

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION ARTS

Alumni & Friends

SPRING 2005

GUESS WHO?



He's a film graduate student who made an appearance on Jeopardy last year.

Who is Ethan DeSeife?

Is the assistant to the vice president of production at Columbia Pictures but just earned her BA degree in 2003.

Who is Mary Rohlich?

Schedules all primetime series, specials, and movies for CBS and UPN?

To find the answer, go to commarts.wisc.edu/Alumni

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT:
<http://commarts.wisc.edu>

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Nietzchka Keene

Remembering Professor Nietzchka Keene



photo by Stephanie Judge

The Department of Communication Arts suffered a huge loss with the death of Professor Nietzchka Keene on October 20, 2004, after a brief but valiant battle with cancer.

Professor Keene was a distinguished filmmaker and dedicated teacher who had written, directed, and produced three feature-length films. Her first film, *The Juniper Tree*, was set and filmed in Iceland and starred singer-actress Bjork in her first film role. Her second film, *Heroine of Hell*, funded by a prestigious ITVS grant and aired on PBS, starred Catherine Keener, Wendy Phillips, and Dermott Mulroney. At the time of her death, she had nearly finished production on her third film, *Barefoot to Jerusalem*, set in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

At UW-Madison, she led the Department's video production courses, teaching advanced film and video production, screenwriting, and editing, and overseeing the production studios. Her creative guidance shaped the lives of hundreds of students who passed through the production courses in the comm arts major; she was selective in whom she accepted into her courses and rigorous in her expectations. She is greatly missed by her colleagues, friends, and students past and present.

"She had her own ideas and goals for what she wanted to accomplish and would follow them with intensity and strength," said her friend and film-making partner, Patrick Moyroud. "Not many people have produced, written, and directed three feature films on budgets that would not even pay for a three-bedroom house today."

On January 27, the Department held an event in her honor. Her short film *Aves* (1994), the full-length version of *Heroine of Hell* (1995), and *The Juniper Tree* (1989) were screened. Friends, colleagues, and alumni ended the evening with anecdotes and reminiscences of Nietzchka Keene.

STUDENT PROFILE Hope Wallace

Ahoj (Hello)

Sailing around the Whitsunday Islands. Visiting family in Slovakia. Not your typical travel plans, unless you are spending your junior year studying abroad. Hope Wallace, a double major in communication arts and history with a certificate in women's studies, attended the University of Sydney in the fall and is currently enrolled at Charles University in Prague.

Her course work this year has ranged from the U.S. Civil War to Post-Communist Gender Issues. Hope notes, "Interestingly, I've found most abroad programs don't offer rhetoric classes, which is a shame because the area lends itself to international study."

However, this hasn't hindered her informal study of communication. One reason Hope chose a university in the Czech Republic was to gain a deeper understanding of what it is like to be a foreigner in the U.S. and the strategies people use to adapt to a new culture. Hope

doesn't speak Czech, but she is completing two weeks of intensive instruction followed by a semester-long course. She has even noticed a difference in body language. Her smiles on the metro appear peculiar to Czechs who seem more reserved.

In Australia, Hope had the opportunity to meet students from around the world. One of her favorite memories is of arguing politics with students from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, England, and Australia. She credits living abroad with her new perspective on America's place in the global community. "Being in a foreign country during both its elections and American elections was so interesting to me. I hope to use that experience in future political endeavors."



A MESSAGE From the Chair

For the first time in its history, the Communication Arts Department is preparing to undertake a sustained program of alumni outreach and fundraising. The University of Wisconsin–Madison is involved in the ambitious “Create the Future: The Wisconsin Campaign.” As

part of that program, individual departments are identifying their own areas of need and initiating their own fundraising efforts. The key to success will certainly be the generosity of our alumni.

