

12-1-1995

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](#).

Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "Inside Journalism" (1995). *Inside Journalism*. 48.
https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside_journalism/48

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.

DECEMBER **INSIDE** 1995
JOURNALISM

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

**TEN FACULTY
MEMBERS JOIN J-TEAM**

This fall, a number of media professionals joined the expanding corps of part-time instructors in Columbia's j-department.

The *Chicago Tribune* contributed Maurice Possley, who reports on the city's criminal courts. He is known for his in-depth reports on the Mel Reynolds and Rolando Cruz cases, among others. Appropriately, he teaches *Covering the Courts*.

As a working journalist, Possley is able to bring the skills he learns every day

on the job to the classroom every week. He even demands that his students cover their "beats" on a weekly basis.

"I think it's impossible to teach how to cover the courts in a classroom setting alone," Possley says. He sends his 10 students to 26th and California, Daley Center and the Dirksen Building at Dearborn and Adams. Then, after witnessing the judicial system at work, such as in court hearings, criminal cases and sentencings, each student must "file" stories about what they saw.

Possley received his B.A. in communications from Loyola University in 1972. He's originally from Erie, Illinois, but currently lives in Oak Park.

The *Tribune* reporter says he is excited at the opportunity to teach at Columbia. He encourages j-students to "go out and do it." He adds, "When you make mistakes, just go out again and do it better."

Also joining the department is Kenneth Towers,

former executive editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, who is teaching *News Reporting I*.

During his 30-year career at the *Sun-Times*, Towers was a reporter, a city editor, the assistant managing editor, the managing editor and, finally, the executive editor. Now he gives back some of what journalism gave him by teaching.

Last semester, Towers taught news writing to graduate students at Northwestern University. Prior to that he was an editor-in-residence in a program sponsored by the American Society of Newspaper Edi-



Maurice Possley



Ken Towers



Job Search

By Paula Eubanks

When a TV news director is looking to hire a rookie reporter, what counts are first impressions—the impressions made during the first 30 seconds of a resume videotape.

Without a compelling resume tape, you will be severely disadvantaged in your search for work in the competitive market of TV journalism.

Below is my version of an "industry standard" for entry-level resume tapes. This advice comes from major-market TV news directors, producers, reporters, and anchors.

Start with these physical parameters: Make your resume tape five to nine minutes long, and put it on a 3/4-inch format cassette. Neatly affix labels with your name, address, and phone number with area code to the cassette itself as well as to the spine and front of the cassette box.

When you present or mail your resume tape to an employer, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (s.a.s.e.) if you hope to have the tape returned. Also, include a copy of your printed resume covered by a letter that indicates you know a little something about the station and its audience.

Structure the elements of your tape this way:

Remove the color bars, tone, and any prepackaged news-show opening from your resume tape, and lead off with a graphics slate showing your name, address, and phone number. Follow with a brief sampling of three to five of your best stand-ups (and live shots if you've got them). Then, come in with either one or two of your best hard news packages. Include your best feature story next. Finally, if you have tape of yourself doing an exceptional job of anchoring, include it. Otherwise, don't bother.

Of course, the work you include must be your own: your reporting, your writing, your edits of raw tape.

Once compiled, is your resume tape sending the message an employer needs to hear? Review your tape to ensure that it shows the following: accuracy; balance and depth in reporting; strong writing and storytelling; appropriate use of sound, graphics, pictures, stand-ups, and edits; and a versatile range of story styles.

Also check what your tape reveals about your looks, presence, poise, voice, credibility, and authority.

One of the biggest challenges TV journalism students face is collecting enough good tape of their work to piece together a resume tape that meets "industry standards."

One way to collect source material for your resume tape is by doing a TV news internship. The goal here is to leave the internship with tape of yourself delivering stand-ups you wrote and reported set within packages you edited and voiced. You also should try to leave with a bit of tape of yourself reading news stories on the station's or channel's studio news set.

