the Communique

communication arts alumni magazine fall 2006 reflections

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 Galen Gordon







Laura Holland Communication Arts Department Chair

The fall semester is roaring toward the finish line at breakneck speed! Why is it that the longer I live, the quicker the time moves? We have had a bittersweet fall report concerning our faculty. The sweet side of the semester comes with us

"Please accept our deepest

gratitude for your continued

- Laura Holland

Chair, Communication Arts

relationship with us...."

welcoming Courtneay Sanders to the faculty in the drama area of our department. Courtneay recently received her master's in Fine Arts in acting (in the theatre area, this is

equivalent to a Ph.D.) from the University of Arkansas. She has become the Director of Theatre, and she directed our first show of the 2006-2007 theatre season, Shakespeare's "The Comedy of Errors." We performed our fall production to local high school students, and this year we played to over 2,000. The show was a great success, and Courtneay is a welcome addition to the Communication Arts faculty family.

The bitter part of my news comes with the passing of Dr. Johnny Mac

Allen. Dr. Allen went home to be with the Lord on Friday, November 24. In order to express our deep gratitude to Dr. Allen for all that he has given his students and our department over the years, we are honoring him by setting up a memorial scholarship through our alumni association. This scholarship will go to a deserving student in the public relations and advertising area. If you would like more information about this scholarship fund, you can contact me or the alumni office. Also, I want to bring to your attention a book that Dr. Allen had recently written titled "Excelsior Upward and Onward: The Power of Self-Affirmation" Because of this book Dr. Allen was a finalist for Scholar of the Year in 2003. This book is available at amazon.com if you are interested. We will miss Dr. Allen's wonderful, caring spirit and his life

witticisms. He was truly a man who loved his work and loved his students.

I want to thank those of you who have contributed departto our through ment your prayers, your

guest appearances in our classes, your expertise on our many advisory boards, and your monetary gifts. Please accept our deepest gratitude for your continued relationship with us and how privileged we all feel to be serving you and our current stu-

dents. I pray you all have a wonderful holiday season. n

Laura Holland

"The Communique" is a product of the Oral Roberts University Communication Arts Department for its alumni.

> Special Thanks To: Dr. Even Culp Mrs. Shirley Brown Mr. Jared Buswell

> Mrs. Laura Holland Chair

Mrs. Chris Putman Adviser

> **Heather Koger** Editor in Chief

Publication Workshop as seen from page 3:

Jonna Miller, writer Kingston Jones, writer Jenica Stubbs, writer Renae Baccus, writer Heather Koger, editor in chief Danielle Parker, writer Chris Putman, adviser Bethany Hejtmanek, writer Paloma Cortez, writer Becky Duncan, writer Even Culp, founder Elizabeth Porter, writer LaQuez Williams, writer Art Haddaway, writer Trecie Williams, writer

> Contact Us: cputman@oru.edu "The Communique" c/o Chris Putman ORU GC 2C-03 7777 S. Lewis Ave. Tulsa, OK 74171

Cover: Eric Rice Story on page 4 Many graduates secure jobs in their fields of study, and in the midst of their careers lose sight of the major department they left behind. Although this is the normal growing process, the Communication Arts Department strives to keep the door of correspondence open with alumni, keeping them informed of the University's developments and reporting on the lives of its graduates. To accomplish this, the department uses its connecting tool, "The Communique."

For over a decade, "The Communique," has brought the latest news to Com Arts alumni about the department where they learned the art of communication in its many forms. Today's "Communique," however, is a much different publication than alumni have read in the past. Changes made to the magazine are for better content. No one knows more about "The Communique" than director of the MultiMedia Institute, Dr. Even Culp.

"I started it about 15 years ago," Culp said. "Although, when I started it, I didn't think I was the most qualified. Originally it was just myself, a student editor and a staffer. In a perfect world, I thought it would work best as a student-driven publication."

In order to get the changes moving, Culp recently gave control of the magazine over to Journalism Instructor Chris Putman.

"Dr. Culp suggested I take over his brainchild because of my publication background," Putman said. "When I accepted, God began to birth the idea of incorporating my new class, Publications Workshop, with the magazine. I am all about giving students an opportunity to get published and gain real-life experience. This publication gives students an opportunity to write, sub-



Through a semester-long effort, the publication staff experience the process of producing a magazine. photo/kristen carollo

picture-perfect staff

framework to change

mit photos and see the process start to finish."