Several such loyal UW graduates have taken the initiative and advanced the idea that Comm Arts can call on the alumni for support. Over the past year, the Department has hosted meetings with a growing circle of alumni who have been successful in the entertainment and media industries. They have discussed ways to



Vance Kepley (PhD '78) and
Glenda Noel-Ney

assist our students with internships and job opportunities, and they have also helped shape plans for departmental development. My thanks and that of my Comm Arts colleagues go out to Ed Greenberg (BA '75), Stuart Brotman (MA '75), Lee de Boer (BA '74),

and James Hirsch (BA '69) for getting the ball rolling, and to Deborah Schindler (BA '77) and Jeffrey Kurz (BA '83) for joining in the effort. Several other prominent UW graduates have expressed interest in our plans, and I look forward to acknowledging their assistance in the future.

I am also encouraged in this effort by particular acts of generosity from Communication Arts alumni. The thanks of the Department go out to George Hamel, Jr. (BA '80) and to the Hamel family for two major and timely gifts to

the Communication Arts endowment. Their donations will help us get a development program underway.

We can also count on two consummate professionals to lend their assistance. Glenda Noel-Ney became our development director a year ago, and she is one of several outstanding members of the UW Foundation's development staff. This energetic ally has already started to cultivate a growing network of interested Comm Arts alumni. The Department's own Mary Rossa (BS '86, MA '90), who many of you know first-hand as an excellent advisor, will now include alumni relations among the several duties that she skillfully discharges.

Expect to hear more from us on this matter. As our alumni become more involved in the Department's well-being, our current and future students will reap the benefits.

Your Gift is Appreciated

The Department of Communication Arts has a tremendous number of exciting programs, initiatives and research under way. Opportunities are plentiful for you to participate in the life of the Department by staying in touch with us, providing student internships with your company, and donating to the Department. Private gifts are increasingly critical to ensuring our excellence. Your gifts help us attract top faculty and graduate students, provide scholarships to outstanding undergraduates, upgrade our technology/facilities, and so much more.

Please consider a contribution today. For more information on making a gift to the Department of Communication Arts or including the Department in your estate plans, please contact:



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You may pledge your support online using a secure server at <http://commarts.wisc.edu/> or use the form below:

I/we would like to join other alumni and friends in their commitment to the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Communication Arts:

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My/our contribution of \$_____ is enclosed

My company matching gift form is enclosed

Please charge my gift of \$_____ to my: MasterCard Visa American Express

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Signature _____ Date _____

Please make checks payable to The UW Foundation—Department of Communication Arts, P.O. Box 8860, Madison, WI 53708-8860.

You will receive a receipt for your gift. We appreciate your support!

In Appreciation

The Comm Arts Department wishes Professor Mary Anne Fitzpatrick well as she becomes the dean of the new College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Carolina. A heartfelt thanks to this remarkable scholar, teacher, and administrator for her 28 years of service.

Nietzchka Keene Memorial Fund

The Department has organized the Nietzchka Keene Memorial Fund through the University of Wisconsin Foundation in her honor. It will be used to provide an annual prize for excellence in undergraduate film and video production. Contributions can be made to the fund by check, payable to the UW Foundation (UW Foundation, Gift Processing Department, P.O. Box 8860, Madison, WI 53708), with a notation for “Nietzchka Keene Fund.” One can also donate online. Log onto commarts.wisc.edu and click on Nietzchka Keene Memorial Fund.

The Comm Arts Department Welcomes Mares and Xenos



Professor Marie-Louise Mares
(MA '90,
PhD '94)

Do older adults watch more television than other age groups because of their age or because they belong to an

age group that has always watched more television? Do teen viewers of talk shows overestimate the occurrence of deviant behaviors? When young children watch a video over and over again, do they actually improve their understanding of the content, or do initial misconceptions become entrenched?

These are a few of the questions Professor Marie-Louise Mares examines in

her research on communication across our life-span. Focusing on media use and media effects, she studies what changes and what remains the same as we develop and why. Professor Mares will teach courses in media effects and mass media and youth when she joins the department next fall.



Michael Xenos

Michael Xenos will also be joining the department in the fall. Xenos, who will complete his doctoral degree from the University of Washington in

May 2005, studies political behavior and political communication. Through his

research, Xenos examines the basic principles underlying the relationships among political context, information environments, democratic deliberation, civic engagement, and opinion formation and change. For example, he is studying the extent to which the growth of online political communication may foster greater civic engagement among young citizens. Xenos is also looking at how candidate appearances on late night comedy programs affect civic engagement and candidate evaluations. He will teach courses in group discussion, media technology, and politics.