As an intern you'll most likely have to ask, beg, or somehow appeal to the powers that be (camera-persons, working reporters, et al.) to get an opportunity to do a quick stand-up at a story scene, or to have your 15 minutes behind the anchor's desk after he or she has vacated it.

Without a TV news internship, you will have to find other sources of fodder for your all-important resume tape. For example, don't pass up the opportunity to work on Columbia's own news show, "600 South."

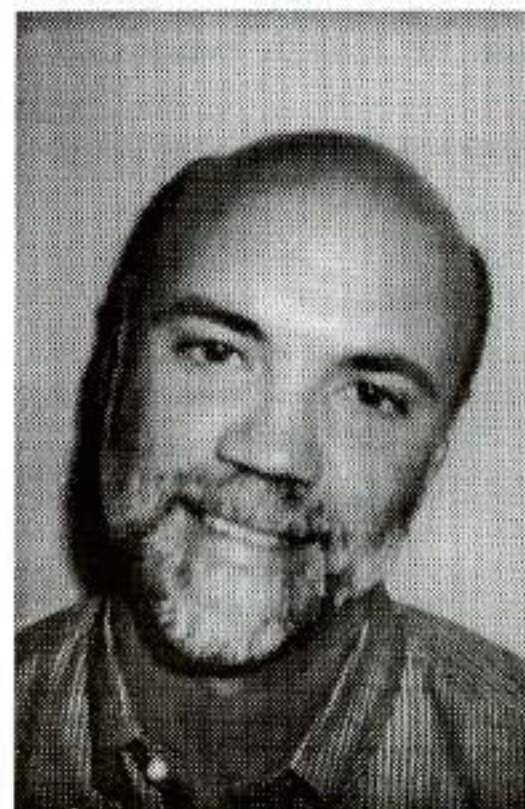
Above all, plan ahead to develop and construct your resume tape. This critical element—the resume tape—of a broadcast journalist's job search cannot be whipped up overnight. A great resume tape, however, can make you into an overnight sensation in the eyes of one of those news directors looking for a novice reporter.

tors. He also taught briefly at Ball State University in Indiana.

Even after meeting so many students in his academic career, Towers says, "Columbia students impress me." He adds that the j-students he met this semester struck him as eager to learn and highly motivated.

Towers was born and raised in Chicago where he still resides. He received his B.A. from Northwestern University in English and Political Science.

He advises that j-students should "study hard and never be discouraged when you go out into the real world." He continues, "Make the school experience as profitable as possible and prepare yourself to land the job you want."



David Berner

The j-department also welcomes David Berner (Radio Newswriting), a senior reporter/anchor at WMAQ radio; Chris Blackman (Writing and Producing Television News), executive producer in news, WMAQ-TV; Paula Eubanks (Introduction to Media Writing), Columbia College placement specialist; Patricia Frey (Desktop Publishing), desktop specialist at Ace Hardware; Pamela McKuen (News Reporting I), freelance writer; Mel Miles (Introduction to Media Writing), writer and consultant; Lynn Petrak (Introduction to Media Writing), freelance writer; and Oliver Witte (News Reporting I), writer and consultant.

--Michel Schwartz

NEW ADVISOR BRINGS CHANGES TO CHRONICLE

Everyone's noticed great changes in the *Chronicle* this year. It should come as no surprise. The *Chronicle* has a new advisor, and a new image.

Jim Sulski is the advisor, and together with a new and enthusiastic staff, headed by editor-in-chief Nancy Laichas, a number of changes have been made.

The *Chronicle* has a new computer software system, and this has made a great difference in the look of the paper. The staff is working with Quark Express, used

by newspapers and magazines, and it has contributed to a more engaging layout.

Sulski comments, "This system is the way of the world, the real world. It's efficient, and it's the program that *Chronicle* staffers will be utilizing after they graduate." In addition to Quark Express, a good deal of state of the art hardware has been added, too.