"I am all about giving students an opportunity to get published and gain real-life experience."

> - Chris Putman Adviser, "The Communique"

Student driven is the spark causing change in the method used to publish the magazine. The decision to empower students builds a bridge that connects them with alumni.

"I'm really thankful for the opportunity to be a part of 'The Communique,'" senior Art Haddaway said. "It's provided me the foundation to enhance my writing and to produce more stories in the future."

"The Communique" has come a long way from its newsletter beginnings. With the world constantly changing the way publications are created and presented to the public, the magazine has made advances.

"I loved 'The Communique' in its original newsletter-style format, but that was not my baby; that was Dr. Culp's vision," Putman said. "I have to do what's in my heart and what's in my head using my style. I have a concept of the magazine in my head. I see full-page photos, lots of color and a magazine-style cover."

The new faces behind "The Communique" hope to capture that truth and use it to further alumni communication in the future.

"I want to compete with this publication," Putman said. "I have high expectations for this magazine. We have some amazing kids, and God's blessing is on those who give it their all." n story/kingston jones

under his direction

Eric Rice, a life in focus

" ... I am feeling like my vision is just now starting."

- Eric Rice founder, 44 Films

A young freshman from Texas walked onto the campus of the University and into a telecommunications class. He soon found what he wanted to do with the rest of his life, television. Through the experience learned in his first years working at the Mabee Center and local news stations, this young man matured into an award-winning producer and director of Atlanta-based 44 Films.

Since graduating in 1981, Eric Rice quickly aimed at pursuing his passion. He not only launched his own production company, 44 Films, but explored many types

of mass media, including editing and screenwriting.

"A guy asked me to come work for this little ad agency that did auto ads," Rice said. "I was almost fired right away because I couldn't edit. He then showed me how to edit and direct by allowing me to watch him. Literally one year out of ORU, I was taking film crews to Oregon and Washington."

After working in North Texas a few years, Rice moved to Atlanta to marry Lisa, now his wife of 22 years, a vital

component in his work. Together, they write books and screenplays and create ways to provide quality work.

"We kind of get a creative adrenaline rush together," Rice said.

"Guilty Bystanders," 44 Films' first independent feature-length film, is a production currently under construction.

"Through a list of miracles, it fell into the hands of a producer, and now it has over a \$100 million budget," Rice said. "There are about 30,000 screenplays that are sent to Hollywood and only about 300 films actually get sent to the theatres. This is a blessing to know my film will be a part of that selected few."

Rice has no intentions of stopping now. His vision is to take 44 Films into every form of media.

"I really hope that this leads to more books and more films and eventually TV shows," Rice said.

Rice's influence is not limited to the media, but extends to his co-workers as well.

"As a director, you have the tendency to be so focused that you forget about the crew you are working with," friend and colleague Lael Camak said. "Throughout the years, I have seen him make the transition with all of those relationships and value those people that are working for him."

As a husband, father of three and successful professional, Rice is the first to admit that God is the source of his pres-



From behind the camera, Eric Rice finds a unique point of view while working on his latest project. photo courtesy/44 films

ent success.

"I am feeling like my vision is just now starting," Rice said. "After a lot of humbling and crushing, I am fulfilling my calling." n story/danielle parker



"I'm just a friendly writer who loves cooking."

- Shaun Chavis writer, "Health" magazine

She works hard, lives on the edge, and shares an overzealous taste for adventure. For 1990 graduate Shaun Chavis, tasting the adventure is not merely wordplay; it's her job.

Chavis is the associate food editor and writer for "Health" magazine in Birmingham, Ala., where she can regularly be found discovering the latest food diets and trends, studying ancient food history and evaluating new food products.

Working for "Health," a magazine with more than seven million readers, Chavis inspires others to grow actively aware of the importance of food and health.

"I love what I do, and it really fits me," Chavis said. "By presenting readers with different perspectives of food ... my mission is to communicate and stimulate thought and imagination."

In her free time, Chavis enjoys spending time with family and teaching others to bake.

