

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Communique, 1953-2020

Journalism

2021

Communique, 2021

University of Montana–Missoula. School of Journalism

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/communique>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

COMMUNIQUÉ



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

HELLO FROM Don Anderson Hall and a smoke-filled Missoula Valley. Last year at this time, we were in the midst of the pandemic and holding on for dear life. I'm happy to report the faculty, staff and students of your J-School have weathered the storm and come out whole. Well, mostly.

I'm not going to sugar coat it; it was a rough year. We pieced instruction together as we went along, offering remote and blended and all in-person courses. Students and faculty rotated in and out of the different attendance methods as they contracted COVID or were close contacts and had to quarantine. None of it was ideal, but I'm incredibly proud of the way we worked together to make the most of the situation.

Fall T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor Tammy Kim proved remarkably resilient and creative. She found ways to engage with her class and the Montana Kaimin while fully masked and distanced. When it came time to deliver her community lecture, we partnered with the television students to create a live-streamed, interactive session unlike any previous Pollner lecture.

The documentary film class was not to be denied a chance to produce a feature film. Students found a topic that would keep them outdoors so they could follow pandemic protocol and still tell a compelling story. Their work, "Weathering the Storm," explores the business of fly-fishing in the state and COVID's impact on the industry. Other courses and capstones found complicated and creative ways to keep on keepin' on.

Dean Laurie Baefsky joined us in January. She has been working hard to get to know the School of Journalism and the three other schools in the college. She's also had an abrupt introduction to the budget challenges facing UM and a crash course in the Montana Legislature. You can meet Laurie in *Communique's* pages this year.

The J-School sent students to cover the 67th Montana Legislature. Austin Amestoy and James Bradley were witness to one of the most contentious sessions in recent memory. You can read about what they learned and what took away from the hard work of political reporting in these fractious times on page 14.



Director Denise Dowling hosts the J-School's virtual graduation celebration on April 30, 2021, from her office in Don Anderson Hall.

The Montana Media Lab was on a low simmer for most of the past academic year but was out in force this summer. Four students and recent alums took to the road in June, spending a week in four different communities. The student teachers gave instruction in media literacy, worked with high schoolers on a storytelling project, and made community presentations of their work at week's end.

The pandemic brought an unexpected benefit in our ability to hire adjunct professors to teach from afar. We had the great good fortune of hiring alumnus Nathan Rott of NPR to teach our advanced audio course in the spring. Nate was able to be in Missoula for part of the semester, but also taught remotely as he returned to his home base in Los Angeles or continued his reporting around the West. We also engaged Kate Gammon, a Los Angeles-based independent journalist covering science and the environment, and Mallory Pickett, a freelance journalist for the *New Yorker*, *The Guardian* and *Slate*, to teach our graduate-level journalism seminar.

We again hosted many of our annual events virtually, like our High School Journalism Day, Job and Internship Fair, Dean Stone Awards and Journalism Commencement. Since we'd been through this once before we had the hang of it. Although I have to say I really hope this will be the last time we're forced to take all our events online. It's just not the same.

We've had some coming and going this year. Development officer Gita Saedi Kiely left us for another opportunity. And Montana Media Lab Founding Director Anne Bailey welcomed baby girl Vivienne and stepped away from her position with us. We wish them the best in their new adventures and we are taking this opportunity to think big about the future of the Media Lab and development.

We've just wrapped up a fantastic summer camp for high school students. They came from as far away as Portland and Pittsburgh, and Montana was well represented with students from Miles City, Joliet, Whitefish, Missoula and Great Falls. The students produced stories, photographs and designs considering the future of the media. I think you'll enjoy seeing what they accomplished in this issue.

We would not have made it through this crazy year without your ongoing support and your cheerleading from afar. While we expect to be back to business as usual this fall, the pandemic continues to rage and we are keeping a constant watch in case our plans need to change. We're ready to roll with it.

We hope you're well and managing through this ongoing upheaval. Please be in touch.