The format of the *Chronicle* has been altered. For example, the back page was a "junk page," according to Sulski, filled with



Jim Sulski

crosswords and "other nonsense." This page is now a features section. Another difference in the paper is that more pictures have been added. As the paper progresses, Sulski hopes to see these areas expanded.

The response to the new *Chronicle* has been positive. Omar Castillo, jour-

nalism staff and faculty member, calls Sulski, "a great team player and a good advisor." The changes have made a difference, and the *Chronicle* is becoming a source of pride to Columbia College.

--Danielle Curley

DON'T PASS ON THIS CLASS

One of the more exciting classes scheduled for this spring's journalism roster is a topics course dedicated to "Covering the Presidential Election."

The instructor will be full-time faculty member, Rose Economou, author of several books and winner of eight Emmies in her career as a broadcast journalist and producer. She has also worked in various capacities for President Clinton and Vice President Gore, as well as George McGovern, Ted Kennedy and many others of note.

The course will train advanced students in how to cover breaking stories, important new trends and one-time events. But the main topic will be preparations for the 1996 presidential election and the Illinois primary.

The course is limited to 12 undergraduate and six graduate students. Journalism majors are required to have taken News Reporting II (exceptions will be made -- ask about them).

Non-majors must be juniors or higher and must have a 3.0 GPA. Graduate students must be granted permission by Norma Greene, the graduate journalism director. For those who qualify, this will be a unique and exciting experience. I look forward to seeing you in class.

—David Kamish

AWARD FOR J-STUDENT

One of the Journalism Department's very own was recently a winner of an Albert D. Weisman Memorial Scholarship.

Elizabeth Kittle was the only journalism major out of 33 contestants from all departments.

As a recipient of the scholarship, Kittle will be awarded \$825 for producing a written documentary based on her experience of supporting single mothers in their decision to keep or place their children.

Her project began as a four year journal kept during her employment at a home for unwed pregnant women.

"I have long been interested in female issues: sociological, psychological and reproductive," states Kittle.

Named after the late Al Weisman, one of Chicago's best known communicators, the fund was established to encourage Colum-

bia College students to complete projects in all fields of communication.

To qualify for the Weisman, students must be enrolled at Columbia with at least 15 credit hours in the fall and spring terms combined. The project submitted must be related to the world of communication and be suitable for presentation to the public.

For more information, students may contact Gillian Moore of the Development Office (624 S. Michigan) in Suite 1100.

The Journalism Department encourages students to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Weisman Fund.

--Lisa Bolls

KNOCK KNOCK

If you're wondering "who's there," tune in to Columbia's own radio station, CRX, and the next newscast you hear might be your own. This is an opportunity for all of you sports and broadcast writing hopefuls to broaden your experience. "If you can cover a story and write it for print media," says Radio Newscasting instructor Cheryl Morton Langston, "why not do two versions? Why not adapt what you've learned in print journalism to radio?"

Langston, who also teaches Ethics in Broadcasting at Columbia, says there's real opportunity and huge poten-

tial at CRX for j-students, but, "a lot of students just aren't aware we have a radio station that devotes time to the news as well as to sports." Although some students feel they would like to "specialize" in a particular area, the fact is, the more versatility you can offer, the more offers you'll get, she stressed.

Talk about sharpening your skills! There's writing, reporting, investigating and research. Add to that interviewing, reading your own script and hearing it read over the air. Who woulda' thunk it? Right here in Columbia's own back yard, Langston is kicking around the idea of a "Journalist Round Table." "In fact, I don't see why we couldn't have a couple of j-students from the print area, from radio and from television to discuss the top five or ten



Cheryl Morton Langston

news stories of the week. Almost like a Mclaughlin Group. It would be an hour show, and they'd sit and kick around the events of the week."