"I really like cooking, especially for other people," Chavis said. "I said to myself, 'Why not combine the two and make a career out of it?""

Before landing the job at "Health," Chavis, with a degree in telecommunications, began freelancing for "The Black Advocate," a local publication in Oklahoma City, Okla. At the same time, she began public relation work at the Oklahoma



Whipping up a new batch of creativity, Shaun Chavis prepares for her latest article in "Health" magazine. photo/jamie rowland

recipe for success

Shaun Chavis serves others

Institute for Child Advocacy and broadcast journalism at a variety of local television stations until she moved to Raleigh, N.C., to work as an online and newscast producer for ABC affiliate WTVD news for eight years.

After years of working, Chavis earned a master's degree in gastronomy from Boston University. This prepared her for the job at "Health" to influence readers through her passion for food.

"Food affects ... social life, selfimage, wealth and spiritual dimensions ... and I want to convey that to readers," Chavis said.

Along with her readers, Chavis' friends and co-workers respect and enjoy her ingenuity.

"Shaun has always offered a fresh

approach to every project," Wendy Farmer, former co-worker and executive producer of WTVD news, said. "Her creativity, with an attention to detail, has been an inspiration to me because it's hard to achieve success in both those areas at the same time."

While at "Health," Chavis has impacted numerous lives by allowing God to use her.

"I'm just a friendly writer who loves cooking," Chavis said. "I know I'm made to do this ... and I never want to stop learning and improving my life ... without God, my faith, family and friends, I would have nothing." n story/art haddaway



In the chaotic blur of a news room, Pamela Long exercises her talents to produce daily news packages at KOTV in Tulsa, Okla. photo courtesy/the news on 6

Long-awaited news

Pamela Long at work

A fire broke out in ORU's Susie Vinson Hall after electricity surged from an outlet laden with plugs. Sirens rang and students filed out for what they thought was a routine fire drill. That is, until firemen bolted from the building with a burning mattress in tow. No one was hurt, but some property was damaged.

The woman responsible for this news-making event was 1984 graduate Pamela Long. As chief editor of Tulsa's KOTV station "The News on 6," Long is still in the business of making news. Now, she tells stories

from behind the camera rather than being the newsmaker.

During her time at the University, Long became friends with LeAnne Taylor, co-host of the program "Six in the Morning."

"Pamela and I lived on the same wing at ORU," Taylor said. "I was a freshman and new to dorm life. She was so helpful and encouraging."

Long's desire to work behind the scenes led her to major in Telecommunications and intern at KJRH in Tulsa where she was hired as an editor. The same year she assumed "In a day and time where it's every man for himself, Pamela shows the true meaning of teamwork."

- LeAnne Taylor co-host, "Six in the Morning"

the position of chief editor, which she had for 3 ½ years. A two-year stint with Lester Sumrall's ministry LeSEA Broadcasting in South Bend, Ind., followed. She eventually returned to TV broadcast in Tulsa where she now thrives on the adrenaline rush to get a news package on the air.

"Things look impossible to get on [the air] at times," Long said. "Sometimes, it seems as if there's no way. And then I'm like, 'Oh, wow! We did get it all done, and within a minute to spare.""

Long aims to stay rejuvenated by immersing herself in the Word and striving to share her faith through her actions in the workplace.

"My goal every day is to get up and be a witness and try to minister to someone here, even if it's through a smile," Long said. "I try to help them go through their day and meet their needs through God."

Co-workers notice and appreciate Long's efforts.

"In a day and time where it's every man for himself, Pamela shows the true meaning of teamwork," Taylor said. "I admire her loyalty and devotion to things she believes in."

Long's future may not be etched in stone, but the legacy she hopes to leave is certain. n story/trecie williams



freeze frame Eric Welch making time stand still

"From film to still photos to commercials, if there's a visual element, I do it."

> - Eric Welch director/founder, Broken Poet Productions

Artists are visible people. The public sees their faces: the actors of the stage, the musicians of the halls and the authors with their pictures on the covers of their books. Eric Welch, 1991 graduate, is an artist whose face the masses may never know.

Shortly after college, this former Telecommunications major founded Broken Poet Productions, a company

specializing in music videos and still photography. As a director/founder, Welch views his career as an art form rather than merely a job.

