

Fall 1982

Columbia College Alumni News

Columbia College Chicago

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His love of filmmaking goes deep

Walt Clayton has a lot of good memories of Columbia College, starting with his first encounter with the school.

"It was 1975 and I was working in Chicago at the time," recalled the much-traveled Clayton, "and I decided to inquire about Columbia's film department." Having already earned degrees from two universities including an MBA in International Marketing from Northwestern, Clayton had turned his attention to fulfilling a lifelong ambition—earning a living as a filmmaker.

"Columbia was still at the Lake Shore address then," he said, "and one of the first persons I met there was (instructor) Chap Freeman. I explained my interest in film and he graciously offered to let me sit in on a couple of his classes."

The rest, as they say, is history. Clayton enrolled that fall and, two years later, while still a student at Col-

umbia, he gained recognition with his adventure/documentary, *JUMP*, about a young woman making her first parachute jump. The film, which Clayton produced, wrote, directed, photographed and edited, won five

'When I started out, I didn't know the difference between a Bolex and a Rolex'

first-place awards in national competitions. It also was a financial success, recovering about six times its \$5,000 production cost.

His filmmaking talents soon interested the industry's top underwater filmmaker, Al Giddings, bringing Clayton closer to realizing still another dream—underwater filmmaking. The dream itself grew out of his experiences as a scuba diver and an incident in Argentina, where Clayton was raised. He described it this way:

"I was driving along Valdes Peninsula," (a desolate and remote part of Argentina) he recalled. "The peninsula juts into the Atlantic and is a breeding area for the southern right whale and sea lions.

"I stopped at the top of a cliff to look at the sea. Suddenly, on the pebble beach some 150 feet below, a huge killer whale literally leaped from the water and landed in the midst of a herd of sea lions. They all panicked and fled, except one young pup, while the whale chomped it in its jaws, thrashed it around and tossed it into the water."

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Daryle Feldmeir

A new career for an old pro

Five years ago, Daryle Feldmeir, editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, packed his books, his papers and other paraphernalia accumulated over a 30-year career and retired to a house he bought in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

It wound up being a short stay. The lure of 'big city' living and the prodding of Columbia College President Mike Alexandroff and former *Daily News* friends to return to Chicago to head Columbia's journalism department were too much for Feldmeir to resist.

"Mike (Alexandroff) proposed the idea to chair and teach here," said Feldmeir, who at first balked at the proposal. And can you blame him? After all, here's a guy who hadn't even attended a journalism class, and now he's being asked to teach and head a journalism department.

So it took a little more prodding before he convinced himself that, at 59, it would be a worthwhile undertaking.

"My first goal is to build a department that produces first-rate journalists," said Feldmeir, adding that one of the ways he intends to do this is by supplementing classroom theory with what he calls "hands-on lab education." Starting this fall, he will put

that idea in practice in news reporting courses that emphasize actual reporting from the field—City Hall, courtrooms, police and fire stations.

"It's absolutely crucial for practicing journalists to have a tremendous curiosity and knowing instinct for where to get information," Feldmeir explained. "Journalists first have to know how to gather the news before they can write about it."

Along with a news reporting course, Feldmeir will introduce a mini-course on the art of interviewing. He titles the course "The Front Page Lectures," and it will feature a one-hour lecture and one-hour interview with each of the lecturers. Mike Royko, Lois Wille and *Chicago Sun-Times* publisher James Hoge, Jr. are among those who already have agreed to lecture in the course.

"Columbia's strength lies in courses that are taught by practicing professionals," Feldmeir maintains.

He also contends that, regardless of the communications medium students choose to work in, strong reporting and editing skills are essential. Accordingly, he has structured Columbia's journalism program to emphasize that. "There's going to be job availability for people who know how to



photo by CAROL KURZ

gather and write news," he said. "The techniques are the same in all media."

When asked what he'd most like to accomplish as Journalism Department chairman, Feldmeir said: "To see that our students get a fair shake and a professional education."

