

1-1-1993

Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside_journalism



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "Inside Journalism" (1993). *Inside Journalism*. 30.
https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside_journalism/30

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in Inside Journalism by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. For more information, please contact drossetti@colum.edu.

INSIDE JOURNALISM

DECEMBER, 1992

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

Wanna be like Mike - Not

Everybody wants to "be like Mike." They want to be able to soar ten feet through the air to jam a basketball. They want to be triple-teamed, not-looking and still be able to make a score. Everybody wants to be able to carry a team to two consecutive championships.

Columbia College j-students want to be this and more. They want to also be like Barbara, Ron, Mary Ann and Peter.

They want to jam words into prize-winning published articles. They want to carry networks to number one ratings. They want to soar to the top of the industry.

"I admire Ron Magers of Channel 5. He is very sensitive to his stories. He is successful at anchoring and street reporting," says Denise Ablin, a junior j-student.

People are bombarded by news and flooded with fresh information daily. It's up to the journalist to organize that information into an effective story. On any given day, reporters may find themselves interviewing famous people, traveling to distant news sites, or reporting major disasters. Therefore, they must be prepared to do it and to do it right.

Reporters must have conversations with the viewers rather than just read to them. This guarantees they will be invited back into that living room again the next night. Print journalists must hook readers in the lead and keep them until the end. This ensures they will be invited back to the breakfast table the next morning.

Columbia College is the first step

towards this plateau for many j-students. Extensive training and hands-on experience are a large part of Columbia's j-curriculum.

As senior j-student Renee Calomino says, "It takes more than just looks to succeed. Mary Ann Childers has that. She has both brains and beauty and at the same time works very hard at what she does."

Hard work and dedication are vital in the journalism field. The best journalists have woven these qualities into their writing and reporting.

Mike Costa, a senior j-student, says he looks up to Peter Jennings. He says Jennings has class and appears very professional.

Other heroes mentioned by students include Bill Kurtis of Channel 2, Channel 5's Carol Marin, radio personality Howard Stern, Barbara Walters of ABC and Mike Royko of the **Chicago Tribune**.

Heroes are admired for their most distinguished qualities. These qualities among popular journalists today, according to Columbia's j-students, are dedication, hard work, good looks, sensitivity and intelligence.

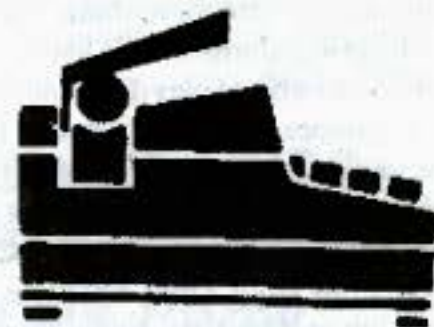
They say it has nothing to do with the shoes.

--Jennifer Blackwell

Columbia Grad Returns As Instructor

Lee Bey is in his freshmen year again at Columbia--but this time as an instructor. Bey, who graduated from Columbia in 1988, now teaches News Reporting I.

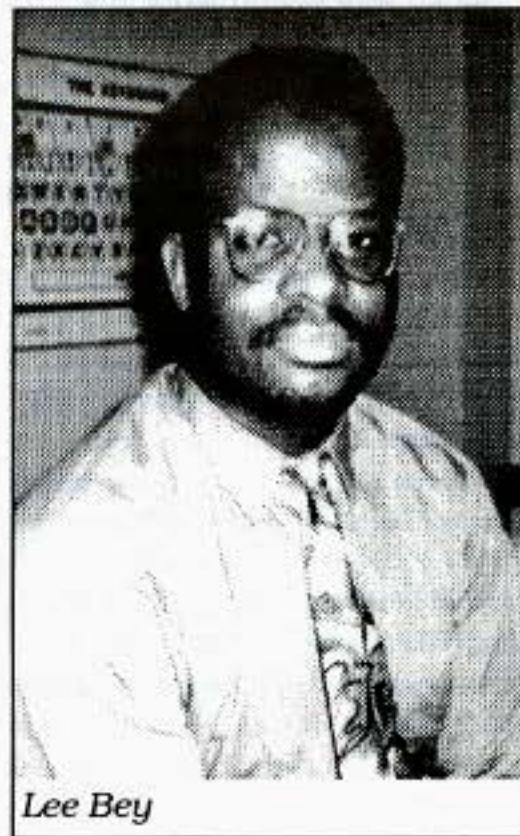
Carolyn Hulse approached him about



a job last Spring when he appeared on the panel of the 1992 Senior Class Breakfast. Hulse recognized his good rapport with the students and thought he'd be right for a job.