"There are two things that are important to me, two things that drive me," Welch said. "One is to create amazing images whether it's video or photography. Two is to create stories that move people. When everything is done, the real question you have to ask yourself is, 'Does it move anyone?'"



Risking life and limb, Eric Welch aims for the perfect shot for Barlow Girl's "Never Alone" music video. photo courtesy/ eric welch

Welch has certainly moved audiences by the stirring images he has captured from various videos including one he did of the concentration camp, Dachau, which he used in D.C. Talk's "Welcome to the Freak Show Live Concert" video.

"I'm a film-maker," Welch said. "It's weird to say I'm an image-maker, but I am. From film to still photos to commercials, if there's a visual element, I do it. You never know where the ideas and photo shoots are going to take you. It could be anywhere."

Anywhere is where Jeff Tuerff, vice president of marketing for Curb Records, expects to find Welch. He recalls the video Welch shot for Curb Records' leading Christian artist. Nate Sallie.

"Our location was on the bank of a river on a blustery day in March," Tuerff said. "We wanted to get some shots of Nate playing the piano in the water. To do so,

> we needed to build a dam to collect water alongside a soft, sandy landing. With a very hectic schedule, I went to scout the location and who else was there in rubber boots and a shovel but our director, Eric Welch."

> Welch recently finished his 81st music video. With a list of chart-topping videos including those for artists Vince Gill and Mercy Me they foretell a career destined for greatness. He has also shot still photography for U2 and employed oth-

er media forms including a live DVD for Ben Folds. Welch attributes his success to God and looks forward to exploring new ways to impact more lives.

With this motivation, he desires to bring his storytelling into a bigger arena. While this artist may never be the most recognized face in Hollywood, his creative mind and talent will move and inspire many. n story/ jonna miller

"His education ... has shaped him into a unique and indispensable talent."

- Chris Leonard co-worker, Runway Network

As a self-proclaimed simple man, 2005 graduate Mark DiCicco strives to be an optimist, enjoys eating cereal at night and loves to play soccer. He has recently immersed himself into a rewarding profession. He works with Grammy award-winning producer Charlie Peacock at Runway Network. Working with big names like Switchfoot and Michael W. Smith and groups such as Jars of Clay and The Eagles has propelled this record company to success.

DiCicco communicates with the artists and helps them identify exactly what their vision is and how to achieve it. He also listens to demos and assists with the production process.

DiCicco's talents developed at Runway Network have also opened a door for him to work with Rethink Records. At Rethink, DiCicco focuses primarily on marketing the artist by planning tours and getting exposure. The relationships DiCicco makes are what give his job meaning and context. As a result, DiCicco tries to let his light shine where God has placed him.

"It's not about having an agenda to get people saved; it's about a lifestyle of loving and caring for people ... it's just a matter of being genuine and not trying to do anything other than what Christ calls for us to do, love," DiCicco said. "The rest seems to—fall in place after that."



Masterfully controlling the output of ambient sounds, Mark DiCicco employs his skill in his position at Runway Network, a record label in Nashville, Tennessee. photo courtesy/runway network

making a mark

Mark DiCicco shines in record industry

Sheer luck did not get DiCicco to where he is today. His professional attitude, dedication and experience have all contributed to his success in the music industry. Without the intricate blend of the three, his life may have led down a different path. He grasped these concepts early enough in his education and work to allow them to assist him in his goals.

"His education... has shaped him into a unique and indispensable talent, and watching him work, it's easy to see why," friend and coworker Chris Leonard said. "He

brings to his work an eager humility and a relentless innovation which seeks to learn everything about how to do the job right."

DiCicco's hard work opened doors of self-discovery and career advancement. He is willing to keep a humble attitude and learn from his friends, mentors and God to advance not only in the career world, but more importantly in life. n story/jenica stubbs



Skillfully speaking at a staff meeting, Jessica Wilson stresses a driving point to her co-workers at the public relations firm, DeMoss Group. photo courtesy/demoss group

Group dynamics

Jessica Wilson joins DeMoss Group

Staying up all night to finish assignments and scrambling to balance school and work are finally over for 2005 graduate Jessica Wilson. She recently settled into a rewarding position at DeMoss Group.