—Linda Matsumoto, '79

Matching gift program helps us over the hump

Corporate giving through the Matched Gift to Higher Education program accounted for about a third of the 1981-82 Alumni Annual Fund contributions, according to Clifton Wilkow, chairman of last year's fund drive.

"All told, we raised about \$5,000 during the campaign, and a good chunk of that came by way of matching gift contributions from companies like General Mills, Illinois Bell, Sinkler Or Sinkler, and CBS, Inc.," said Wilkow. "These companies matched the contributions of their employees

dollar for dollar and in some instances two-to-one."

Even though the overall dollar figure is extremely low (by comparison, alumni from schools such as Northwestern and the University of Wisconsin annually contribute in the hundreds of thousands of dollars), Wilkow said it was a "remarkable achievement" because it was the college's first appeal to its alumni for contributions. Based on that initial response from alumni, Wilkow predicted much higher contributions in the future.

Wilkow, who relinquished his chair-

manship title to incoming chairman Greg Hultman ('72), said his tenure was "a truly heartening experience, and I'm sure Greg will feel the same way next year at this time."

Alumni News

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Editor Earl Smith
Associate Editor Marsha Wetmore,
Alumni Relations Director

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Class Notes

by Marsha Wetmore



Lorraine Graves ('81) has been named a professional medical representative for Syntex, a California-based pharmaceutical company which spends about \$70 million a year on research in the life sciences. As a professional medical representative, Graves will provide Chicago area health care professionals with medical background and usage information on Syntex products. Prior to joining Syntex, Graves was an advertising intern with John Iltis & Associates.

* * *

Filmmaker **Jack Sell**'s first feature, *The Psychotronic Man*, grossed over \$500,000 during its initial release this summer. Sell, whose films have won many awards including the New York International Film Festival and Kodak, Milan and Houston film festival awards, is a 1975 graduate. Incidentally, Sell is the first student to receive a full-paid scholarship to Columbia, and recently he was appointed head of Metro Films' new Chicago office.

* * *

Sheldon Baker ('72), a principal of the San Francisco-based Public Relations Director (PRD), has taken on the added responsibility of representing Mendelsohn & Adler Advertising's public relations division. Sheldon will be responsible for ComPath business telephone systems, Solitec, Inc. and M&A's public relations. Another PRD client, College International de Castelnaudary, a French language school in the South of France, got the benefit of Sheldon's organizing abilities recently when he helped organize a radio sports reporting service for the school. The service is scheduled to begin operation in California in late fall.

* * *

Congratulations to **Nancy Stuenkel** ('78), winner of the prestigious Peter Lisagor award for photography. Nancy, a staff photographer for the Suburban Sun-Times, took top honors in the general photography category for weekly newspapers with her photo of a supervisor and student at the Illinois Deaf-Blind Service Center and School in Glen Ellyn.

And belated congrats for another '78 graduate, **Merlyn Klaus**, who won first place awards two years in a row—the Nebraska AP Broadcasters Award for sports reporting in 1980 and the Nebraska UPI broadcasters' award in 1981. Merlyn currently is sports director for the ABC affiliate, the Nebraska Television Network.

Linda Shamest ('79) is an assistant film editor at Magno Sound in New York and currently is working on the *Nurse* series for CBS. Her next project is a feature film, *Bless 'Em All*.

* * *



Columbia College can claim bragging rights to **Gypsy-Fari**, considered by some music critics the country's best homegrown reggae band. Two key members of the band, **Kevin Coleman** (left) and **Stann (Higgins) Champion** ('79) (second from right) are Columbia alumni. Keyboardist-vocalist Coleman is one of the founders of Gypsy-Fari, and Champion, lead guitarist and vocalist, wrote the band's current single, "Can't Keep My Mind Off Girls," on Obvio Records.