"He was very articulate and sensitive to the students' concerns," says Hulse.

Bey believes he not only can bring something to the students, but that he can learn from them as well. "It's nice to teach others and it makes me a better reporter. You keep it new and it keeps your creativity up," he says.



Lee Bey

Although Bey went to Columbia for three years, he isn't teaching the same way he learned. "My class deviates from the ones I had because we deal more with current topics. Every three classes we take a hot issue and dissect it--try to figure out why it's news," says Bey. The recent shooting of Dantrell Davis and the presidential election have been some of his class's topics.

Bey also tries to set the students up with practical situations--things they'll have to do as reporters. "We have press conferences where I play different roles. We use issues taken from stories I've done in my career. I had to prompt the students at first, but then they got the hang of it," says Bey.

The clips from **The Chronicle** got him a job at **The City News Bureau** nine days after he was graduated. There he got some great experience, but when he wanted to work on an actual paper, he left **The Bureau** and took an internship. "I did it backwards. I had my internship at the **Sun-Times** two years after graduation."

When the internship ended, Bey went to the **Southtown Economist**. "I wrote about everything from school budgets to breaking crime," says Bey. While there, he was also part of a team that wrote an award-winning series on race relations at six suburban high schools. Bey claims the series proved to him that he was able to write at a higher level.

Bey also says it didn't bother him that he was the only African-American working on the story--and at the paper. "Some minority writers feel pigeon-holed when they're asked to write a story about that group. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Sometimes it gives you better insight...I look forward to those assignments," he says.

Just before Bey started teaching at Columbia, he was hired as a writer for the **Sun-Times**. Mary Johnson, another Columbia j-grad and **Sun-Times** reporter, recommended him and he was remembered from his internship. Bey is enjoying his job there and appreciative of his education at Columbia.

Bey took his first courses at Chi-

cago State University, but then decided to transfer to a school where he could study journalism. "Medill was too expensive," says Bey, so he chose Columbia. In retrospect, he's not sorry. "Columbia is good in placement. There were seven Columbia grads at the **Economist** and none from Medill. It shows the education at Columbia is good and competitive with other schools. And you get an education with a heart and a passion. It's not like we're creating cookie-cutter reporters."

--Kari Smith

Super Magazine Internships

The American Society of Magazine Editors offers its 1993 Summer Magazine Internship Program to college juniors. These are the choice internships in the industry -- many with the top level consumer magazines.

The program is a 10-week summer session during which students learn about magazines by working in the editorial offices of top-level publications.

Students have the opportunity to work on editorial staffs in New York, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere.

Intended for editorially-oriented students, the emphasis of the program is on editing magazines, and includes such tasks as handling reader mail, evaluat-

ing unsolicited manuscripts, researching articles, checking facts, writing leads and captions, proofreading, copy editing, interviewing, covering press conferences and attending editorial meetings.

Students are selected on the basis of their complete application package, as well as a letter from the nominee expanding on the application, especially an activity or experience in campus journalism, internships or summer jobs, etc; and most of all, why the nominee wants to be an intern and what is expected from the experience. The attitude of candidates toward magazines, as expressed in their letters, and their willingness to dig in as full-time employees, are essential to a successful internship. Also needed:

--A supporting letter from a department head or professor who personally knows the nominee's journalistic experience and academic ability.

--Examples of writing ability.

--If possible, a letter from a former intern indicating the nominee's qualifications.

--A recent black-and-white photograph no larger than 3 1/2" by 5 1/2." A passport photo will suffice (for promotional use only).

--A stamped, self-addressed postcard for notification of receipt of application material.

Applications must be mailed to Magazine Internship Program, American Society of Magazine Editors, 575

College News Offers Student Outlet

The **College News**, an independent newspaper that you've probably seen in Columbia's lobbies, is looking for contributions from Columbia students. Last year, the paper was dominated by Columbia student work, with **Mindy Austin** as the news editor and **Kim Ehrenhaft** as the copy editor, both encouraging contributors from Columbia.

