole journalism program is excellent. Much better than at some of the other schools I've attended," says Victoria.

Tom Holoubek, the Photo Editor for the **Chronicle**, has majored in photo journalism and liberal arts. "I plan to get a job for a daily newspaper after graduation," says Tom. He points out that working for the **Chronicle** has expanded his photography skills and allowed him to report on big news events. "I covered the entire funeral of Mayor Harold Washington and recently covered an interview with an AIDS victim," says Tom.

Lee Bey is Managing News Editor for the **Chronicle**. Lee, 22, says that he would like to work for the **Chicago Defender** after graduation. Whatever paper he works for, Lee believes he can present his employer with a great deal of "talent and energy."

Penny Mateck, 21, is Editor-in-Chief of the **Chronicle**. Penny says that her plans after graduation include getting a "real job."

Penny, who went from staff reporter to editor-in-chief in less than a year, says students can get experience through working for the **Chronicle** that will benefit them later on. "I've gotten a lot of good clips and stories working for the **Chronicle**," says Penny.

Tanya Bey, 21, another of the

TEACHERS RECEIVE RECOGNITION

Columbia's Journalism Department had reason to be proud when its Investigative and Consumer Reporting teacher Bill Gaines was awarded the Pulitzer Prize this spring. In a series on the Chicago City Council that ran in the **Chicago Tribune** in late 1987, the political maneuverings of the Council and the aldermen responsible for them were revealed to a nationwide audience.

Bill says that "to be an investigative reporter, you have to work hard in all aspects of journalism. That includes the police beats, covering the courts, doing features and learning everything about the city you're working in. But eventually it pays off."

The department is also proud of Gary Hengstler, who teaches Copy Editing, and was a finalist for the Peter Lisagor Award. His article, "Attorneys for the Damned," received recognition for dealing with attorneys who voluntarily defend convicts who have been sentenced to death but can't otherwise afford legal representation. Gary wrote the article for the **ABA Journal** as part of the American Bar Association's Death Penalty Project. -- Josephine Gibson

Chronicle's reporters feels that finally graduating is worth all the hard work she put into school. "I want to work on a newspaper for one year and then attend law school," says Tanya. She emphasizes that journalism students need to be able to compete after they graduate. "Do an internship and be persistent. The competi-

tion is tough, and you have to work at it to make it in journalism." --Shirley Henderson

INTERNSHIPS OPEN DOORS

Kathleen Misovic, a senior, is one of 17 students doing a journalism internship this semester. Kathleen's responsibilities at the Chicago Department of Health include writing press releases and feature articles on department programs, facilities and staff members. Kathleen spends at least 16 hours a week working at her internship. "Sometimes, I come in between classes on Friday to work on a project," she notes. But the hard work is paying off. Kathleen's feature articles are appearing in neighborhood and community publications.

The internship, Kathleen says, has not only enhanced her abilities in journalistic writing, but it has also taught her a lot about public relations. In addition, it has enabled her to write about science, one of her special interests. Kathleen also values the "hands-on reporting experience," which she gets going around to the department's "various offices to report on breaking news."

Kathleen hopes her participation in the program will send a message to prospective employers: "It shows employers that I have writing experience and that I take my job seriously." She also knows that "without experience, it will be hard to get a job."

Crystal Downs, who is also a senior, is looking forward to an exciting summer internship at **Essence** magazine in New York.

Crystal says she has "very high expectations for this internship. I expect to learn a lot from the editors there." She adds that Susan Taylor, editor for **Essence**, is an inspiration to her.

As we go to press, Claudia Lenart reports that her internship at **Wednesday**, a weekly community paper, has turned into a full time postgraduate job. As the old song goes, "It could hap-

pen to you!"--Eric Peterson

FRONT PAGE LECTURE SERIES

You never knew who you were going to run into in Nick Shuman's News Interviewing/Front Page Lecture Series class (given every spring for one credit). The many guest speakers from broadcast and news media read like a Who's Who of the press. Their purpose was to teach the fundamentals of interviewing and lay some tips on the students about how to get ahead in the competitive media businesses.

This semester, we heard Renee Ferguson, General Assignment reporter for Channel 5 News. Renee stressed the importance of networking in the journalism business. One of the contacts you make now, she says, can become a mentor later in your career. Renee considers mentors to be very important because they are people who can give you advice and guidance every step along the way. She also states that you should try to start in smaller markets and work your way up, because you do more and you can afford more mistakes. Moreover, most larger markets require prior experience.

Mike Royko, Pulitzer-Prize winning columnist for the Chicago Tribune, says that there is a lot of luck involved in getting into journalism. His advice to students who want to write columns for newspapers includes: learn how to be a reporter, work on your writing, read successful writers and work like hell.

Richard Locher, political cartoonist for the Chicago Tribune says that even though the competition is tough, there is always room for a good cartoonist. But you have to be really skilled and dedicated. He also says that a successful cartoonist must develop a unique and incisive style.

These are only a few of the media celebrities who appeared in this course. The one thing they all had in common was a desire

to help Columbia students get ahead in a fiercely competitive market.--Carla Jones

GETTING IT PUBLISHED--A KEY TO SUCCESS

As journalism students seeking employment, we should be concerned with one thing -- getting articles published and building portfolios before we go out into the often indifferent business world. Here is what some journalism students are doing to prepare:

Jeff Copeland, a junior, is a stringer for the Southtown Economist and senior editor of Inside Journalism. He got his first article published by networking through a friend who works for the Southtown. Jeff does one

Columbia about seven months ago, having accumulated enough clips to land an internship with Today's Chicago Woman. Brenda is now a staff writer for the periodical.