Denise Dowling
Director of the School of Journalism

VOLUME 65 | 2021

COMMUNIQUE



(photos, clockwise from left: Jeremy Lurgio, Bruce Ely, Paul Queneau)

16

17

14

COVER STORY

4 "Covering COVID-19 is trauma reporting:"

IN THIS ISSUE

6 Q&A with Dean Laurie Baefsky, College of the Arts & Media

7 An interesting year for Pollners E. Tammy Kim and Geoff McGhee

8 Past Pollners tell us what they're up to

14 J-School resumes summer camp. Also: student election coverage

15 Study abroad stays stateside, and updates from the grad program

16 Native News, Documentary and Radio-TV class updates

17 Showcase of recent work by photo-J alums

20 Faculty updates

22 Favorite professors of the past report back

25 Student awards and the latest from our Media Lab

MORE NEWS

26 Alumni obituaries

28 Updates from alums

34 Honoring our donors

COMMUNIQUE



Volume 65, 2021
Published for Alumni and Friends

Editor: Paul Queneau '02

Design: Allison Bye '14

UM School of Journalism © 2021

Send news and Class Notes to:

Communique
UM School of Journalism
Don Anderson Hall
Missoula, MT 59812
406-243-4001

Contact us:

Email: journalism@mso.umt.edu

Online: jour.umt.edu

@umjschool

#montanajournalism, #learnbydoing



COVER PHOTO: As part of his work as chief photographer for the Portland (Maine) Press Herald, **Gregory Rec '96** took this image of Bryce Barnes adjusting the nozzle on a snow-making machine at the Sunday River ski resort in Newry, Maine, this past January. To see more photos from Rec and other alums, turn to page 17.



ABOVE, FROM LEFT Big Horn County News General Manager and Editor Luella Brien '06 (second from left) with her family; Newsy's Montana Reporter Maritsa Georgiou '07; and Ryan Divish '01, who covers the Mariners for the Seattle Times. (photos: left, Jade WalksAlong; right, Dean Rutz)

REPORTING THE PANDEMIC

Alums went to great lengths to tell the stories of COVID-19, setting grief and fear aside

BY MARITSA GEORGIU '07

“COVERING COVID-19 is trauma reporting.”

I’ll never forget reading those words in an article advising news managers to check on their reporters. They turned me into a puddle on the couch. I was coming off the most exhausting and traumatic year of my career working as an anchor at NBC Montana where, among many stories, I covered the removal of USPS boxes before the 2020 election when most of the state would be voting by mail. I also reported on COVID’s heavy toll on Montanans.

Big Horn County News general manager Luella Brien '06 can relate. “I’ve been through traumatic grief. I’ve lost friends to car accidents or alcoholism or just random tragedies. But this unrelenting death after death after death—it will mess you up,” she told me in a candid (if therapeutic) phone conversation. “You want to try to articulate it.”

The pandemic beat was both personal and relentless as COVID numbers became more

than statistics. They were our family members, our friends, ourselves.

Brien contracted COVID-19 in April 2020. So too Ryan Divish '01, who covers the Mariners for the Seattle Times. He tested positive in his hometown of Havre, Montana, where he rode out part of the pandemic.

“Don’t ever get COVID and be stuck in quarantine in your childhood house with your parents who also have COVID,” Divish laughed. “It is not something I recommend.”

National Public Radio’s Nathan Rott '09 thinks he had it, too. After he returned to Los Angeles from covering the devastating Australian bushfires in March 2020, he became very ill, but the hospital didn’t have enough tests to confirm it.

Few experienced it like Brien, though, who grew up in Big Horn County. During Montana’s peak, it had the highest infection rate in the state, and she estimates she knew about 50 people who died from the virus, including many relatives.

Native Americans make up just under 7% of Montana’s population, yet they account for 16% of the deaths. She eventually had to quit attending funerals “or else we would be at a funeral every day,” Brien said.