* * *

What's News With You?: **Patience Johnson** ('75) recently was promoted to merchandising coordinator at G.H. Bass (Bass Shoes) in Wilton, Maine... **Lloyd Hobgood** ('73) got married last year and earned a Ph.D. this year. He currently is in private practice as a body therapist in Oakland, CA., where he also organized a Bay area conference in body work at McKinnon School and JFK University... **Barry** and **Virginia Bellville** (both '77 grads) now reside in Dallas, Tex., where Barry is a sales rep for Reynolds and Reynolds, and Virginia a research associate/executive search consultant for Spencer Stuart & Associates... **Isidor Leonitis** ('82) works as a cameraman for WCFL-TV (Channel 38) in

Chicago... **T.J. (Thomas) Beagan** ('82) is an assistant producer at Lee King and Partners Advertising in Chicago... **Raymond Berry** ('77) is an underwriter at Casualty Insurance Co. and recently earned a Master's in Human Resource Development from National College of Education... and **Dan Liss** ('71) works for the American Red Cross Blood Services in Los Angeles, CA., where he's assistant director, Donor Resources Development, Los Angeles-Orange County Region.

* * *

On a sad note: **Antanell Moore** ('75), **John Libera** ('74) and **Martin Murphy** ('77) died this year. We extend our deepest sympathies to their families and loved ones.



Clayton

(continued from page 1)

Clayton said the whale then flipped off the beach and back into the water to devour the pup. "It was a sad but fascinating sight," he said.

When it was over, Clayton noticed that a documentary team had been filming the whole event. "It was then that I got this overwhelming desire to do documentary filmmaking, and to combine it with my underwater experience." He then decided to change careers, resigning his job as an ad agency account executive, and made serious plans to become a filmmaker.

After graduating from Columbia in 1977, Clayton moved to California to work with underwater cinematographer-director Al Giddings, who had just completed filming the underwater

sequences for *The Deep*. The ensuing relationship led Clayton to embark on a thrilling odyssey of underwater filming. He found himself working in such exotic surroundings as the Bahamas, Micronesia, Australia, Maui and French Polynesia.

Giddings' underwater production company, Ocean Films, Ltd. provided underwater footage for the 1981 James Bond thriller *For Your Eyes Only*, and the Emmy award-winning ABC-TV special, *Mysteries of the Sea*—both of which Clayton worked on as a crew member, doubling as associate producer on the latter. He also wrote an article recounting his experiences on *Eyes Only* for *American Cinematographer* (Aug. 1981). Presently, he is working on *The Eternal Sea* for Walt Disney Productions, and *Comeback*, an NBC-TV/Twentieth Century Fox production—all under

the aegis of Ocean Films, Ltd.

Clayton is one of those people who sets goals for themselves and then derive immense pleasure out of reaching them. He did that with underwater filming, and now he has set a goal of writing and producing his own feature films. With one screenplay, *Whalesong*, already written and another, *The Hailstone Plunder*, (which Giddings is collaborating on) almost completed, he's a long way along toward reaching that goal.

Clayton gives Columbia College a lot of the credit for his film successes. "When I started out in Tech I, I didn't know the difference between a Bolex and a Rolex," he said. "But within two weeks at Columbia, I was making film—however crude. Columbia gave me a good foundation for the competitive world of filmmaking."

—Earl Smith

Five receive honorary doctorate degrees

Honorary doctorate degrees were bestowed on five prominent Americans at the 92nd Columbia College commencement June 4 at Chicago's Auditorium Theatre.

The five are: physician/author Helen Caldicott, studio executive Sherry Lansing, playwright/poet/director/actor Luis Valdez, master photographer James Van Der Zee, and columnist/author/professor Garry Wills.

Dr. Caldicott, national president of Physicians for Social Responsibility and author of the recently published book, *Nuclear Madness: What You Can Do*, delivered the commencement address.

James Cronin, 1980 Nobel Laureate in physics and distinguished professor at the University of Chicago, presented the honorary doctor of humane letters degree to Dr. Caldicott.

Sherry Lansing, president of productions at Twentieth Century-Fox, was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree by Pastora Cafferly, associate professor at the University of Chicago. In 1980, Ms. Lansing received the Economic Equity Award as the Outstanding Woman in Business, and the following year she received the Artistic Achievement Award from the American Jewish Congress.



Clockwise from top left: Sherry Lansing, James Van Der Zee, Helen Caldicott, Luis Valdez and Garry Wills.