Doug Haddad, the paper's publisher, welcomes any contributions from Columbia students, mainly student writings and photography. They will pay photographers' expenses, he said.

This year, **The College News** is offering positions as interns. If you are interested in getting involved, send a resume and samples of your work to the paper at 8 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1406, Chicago, IL 60603.

If you have stories, ideas or photographs, you can channel them through Columbia j-student **Kim Ehrenhaft**, at 708-371-5078 or submit them directly to **Doug Haddad**, publisher, at 312-973-6784.

--Kimberlee Ehrenhaft

Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022. They **must** be postmarked on or before December 15, 1992. Applications can be obtained from Don Gold or Carolyn Hulse in journalism.

Interns will be temporary employees of assigned magazines and will be paid a minimum stipend of \$275 a week. Interns are responsible for their own travel, housing, food and personal expenses. ASME will assist in making dormitory arrangements in New York, Washington D.C. or elsewhere. The cost for a room for the entire internship should be about \$1700 and must be paid in full before taking up residence.

--Kimberlee Ehrenhaft

The Interview: A Journalist's Backbone

Mike Wallace has mastered the skill. Barbara Walters has perfected the art. And that's exactly what it is--a skill and an art.

Interviewing is the most basic way for a reporter to gather information about a story. It is the backbone of the reporting process. Therefore, the interview results are the backbone of the news story.

A good interview does not just happen. It requires extensive preparation, which begins with knowing what kind of information you seek. Is the purpose of the interview to inform, to persuade, or to impress?

The answer to this question assists reporters in directing the focus of the research for the interview. A reporter must research both the person to be interviewed and the topic of the interview. Sources of information include newspaper and magazine clips, news releases, PR handouts, speeches, bibliographies and books.

A process called "brainstorming" follows the research. In brainstorming, reporters think up as many questions as possible. These questions should then be organized into categories and ranked according to importance. This will help the main, secondary and back-up questions to flow logically.

The interview itself is next. A reporter should identify him or herself and state both the medium he or she works for and the general purpose of the interview. Allowing time at the beginning of the interview for "small talk" relaxes the subject as well as the reporter. Many experts believe an open-ended question, one that lets the subject take the answer in any direction, is a good way to get the interview started.

Throughout the interview, reporters ask follow-up questions that are generated from the subject's answers. A tip for slow writers: ask "treading-water" questions, which can elicit responses that are less important, allowing the reporter to catch up on note-taking.

A good interviewer is also a good listener. Researchers estimate that humans spend about 48 minutes of every waking hour communicating. Almost half of those 48 minutes is spent listening, but this doesn't mean that everybody is good at it. Reporters, though, must be. They must listen to the spoken words as well as the unspoken. This nonverbal communication includes the speaker's rate of speech, facial expressions, posture, gestures and dress. A good listener focuses complete attention on the subject.

Interviews will eventually come to an end. At the conclusion, the reporter summarizes the interview. This gives the source an opportunity to elaborate, agree or disagree.

Finally, the simple courtesy of a firm handshake, eye contact and a thank you must not be forgotten. This may help the reporter build a good relationship for future contacts.

The best stories originate from well-prepared, well-conducted interviews. Therefore, interviewing is an art worth perfecting and a skill worth mastering. Just ask Mike Wallace and Barbara Walters.

--Jennifer Blackwell

New Chronicle Editor

To find yesterday's stock market report and analysis, business people turn to the **Wall Street Journal**.

When looking for that downtown news story, Chicagoans turn to the **Tribune** or the **Sun-Times**.

But where can you read about the news that affects Columbia and its faculty and students?

Those who know, pick up Columbia's student newspaper, the **Chronicle**. And the student in charge is senior Nancy Thart.

Like any writer with a firm understanding of journalism, Nancy worked her way up from **Chronicle** reporter to news editor and now editor.

But that's not all. This year, while her focus is mostly on the **Chronicle**, Nancy is also participating in the Senior Honors Seminar in which distinguished senior j-students write a publishable 3,000 word article. Nancy's piece, which is about public television, will appear in the 1993 edition of Columbia's **Chicago Arts and Communication** magazine.

She also completed a summer internship in '92 at the Oak Park **Wednesday Journal**, an up-and-coming weekly paper where she was able to venture away from hard news in favor of feature-type articles.

"That was very different," said Nancy about her features experience. "It took me half a summer before I even decided that I liked it. I got to appreciate features a lot more."