CRX has five-minute morning and afternoon newscasts with about a minute and forty seconds for sports, Langston says. If it's a big enough story, Langston says she'll call people in. "Let's say we have a huge breaking news



The radio department provides hands-on experience.

story, the Oklahoma Bombing for example. What we were able to do at CRX was to pull some extra news people in and provide the local angle while we let our AP handle the national aspect. We brought up the big picture from the scene for a couple of minutes, then came back to our newsroom and focussed on the beefed up security at the federal building in Chicago."

CRX has major access to news and operates the way

many radio and television stations do. "We have the AP wire and we have City News wire. This is comparable to any other radio station in the market. We also have two forms of 'hot line' that every radio station in town uses. We also have the AP Hot Line, and what that does is provide us with the feed that comes down once an hour. You know, the actualities and raps."

Langston remembers when she covered the governors' race, there was a student with a print background who took it upon herself to do research on all the candidates. She came back with all the information, and CRX whittled it down and aired a five-part series on the candidates. Langston says she's already thinking about next year's presidential elections. More currently, "A couple of interesting local races were worth covering. I'm looking for someone who can do some research in the second congressional district that might turn into a nice five-part series."

Langston also talked about a recently established relationship with the University of Illinois, in which a Columbia student does a play-by-play of the women's and men's basketball games. "Wouldn't it be neat for a print student," Langston asks, "to go around with this person

and do some locker room interviews?" A radio student would come back with tapes, and the print student would come back with the story. Langston wants to meet any print students interested in sports writing.

Langston says her dream is to do a noon news block in a student-managed radio station.

Interested students can get anywhere from one to four credit hours, Langston says. She suggests that students submit some writing samples and fill out an application a week before registration begins.

Langston will not be satisfied with just news "readers." "I want anchors, writers, reporters and producers with an aggressive nature. I want people to fight me. 'Oh no! We're not leading with this!' So they'll know what it's like to work in a newsroom or radio-type environment." In the end, students can walk away with valuable experience, both in tape and on paper. These will make a great addition to anyone's clip file.

--Michael Johnson

J-DEPARTMENT HOSTS PHOTO EXHIBIT

For 22 days in November the corridor of the journalism department was filled with color and ethnicity. These were provided by a photo exhibit by Interpre-



Wilma Randle poses beside one of her photos.



dents will formulate a more accurate image of them," says R o s e Economou, full-time faculty member, who is broadcast journalism coordinator and the force behind this exhibit.

The lesson for journalism majors? Sometimes you just can't put it into words. You need pictures, too.

--Jennifer Laboy

tive Reporting instructor Wilma Randle, a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*.

"A visit With My Cousins: African Roots in Cuba and Mexico" was the name of Randle's exhibit, displayed from Nov. 1-22, which showed the African influence in Cuba and Mexico as well as the unity of the people who live there.

The pictures, taken in 1991, in completion of Randle's graduate studies in international journalism at the University of Southern California, were intended to convey the legacy, the African people in Cuba and Mexico. According to Randle, this legacy is "visible in the round-style hut houses, felt in the rhythm of the festival dances, and

etched in the beauty of the faces of the people."

The pictures also portrayed unity despite the photo subjects' diversity of color. This could be seen in the photos of smiling schoolchildren, mothers and grandmothers in the village markets, and men creating music with various instruments. "I want people to walk away with a consciousness of what connects us, not what separates us," says Randle.

In addition to a feeling of unity and cultural awareness, Randle hoped that everyone who viewed the exhibit would walk away with a clearer image of these countries. "By putting up pictures of Cuba and Mexico, I hope that stu-

INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the Journalism Department

**COLUMBIA COLLEGE
CHICAGO**

600 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605

MANAGING EDITOR

Omar Castillo

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Lisa Bolls

Danielle Curley

Michael Johnson

David Kamish

Jennifer Laboy

Michel Schwartz

ADMIN. EDITOR

Lena Renteria

FACULTY ADVISOR

Don Gold

CHAIRMAN

Nat Lehrman

Dec 1995 Vol. 10, No. 2