Many of us compartmentalized the grief to get our story filed, then broke afterward. I remember having to read one script six times before I could get through it without crying.

“It’s just robotic,” Brien said. “And that takes some of the humanity out of it. But at a certain point, you can’t afford to have too much humanity for your own sake.”

The multitude of unknowns didn’t help. So much of what we normally cover has an expiration date—an investigation, a verdict, a season-ending event. But there’s no clear timeline of how long we will be writing about PCR tests, variants and (thankfully) the vaccines.

“I think [my reporting] early on was the hardest with all the suffering and people dying,” said CBS News’ Meg (Basinger) Oliver ’93, who covered one of the nation’s first hotspots in New Rochelle, New York. “It was overwhelming to try and make sense of it all, let alone cover it under a deadline when the headlines were constantly changing.”

Divish said he faced opposite challenges. He was covering spring training in Arizona as baseball shut down. “I’ve never been more uncertain about my job in my life, and that’s saying a lot for the journalism business.” His past experiences kept him innovative. At one point he had staffers write about their favorite sports books to fill space.

“What I learned [in my early days] in Montana was you had to be willing to adapt and adjust on a moment’s notice,” Divish said. “When you’re coming up through the journalism ranks and you’re at smaller newspapers, you’re asked to do all that stuff.”

For Rott, his creative shift at NPR came when he and colleague Ryan Kellman broke NPR’s traditional storytelling mold to convey the soul-crushing toll on medical providers as tensions ran high about mask mandates.

“This nurse that I had talked to for another story was expressing frustration and basically just despair about it. And so I did an hour-and-a-half long interview with her about her whole day,” Rott said. But instead of sticking to the traditional radio format, he worked with an illustrator to convert the

dramatic scenes she described into a comic book format delivered on NPR’s website.

“Dealing with the virus—it’s like you’re trying to rake in a windstorm,” the nurse told Rott. And for journalists covering the pandemic, the windstorm feels familiar.

CBS’s Oliver was taking things on one day at a time. “It has been emotionally draining. When you’re reporting on it every day there’s no escape. I definitely think the buildup over time has taken a toll.”

Add George Floyd’s murder, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, a presidential election cycle topped off with insurrection—all accompanied by a constant undercurrent of misinformation and accusations of fear mongering. An entire field of trained

“It has been emotionally draining. When you’re reporting on it every day there’s no escape. I definitely think the buildup over time has taken a toll.”

— Meg Oliver ’93, CBS News correspondent, on reporting during COVID

.....

professionals became stuck in an endless game of journalism whack-a-mole.

“To be honest, I feel like I’m treading water most days trying to juggle it all,” said Oliver.

But we collectively pushed through, working to convey this massive, evolving beast that affected every person watching, listening and reading. We leaned on each other, and in many cases, camaraderie replaced competitiveness.

It also provided opportunities most of us never thought possible. Remote work allowed Divish and Rott to leave their respective cities to return to Montana for a time.

“Working from home has been my saving grace since our children were all remote for more than 13 months,” Oliver said. “My heart goes out to all the women who had to leave their careers. There is no way I could

have continued working if I had to keep commuting.”

For me, spending more time with family was the true bright spot of the pandemic. But even the happiest moments were tinged with sadness and angst. I tried to channel that energy into relaying pertinent information. I became fixated on the virus and the daily case numbers in Montana, which declined, thankfully, in early 2021 with the first available COVID-19 vaccine appointments in Missoula.

I finally had news to share that brought hope, albeit with a dose of initial frustration as clinics filled up faster than concert seats. People were desperate to get that jab in the arm, knowing it could mean the literal difference between life and death. So I did what I could to help, signing people up and sending alerts with each new clinic announcement. It soon became a daily Twitter thread. Missoula County now has the highest vaccination rate in the state.