Luis Valdez, founder and artistic director of the internationally renowned El Teatro Campesino, received the honorary doctor of arts degree from Fidel Lopez, director-area development department of Continental National Bank. El Teatro Campesino, founded in 1965, the same year Cesar Chavez launched his historic Delano Grape Strike, performed in the fields, at union meetings and in protest marches.

James Van Der Zee began taking photographs in 1900 at age 14. He opened his first professional studio in Harlem in 1916 and investigated almost every aspect of Harlem life for nearly five decades, until his retirement in 1969, the same year his photographs were exhibited at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Garry Wills, currently the Henry R. Luce professor of American culture and public policy at Northwestern University, received the honorary doctor of letters degree from Daryle Feldmeir, former editor of the *Chicago Daily News* and now chairperson of Columbia's journalism department. Wills has served as contributing editor of *Esquire* magazine, election analyst for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and newspaper columnist for the Universal Press Syndicate.

Party time!

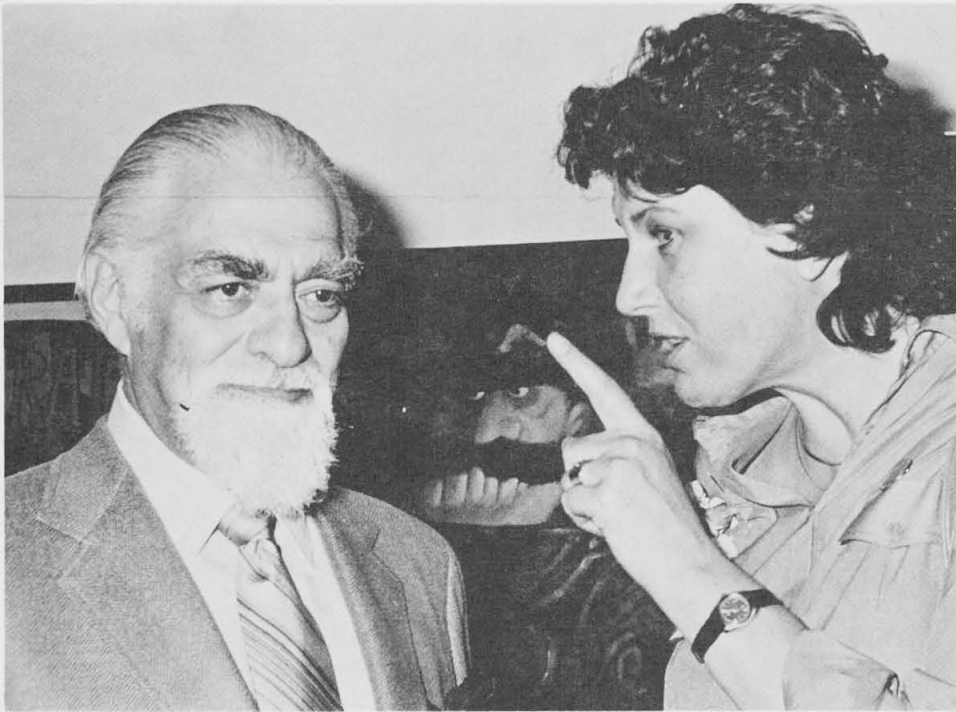
Good friends, good food and good music—the perfect ingredients for a good time. And that's exactly what members of the 1982 graduating class had June 2 when the Alumni Association threw a party for them at the Columbia College Gallery.

For some of the party-goers, though, the occasion presented a great

opportunity for mixing business with pleasure, which seems to be the case (below) as Alumni Association president Paula Sinkler-Russell and Columbia College president Mirron Alexandroff put their heads together.

Meanwhile, Frank Basenoffer (bottom left) was all smiles, obviously enjoying the comradery of his classmates and friends.