DeMoss Group is a faith-based public relations company serving clients like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, TiVo and Teen Mania. Wilson, an accounts coordinator for the company, is responsible for researching, contacting the media and writing press releases.

"In just a short time there [De-

Moss Group], it has increased my capacity to set higher goals for my career path in the public relations industry," Wilson said.

With the help of her professors, Wilson saw the importance of communication in the career world.

"Many professors took the time to go beyond helping with homework and got involved with our personal lives as well," Wilson said. "I learned quickly that I was going to receive life-training and not simply an education."

Through various experiences, Wil- Him." n story/elizabeth porter

"The DeMoss team is closely knit together because of our common faith in Jesus Christ."

- Jessica Wilson accounts coordinator, DeMoss

son has gained valuable credentials to get to the place she is at now.

"Even during the rigorous interviewing process, Jessica demonstrated a high level of professionalism, maturity, drive, strategic thinking, and work ethic unusual in someone her age," DeMoss Group senior vice-president Beth Bragg said. "We liked her professional history in that she worked a relevant internship her junior year and then, once graduated, was willing to take a job with a major national retailer to gain management experience."

Bragg noted Wilson quickly bonded with her team members and began training herself through the expertise of others.

"Jessica is a successful collaborator, a trait that is remarkably effective in a public relations agency," Bragg said.

Wilson enjoys working with De-Moss Group because of the shared Christian faith of the employees and clients.

"I am so impressed by the uncommon integrity that is demonstrated in everything that is done," Wilson said. "We have a devotional prayer time before our staff meeting every Monday morning. The DeMoss team is closely knit together because of our common faith in Jesus Christ and our individual commitments to Him." n story/elizabeth porter

producing results Galen Gordon speaks frankly

"We don't want to be like any other show on ESPN, and quite frankly we're not."

- Galen Gordon executive producer, "Quite Frankly with Stephen A. Smith"

The scene behind the camera looks much different than what comes through the TV screen, an angle most viewers never see. In order for the show to succeed, there must be a perfect blend of artistry and communication that separates it from all others. The one conducting this visual symphony is the executive producer.

Galen Gordon, class of 1994, is striving to master the art of television production. After years of climbing the ladder in the TV industry and working at various

networks including WABC, WNBC and CNN, Gordon was recently named executive producer for ESPN's show "Quite Frankly with Stephen A. Smith." "Quite Frankly" is a show that combines sports news and entertainment. Both Gordon and Smith want the program to stand out in ESPN's lineup.

"We don't want to be like any other show on ESPN, and quite frankly we're not," Gordon said.



Hand in hand, television personality Steven Smith and alumnus Galen Gordon work together to produce a successful weekly show on ESPN. photo courtesy/espn 2

As executive producer, Gordon oversees the editorial production and manages the daily operations. He chooses the stories and guests that appear on "Quite Frankly" and must know the job descriptions of not only himself but everyone on his team. Stephen A. Smith, host of "Quite Frankly," realizes the difference an experienced producer brings to a program.

"He has his creative juices, but he knows it's about the nuts and bolts," Smith said. "He knows his job, and he knows what everyone around him should be doing. He is a leader. He knows how to maximize other peoples' potential."

Gordon believes the concept of mind, body and spirit is vital to understand and that being a Christian in name only is not enough. He believes Christians too often rely on faith alone to get them where God wants them

to go.

"Faith without works is dead," Gordon said. pastor once told me, 'Do everything you can, and God will do everything you can't.' Unless you put some work behind that faith, it's nothing."

Gordon realizes the influence his job has on the lives of viewers. He counts it a privilege to present the news of the day to people across the country to help them make their own deci-

sions. He has gone through his trials and triumphs and understands the true importance of his life, that it is not about him.

"You've got to have faith," Gordon said. "I believe God did not put us here to serve ourselves but to serve other people." n story/bethany hejtmanek



setting the stage

Courtneay Sanders playing the part

The positive changes made in the dramaandtheatredepartmentstem from the direction of a familiar face aroundcampus, alumnus Courtneay Sanders. She has recently become the newest faculty member in the Communication Arts Department.