Since high school graduation in 1986, Nancy was interested in journalism, but not in college.

"Immediately after high school, I decided college was not my thing. I started working in retail and didn't like that. Then I got a 'nice office job,' as my mother would say. It was always in the back of my mind that I would go back to school, but I never took it seriously."

Nancy did spend a few years making money for college while working at a medical supply company.

"After about three years, I said, 'I better do something or else I'm going to wake up when I'm 50 and I'll be in the same job making the same pay I'm making now.'"

That decision firmly made, Nancy enrolled at Columbia, having heard about the college from a high school



Nancy Thart

guidance counselor after she expressed an interest in journalism.

Now, with graduation only a few months away, Nancy has given thought to where she should take her degree after Columbia and the *Chronicle*.

"Last year I probably would have said a daily newspaper, and I think that's something I would like to do. But working over the summer for the *Wednesday Journal* and seeing what it's like on smaller publications, I think that's something I would consider, too. You have the freedom to do things that you wouldn't have at a larger paper.

"It was the internship experience that gave me this whole other view. I think sometimes students discredit local newspapers, but you've got to be realistic; more people are going to end up working for their local neighborhood publication."

As editor, Nancy may not be changing all aspects of the *Chronicle*, but there are a few differences from years past.

"We're playing with the color on the front page, trying to spice things up a little bit. We're trying something new with our columnists; we have Caprice Walters and Charles Edwards rotating a column biweekly. I think it's working out well for us.

"We're getting a lot of letters, and the previous lack of letters was one of our concerns. We're getting so many letters that we're holding some every week, which is terrific. They're writing on columns and they're replying to other letters.

"We're trying to get more student

involvement in the paper. In the features section, we're having poetry and fiction. We're trying to make that a weekly feature.

"When I first came to this paper, it did a lot of political coverage, but if students want that kind of information, they're more likely to pick up the *Sun-Times* or *Tribune*. I think our first obligation is to cover school events and what's happening here because our school is growing so rapidly."

That growth has led to some provocative cover stories so far this year. With nearly one semester left, Nancy Thart has emerged as one of the top student journalists at Columbia.

--Chris Dolack

Writers Have Rights, Too!

The National Writers' Union, which includes authors Susan Cheever and Erica Jong, has drafted a Declaration of Writers' Economic Rights in order to combat "the dismal economics of writing," according to Jonathon Tasini, the NWU president.

The NWU says that while publishing companies and media conglomerates become more powerful and wealthy, it is harder and harder for a writer to make a decent living. Judith Cooper, the chair of the NWU Chicago Local, says, "Our society rewards well-educated, hard working writers with lives of poverty and frustration."

The NWU also claims that payment from magazine publishers has stagnated and that "authors' royalty statements are so complex that [even] attorneys find them difficult to decipher."

In response to this bleak situation, the NWU held a "Writers' Rights Day" last summer to draw attention to the economic plight of writers--and to the specific issues in their Declaration.

The Declaration states that writers are a defining factor of civilization and are the voices of society. Specifically, "As journalists and book authors, we monitor, describe and enlighten the human condition. We explain the intersection of collective experience and the individual."

The NWU states that writers' earnings place most of them below the poverty level. Benefits like health insurance and retirement plans are not usually made available to them either.

The NWU is working to end these economic hardships. They believe in a right to fair compensation that includes timely payment for work done, and uniform contract standards with written minimum requirements.

Writers also should have broader protection for the use of their material, according to the NWU. Writers should receive compensation for their works used secondarily on electronic databases, CD-ROMs, software and for library lending.

Finally, the NWU believes writers should have legal protection to make fair negotiations possible between writers and the publishing industry.

In order to gain more strength, the NWU affiliated with the United Auto Workers (UAW) in 1991. This affiliation gives the NWU more resources and bargaining power. For example, health insurance is now available for writers.

The union's 11 chapters represent more than 3,000 writers in the United States. Several committees deal with specific topics like health insurance, censorship, small presses, labor issues, book publishing, and "kill fees."

A kill fee is a fraction of the original fee promised to a writer upon receipt of his work. If for some reason the work is not used, a kill fee is paid to the writer. The NWU believes this is a practice that should stop; writers should be paid in full for completing the assignment.