Encore, Encore: Professor Tino Balio



After nearly four decades of service, Professor Tino Balio is retiring from the University of Wisconsin. In addition to being a world-renowned cinema scholar, Balio has skillfully and passionately developed the arts

on campus and in the Madison community.

When Professor Balio arrived in 1966, he was chosen to direct the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research. Within two years, he deftly negotiated the acquisition of

the United Artists and Warner Brothers collections, catapulting the center to a position of global importance. No university had ever acquired such a comprehensive film-related collection that included thousands of films, photographs, and financial records reflecting decades of film-making. Balio garnered further acquisitions that brought the University and state global publicity, and he wrote books that became monuments in the study of cinema.

In 1995, Professor Balio was appointed chair of an inter-arts program on campus. He expanded it into the now robust Arts Institute. The Institute sponsors film, art, and dance series; publishes a monthly newsletter; pioneered a resident artist program; and

established the Wisconsin Film Festival, a highlight in Dane County's cultural season. These programs also further the University's multicultural aims by sponsoring events like Asian film festivals and bringing artists such as African American actor/director Clinton Turner Davis to campus.

Professor Tino Balio's career exemplifies the outreach ideals of the University by bringing the arts to the broader community, in Wisconsin, and globally. We are very fortunate to have counted Tino among our colleagues—fortunate that he continues, even in retirement, to promote the arts, the Department, the University, and the state through his good works.

HONORS & AWARDS

Professor Erik Doxtader received the National Communication Association's (NCA) Golden Monograph award. The NCA honored Doxtader with this award, given to the "most outstanding essays published in the previous calendar year," for his article entitled "Reconciliation—A Rhetorical Concept/ion." This is the second time in three years that he has won the award.

Professor Rob Asen was elected vice chair of the NCA's Communication Theory Division.

Ronald Carpenter (PhD '66), professor of English at the University of Florida in Gainesville, received the NCA's Douglas Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award last year. In addition to his work at the

university level, he runs a workshop for improving writing.

Vincent Bohlinger (MA '00) received a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Fellowship to undertake research in Moscow, Russia on his dissertation.



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ALUMNI PROFILE Mary Rohlich

Hollywood Here I Come



Last fall, Mary Rohlich (BA '03), the assistant to the vice president of production at Columbia Pictures, inspired students to head to Hollywood.

Her talk included helpful information on different types of jobs in the entertainment industry, finding employment, and relocating to L.A.

We thought it would be fun to check in with Mary to ask her about life after graduation.

How long have you been working at Columbia Pictures?

Nine months, previously at MGM for one year.

Briefly describe your job for us.

As an assistant, most of my job is making my boss's life as easy as possible. I am in

charge of keeping everything in order. On the surface that means answering phones, scheduling meetings, and keeping things organized. I also read scripts, write coverage, create writer/director/cast lists, track material, and soak in as much information as possible. In this industry, you have to work your way to the top, and part of being an assistant is learning how things work and building contacts. I try to look at my job as school, and I have to learn and study so I can graduate to the next level.

Can you provide an example of a project you're working on right now?

We recently started production on *Ghost Rider*, a film based on the Marvel comic book. It is filming in Melbourne, Australia and stars Nicholas Cage and Eva Mendes. Seeing this project go into production has been one of the most educational experiences. I have been able to see from the inside out how a studio brings a project into production and the many challenges that can arise in the process. I learned a lot about budgeting a film, rewrites, cast-

ing, and the interpersonal dynamics of the business.

What has been the biggest challenge of moving to L.A.?

The most difficult part about moving to L.A. was trying to figure out this business. I learned a lot at UW-Madison. We have one of the top film theory departments, with some of the best professors in the country—I met one assistant from UCSD who actually had David Bordwell “autograph” her course book. At the same time, I know that we spent very little time studying Hollywood and the film business today.

This is where I think UW alumni can play an important role. I think it is important to represent our school and create a network of alumni in the business. I would encourage more alumni to become resources for current students; I know I would have loved to have people to contact when I first moved here!