Sanders graduated from the University in 2002 and went on to earn a master's degree in fine arts from the University of Arkansas. While receiving her degree, Sanders applied for a teaching position at ORU with the encouragement of her former professor and current Communication Arts Department Chair, Laura Holland.

"I just knew that this is where God

was leading me for now," Sanders said. "I am really loving everything about the work at ORU."

As a recent graduate, Sanders' fresh and updated approach has been widely accepted among her DTF students.

"Courtneay has brought energy to the major," senior DTF major Lauren Ranzino said.

Many students and faculty members agree on the positive changes sparked since her arrival.

"The quality of our program has been improved a great deal," Holland said. "The acting area is going to grow by leaps and bounds."

With a renewed understanding



Along with ingenuity, new faculty member Courtneay Sanders brings a fresh approach to developing the drama department. photo/kristen carollo

of what lies ahead of her students, Sanders hopes to impart long-lasting lessons in her role as a profes-SOr. n story/paloma cortez



Training to usher others into God's presence, students practice by leading worship in a weekly chapel service. photo/kristin threadgill

singing a new song

Worship Arts major right on key

A fleeting thought turned into a vision and then became a reality. Students can now declare a major in Worship Arts, the department's newest addition.

An audition and pretest were requiredforadmittanceintothismajor andbothvocalistsandinstrumentalists were welcome to apply.

Weeks after its inception, around 40 students declared Worship Arts as their major and 100 their minor. They will become equipped to meet the needs of today's church through studies in communications, drama, music theory, technology and the art of leading worship.

"I want to become sharpened in the areas I need musically and academically to be able to use the gifts God has given me in the church and other venues," sophomore Worship Arts major Heather Koger said.

There are many promises that stand in the future for students who graduate in this major.

"Their role in the body of Christ is to be healers and physicians of the souland have that impact that leads people as artists and witnesses," Communication Arts Department Chair Laura Holland said. n story/

renae baccus



Standing out from among the rest, seven ORU graduates team up with marketing company, HiCORP. photo courtesy/rebecca boller

HiCORP continually hits it out of the ball park as a full-service company. Their services include offering ad specialty, point-of-purchase and warehouse fulfillment. They focus on being in partnership and developing a relationship with their vendors and customers, not just completing business transactions.

Though HiCORP does not hire ORU grads exclusively, they view themashavingtherightfitwiththeir

making the team

HiCorp hires grads

overall goals. To date, they boast of seven ORU hires.

"I have found ORU grads to be a great resource for our company. [They have] solid character and integrity with a servant's heart," HiCORP President Brad Camp said.

Overseeing six of the company's online programs, 2004 graduate Rebecca Boeller attributes much of her success to her education.

"It is the whole experience of ORU that...hashelped me bemore intentional and work better with people," Boeller said. n story/becky duncan

extreme makeover

ORU gets new look

crossing the threshold of campus causes the discovery of a new image. The University began to instill changes in order to revitalize the look of ORU.

Many students believe the change has made its proper impact.

"It shows a classy look, making us feel comfortable in our environment," freshman Ethorn Bullard said.

Convenience and comfort go hand in hand at the new coffee shop, Hava Java. Next door is the



A spirit of change is sweeping across campus causing various implementations including the new smoothie shop, Green Cuisine. photo/laquez williams

smoothie shop, Green Cuisine, where students can find a variety of organic foods and drinks. Another exciting addition to the campus is a Chick-fil-A, located under the cafeteria.

Through the modifications, lives will hopefully be transformed, en-

rollment increased and one sound reverberated from the campus.

"I think God's favor has been on this whole process," Public Relations Director Jeremy Burton said. "The new image has been a great step for the school." n story/laquez wilThe Communication Arts Department would like to keep its alumni informed of University updates. Update alumni relations records of an address change at alumni@oru. edu.

To receive periodic job listings or to post an open position to recruit ORU alumni applicants, e-mail Dr. Even Culp at eculp@oru.edu. To receive previews of coming magazines, include your e-mail address.

To provide feedback on the magazine or to submit alumni success story ideas, send comments to Chris Putman at cputman@oru.edu.

The magazine adviser and staff are always searching for ORU alumni success stories. Please share news on yourself or fellow alums.

Comments:

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