Writers also can enlist the help of the grievance committee to collect withheld payments from publishers. Cynthia Sims, chairperson of Chicago's grievance committee, says in the past year the NWU has collected about \$16,000 from publishers for aggrieved Chicago writers.

The chair of the NWU Chicago Local, Judith Cooper, can be contacted by writers for information on NWU activities. The Chicago Local phone number is (312) 338-4807.

--Kari Smith

Students Suggest New Classes

Have you ever thought of a helpful class you would like Columbia's curriculum to include? Students with majors in Public Relations, Advertising and Journalism were asked and these are some of their suggestions:

One student liked the idea of a course in golf. "Many decisions are made on the golf course, especially in the world of marketing and business," a junior in Public Relations said. "If you know how to play golf, you are a step ahead in the networking system."

"I'd like to see more Political Science classes," a junior in broadcast journalism said. "There are a few right now but not enough, especially if you would like to minor in political science--which is not offered at Columbia."

"Classes in culture etiquette, international issues, and foreign journalism would help students who would like to become foreign correspondents," said j-student Jake Taylor.

J-student Rosa Lopez suggested a therapy/psychiatric class. "A class that could help you focus not on organization or self-help, but would help stressed-out students relax and meditate," she said.

Students are worried about what is going to help them stay in the field and utilize their majors. They are concerned that the business and critical side of the art isn't taught or emphasized. "Selling your art," I overheard in the Hokin Hall after asking students. "Art business," said a senior in Arts. "Opportunities in the field, cost aspects, national aspects, entrepreneurship, how to manage your money to survive," he added. This type of class could benefit not only art students, but journalism students as well, teaching them how to market their work.

Joe Boehm, a senior j-student, said he would like to see an anchor reporting class that offer hands-on experience.

"I was interested in a class Roosevelt University offers on African languages, but Columbia doesn't offer it," said j-student Bonnie Scarlett.

J-student Charles Johnson would like to see more language classes at Columbia. "Japanese II is not offered," he

said, suggesting he would like to continue to study the language. Another j-student, Tina Serafini, agreed that more language classes should be added, citing Italian specifically.

A senior Hispanic j-student said she wanted to go into a Spanish station, but with the Spanish she has learned at home, she doesn't feel she is prepared. If Columbia would offer an advanced Spanish class, she might be able to brush up and do better during her internship next year, she explained.

--Susan Olavarria

Election '92: Scooped By Talk Show Hosts

Scooped by talk show hosts and MTV, television's elite group of political reporters were left taking notes from the tube as the presidential candidates chose to be interviewed by anyone other than them.

Election '92 marked the end of the traditional way the electronic media covers political races.

Instead of seeing Dan Rather, Ted Koppel or Peter Jennings press the candidates on the "issues," viewers watched as Larry King, Phil Donahue or Arsenio Hall took control of the mic to quiz the politicians on their "character."

It was CNN talk show host Larry King who got Ross Perot to announce his third party candidacy--not Ted Koppel.

NBC's "Today" show host Katie Couric delivered viewers a last minute interview with President Bush that may have made even Dan Rather, whom Bush refused an interview with during the Republican National Convention, jealous.

If candidates had to choose between "Meet the Press" and "Phil Donahue," said WGN news director Paul Davis at an October Headline Club meeting, the latter would win out. Reporters from "Meet the Press" are going to ask the candidates more issue-oriented questions, he said, whereas Donahue would

Top 10 Holiday Gifts for Columbia J-Students

December is upon us all, so it's time to finish, or start, all those lengthy papers we've known about since September. Therefore, in order to save your precious time, we at Inside Journalism have put together a holiday gift-service for j-students.

In the spirit of David Letterman's Top 10 lists, we surveyed your holiday wants and tallied these results:

10. MacIntosh computer with Pagemaker software.
9. Disney World vacation bonanza--during finals preferably.
8. Mini taperecorder--with batteries.
7. N.Y. Times internship.
6. Cosmetic dental surgery--broadcast majors only.
5. A job advancement from McDonald's fry patrol to its newsletter staff.
4. Air conditioning in Wabash Room 804.
3. New car--including year-long parking pass at the luxurious Chicago Hilton and Towers hotel parking garage.
2. All the hot dog specials you can eat from Chicago Carry-Out.
1. Mo' money. Mo' money. Mo' Money.

Now, we've done all the work. As j-students, all you have to do is make sure this page of the newsletter is seen by relatives before they finish their holiday shopping.