Freelancing, she did a profile of WLS-TV reporter Linda Yu and was able to sell the article to AsiAm, a magazine that focuses on the Asian-American community and has a circulation of 60,000. The editors at AsiAm liked the story so much that they asked her to write for them on a regular basis.

Bonnie Decker, a junior, has written for the Elgin Observer, The Real Voice, and The St. Charles Chronicle. She says that the smaller publications have given her the confidence to seek jobs in a wider market. "Every Journalism student should try to get published

before he or she graduates.

I don't think you can get enough experience just writing material for your classes," says Bonnie, who also tutors journalism students in Columbia's Writing Center.

Other journalism students who have been published

WANTED

New talent for the Chronicle

Effective this fall, we have a new policy for the Chronicle. We want talented students from every major to work on the school publication.

We want photographers, artists and design specialists. We want business managers and people interested in selling advertising space. And we want students who can write critically about their specialties -- art, film, music, theater, whatever. (If you've had no formal training in writing, and don't have any clips, let us know between now and registration and we'll evaluate you to see if you qualify.)

Starting next semester, you can join the Chronicle whether you're a freshman, senior or in-between, and you can take the Chronicle course for the number of credits that suits you -- from two credits for a cub or researcher or stringer or reporter to six credits for a fully involved writer/editor. (The top several positions also receive a financial stipend from the school.)--N.L.

to three sports stories a week at \$15 per story. Jeff has been writing sports for the Southtown since November 1987 and will be interning there this summer.

Brenda Herrman, a junior, has published 25 stories since October 1987. Brenda started with her former college newspaper in Rockford, Ill., then transferred to

include Vesna Bozic, Mary Fran Gleason, Penny Mateck, Dean Golemis and Kathleen Flinn. Keep up the good work!!!--Larry DuBose

NEW BUSINESS JOURNALISM PROGRAM

Business reporting is a boom-

ing area in journalism today, which is why the Journalism Department is offering a new program this fall to teach journalists how to write about business and finance. The program combines 36 credits of journalism courses with 18 credits of courses in three other departments: Liberal Education, Management and Marketing Communications.

Why take a program in business?

"Business is a hot area right now," says Carol Yamamoto, chairman of the Management Department, who offers Business Principles, Investment and Finance as part of the program's requirements.

"More and more people are interested in making money, and they're always looking for advice. They're increasingly turning to business magazines and columns in newspapers for information on how they can best invest their money."

Nat Lehrman, chairman of the Journalism Department, explains that "Personal finance has grown tremendously over the last five to 10 years. Today, the average consumer has more discretionary income than ever before, and because of this he or she wants to know what to do with it."

"Since post-World War II, more and more Americans have gone beyond high school, and as they become more educated they become more curious about business," says Les Van Marter, chairman of the Liberal Education Department, who offers an introductory course in economics for the program. "Now you see people in airplanes reading the Wall Street Journal and Forbes magazine."

Advertising columnist Nancy Millman of the Chicago Sun-Times says you can see how much business reporting is growing by the success of business magazines which have had some of the biggest circulation and advertising revenue increases in the industry. She also says baby-boomers have graduated into the business world as participants and investors. "As investors, they have to understand what's going on in the business world. I think newspapers and magazines are

trying to attract that audience as readers."

The purpose of the business concentration is to give students a starting point. It's not intended to make them business experts. "Eighteen credits is not much compared to a student with a four-year business degree," says Les. "But, on the other hand, that sort of student probably won't have any journalistic training." He adds, "One course in economics won't make you an expert, but it'll break the ice and give you a feel for where to start."

Ed Darby, a financial columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times, says reporters should understand economics and business principles in order to intelligently present business news. "I read a story in a paper the other day where the reporter confused sales and profits. As a result, his whole piece sounded stupid."

Marketing Foundations, a survey course offered through the Marketing Communications Department, is also required for the program. "Anyone who is going to write for a business publication should certainly know what business is all about, and marketing is one of the cornerstones of business today," says Phil Kaplan, director of Marketing.

Obviously, says Lehrman, the increasing demand for writers and reporters trained in this skill means good salaries and rapid advancement. --Lynda Horton.

INSIDE JOURNALISM

Many of the newsletter staff are graduating this spring, and we take this opportunity to thank you for the chance to communicate with you and to say so long.

I've been the editor of this newsletter for a year, and now that I and others are graduating, the search has begun for editors to fill the staff's well-worn shoes. The newsletter began as a simple idea and has blossomed into a new learning concept for all of you and all of us. Students often approach me to find out how to

become part of the process. The newsletter will be offered as a course with an open college credit option similar to those stated in the new Chronicle guidelines. The amount of credit you receive will be based on what you want to put into the course. Staff will be limited to ten.

All new crew members who come aboard will learn how to do layout and special effects with Ventura Desktop publishing software, write for a specialized audience, edit copy, and develop other skills that can only be obtained on a publication such as this.

Thanks to Nat Lehrman and the entire journalism department, we've built what we hope is a winner. Now it's up to you to continue the quality of this fine publication with fresh ideas and sharp skills. The door is open...apply in the Journalism Department. --Josephine Gibson

INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the Journalism Department

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