Katrina Gray (middle photo) had a different kind of business to tend to as our photographer caught her in the



photos by JANET ANDERSON

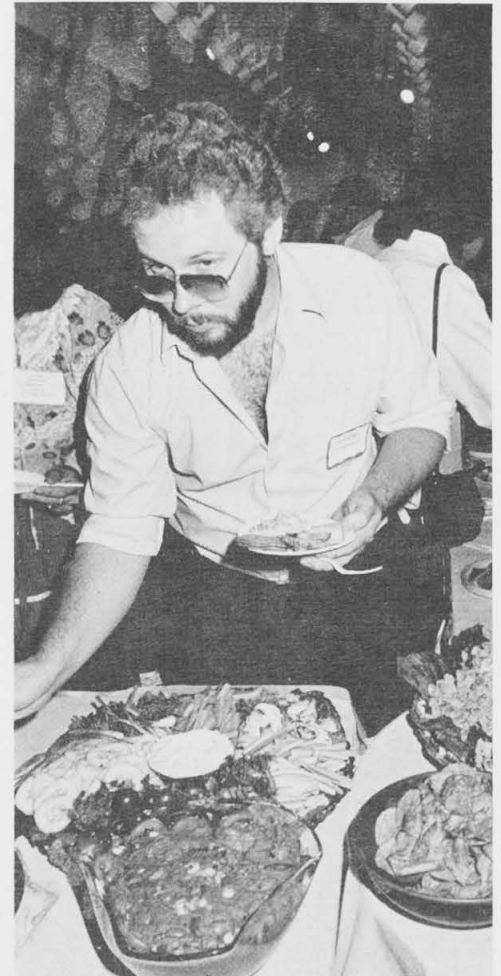


middle of a mouthful.

Leonard Sutkevich (right) prepares to follow Katrina's lead as he samples the many varieties of cheeses, meats and other delectables at the party.

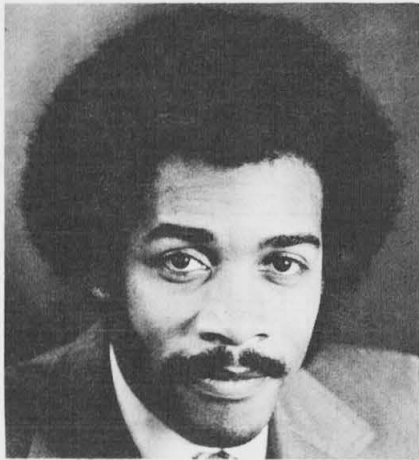


And who might this woman (top right) be? No one seems to know. What is known about our mystery woman, though, is that she has a very lovely smile—one of many such smiles observed on the faces of her Columbia College cohorts that night.



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News Briefs



Photography instructor wins Pulitzer Prize

John H. White, a staff photographer for the **Chicago Sun-Times** and a photo teacher at Columbia College, won the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for feature photography with photographs covering a range of subjects.

White joined the **Sun-Times** nearly four years ago, after 10 years with the **Chicago Daily News**. He was named Photographer of the Year a record four times by the Chicago Press Photographers Association.

He holds an associate of applied science degree from Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, N.C., and was a U.S. Marine Corps photographer and technician before coming to Chicago.

New trustee

Robert M. Wilson, vice president, corporate services of the Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company and North Shore Gas Company, has been elected to serve on the board of trustees of Columbia College.

Wilson joined Peoples Energy in 1970 as director of public relations and was elected a vice president the following year. Active in local civic and professional affairs, he is a director of Chicago's DuSable Museum of African-American History and a member of the citizen's board of Loyola University. He is a past president of the

Chicago chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and the Public Relations Clinic of Chicago.

Theatre group formed

A group of recent Columbia College theater and music alumni has formed the Jaboa Theatre Company, which members say is the only multi-ethnic theatre company in the Chicago area. The company's premiere offering, a trilogy of one-act comedy plays that also features the directing debut of Jeff Award-winning actress Glenne Headly, was performed on Oct. 8 at the 11th Street Studio Theater.

What's news with you?

Columbia College is always interested in the promotions, honors and activities of its alumni. Please send **your** news (along with photos, if available) with the coupon below to Columbia College Alumni News, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605. Please use this coupon for change of address, too.

Name _____

Home Address _____

Business Address _____

Home phone () _____ Business phone () _____

Degree and year _____

Current position/employer _____

News (promotions, community activities, elected offices, etc.) _____