Enjoy any new toys and have a safe and happy holiday season.

--Chris Dolack

Fischetti Party

This year's Fischetti scholarship winners were treated to a cocktail buffet reception at the University Club of Chicago.

The party was held in conjunction with Columbia's 11th Annual Fischetti Editorial Cartoon Competition. The event not only honors the country's best political cartoonists, but also the memory of John Fischetti, a Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist for whom the cartoon competition and scholarship program are named.

The University Club provided an elegant setting for this year's party, which by all accounts was a resounding success. Master of Ceremonies was Nat Lehrman, chairman of the j-department.

This year's keynote speaker, Robin Robinson, co-anchor for Fox 32 News (WFLD), made a biting speech about behind-the-scenes humor in the newsroom. It was definitely one of the highlights of the evening.

The center of the presentations, however, was the video showing the top 10 cartoons in this year's competition. Pulitzer Prize winner Doug Marlette of New York Newsday won the \$3,000 first prize for his cartoon contrasting white-sheeted KKK member David Duke with ultra-conservative Republican Pat Buchanan, labeled "Duke Lite." Marlette, who also won in 1986, was a popular winner among the crowd.

The \$1,500 second prize went to Dick Adair of the Honolulu Advertiser. His cartoon depicted the white government of South Africa as a wagon train drawn into a circle surrounded by black South Africans with the caption, "We've decided to share power with you."

This year's winners combined eye-catching cartoons with witty captions that made people stop and think while laughing at the same time. The top 10 cartoons from this year's competition will be on display during December in the Hokin Center. They are definitely worth a look.

--Gino Carlino

focus more on the character issue.

Jonathan Alter, Newsweek senior editor, accused talk shows such as CNN's "Crossfire" and NBC's "Donahue" of "warping traditional campaign coverage."

In a speech, reprinted in the Washington Monthly, Alter said, "The new hegemony of Phil and Larry clearly isn't teaching Americans enough about the people who will lead them."

But he added before the election, "When fewer than half of Americans vote, it's pretty churlish to complain about fringe media dominance. We should probably be thankful that the fringe media, which reaches tens of millions more Americans than 'Washington Week in Review,' is paying attention at all—that Phil's fans get an hour with Clinton instead of just more lesbians who hate other lesbians' mothers."

Mort Kaplan, a Columbia College instructor and former campaign man-

ager for Paul Simon and former Illinois governor Dan Walker, said that if he were advising candidates on what shows to appear on, he would choose a show that they would feel the most "control" in.

"That politicians use talk shows to reach the public is fine with me," said Tom Johnson, president of CNN, "so long as they continue to provide opportunities for journalists to interview them along the way. I'll be the first to admit that sometimes the general public asks some of the best questions."

One of the positive changes Kaplan said television contributed to the election this year was the electronic townhall meeting. Here the candidates were challenged by ordinary citizens to answer questions that reflected the domestic concerns of voters.

"Electronic townhall meetings get the candidates to answer questions in longer dialogues," Kaplan said. "I remember someone in the audience asking President Bush how the recession

affected him personally. He had a difficult time answering it. Electronic townhall meetings get the candidates to expose themselves."

Mark Effron, WFSB-TV news director, said in Electronic Media that he thinks electronic townhall meetings are going to "continue to be part of the political mix, along with good newscasts and radio talk.

"They helped to provide the flavor and context of the '92 campaign and they're not going to go away," he said.

The dawning of a new electronic media era may give Americans a chance to ask the questions that he/she feels are important. It may even encourage more people to vote.

A Chicago Sun-Times story that appeared the day after the election reported that MTV's "Rock the Vote" was instrumental in getting people ages 18- to 22-years-old to vote. If MTV and talk shows can motivate people to vote, then the media has achieved its prime purpose.

--Julie Moriki

INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the journalism department

COLUMBIA COLLEGE
CHICAGO
600 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605

EDITOR

Kimberlee Ehrenhaft
MANAGING EDITOR

Christopher Dolack
ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Jennifer Blackwell

Gino Carlino

Bridget Connelly

Julie Moriki

Susan Olavarria

Thomas Shea

Kari Smith

ADMIN. EDITOR

Lena Renteria

FACULTY ADVISOR

Carolyn Hulse

CHAIRMAN

Nat Lehrman

Dec, 1992, Vol. 7, No. 2