“From a professional standpoint, I’m hoping it gets back to normal a little bit more. We’re seeing signs of it,” Divish said. “I think also [the pandemic] helped me realize that you can’t live your entire life just to do the job, that if you don’t have a life outside the job you won’t be very good at the job in the first place.”

“I’m so excited to travel for work, I’m so excited to see people, but I’m also not really entirely ready to get out of my hole,” Rott said.

The news cycle once again has room for topics like cicadas, as we ourselves are emerging from our holes. But the pandemic is far from over, it seems, and for many of us, it will take years to process how documenting this episode in history has affected us. But we’re ready to write the next chapter. ●

Maritsa Georgiou ’07 just accepted a new position as a Montana-based national reporter for Newsy, after years as an anchor at NBC Montana. There she earned the 2021 Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism for her coverage of the USPS collection-box removal before the 2020 election when a majority of Montana voted by mail. This year, she interviewed Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dr. Deborah Birx and Dr. Robert Redfield while working from home for the entire pandemic, allowing her to spend more (and much needed) time with her family.



Dean Laurie Baefsky with her dog Trigger near Missoula.

Q&A

Dean Laurie Baefsky COLLEGE OF THE ARTS & MEDIA

LAURIE BAEFSKY joined the University of Montana in January 2021 as the first permanent dean of the new College of the Arts and Media. Baefsky worked for nearly 20 years to build and direct arts and culture programs in the academic, nonprofit and government sectors.

Previously, she was associate dean of research & strategic partnerships at University of Colorado Denver's College of Arts & Media, executive director of ArtsEngine and Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) based at the University of Michigan, grants manager with the Utah Division of Arts and Museums, and established the USU ArtsBridge program at Utah State University.

Trained as a classical flutist and music educator, she holds degrees in flute performance from Stony Brook University, University of Michigan, and California State University, Fullerton. She has appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra, Utah Symphony, was a 15-year member of the Virginia Symphony, and founding fellow with the New World Symphony. We recently sat down with her for a Q&A to help introduce her to J-School alumni:

What drew you to apply for the position of dean at the College of the Arts and Media at the University of Montana?

I fell in love with Montana decades ago after traveling to Big Sky right out of college for a music festival with the New World Symphony. In the early 2000s my husband and I visited Missoula for the first time, and I remember there was still quite a lot of snow even though it was early May. It was beautiful. Between the magic of the local Big Sky Brewing Co. and the carousel, I fell hard for Missoula and for the State of Montana.

The position itself is a great fit for me with the blending of the School of Journalism with Visual and Performing Arts. It is both similar to my work at CU Denver and reminiscent of my time at University of Michigan. I love the blend of strong foundational arts and media training with the potential for new future-forward pathways in new media, film and journalism. Having community access points through the Montana Media Lab, the Montana Museum of Art and Culture, and Montana Repertory Theatre are huge assets both for our students and for being a cultural resource in Missoula.

Where do you see opportunity for collaboration between the School of Journalism and the other schools in CAM (Music, Theater & Dance, Visual & Media Arts)?

Students are creating some amazing content, feeding into the growing media industry in Montana and leading our emerging experience economy regionally and in some cases nationally. The Montana Media Lab, with the adjacent TV studios, is poised to serve as a professional training ground and exploratory space for this work, and is a natural touchpoint to bring together the college around communication and creativity—through both documentary, narrative and realism, as well as all

forms of new media, immersive technologies, and visual/aural explorations. Environmental and sustainability studies is another entry point that bridges beyond the college.

UM has suffered a steep decline in enrollment over the past decade and so has the Journalism School. How goes that battle?

In looking at the data, it's pretty clear our reduction in budget is tethered largely to our reduction in student enrollment. This last year suffering through a pandemic and a semi-shuttered campus further hurt enrollment numbers. The School of Journalism has begun to reverse this trend by investing strategically in staff dedicated to enrollment, recruitment and retention. In fall 2020, they welcomed in their largest first-year class in years, and in spring 2021, the J-School retained more than 90% of its students, far outstripping national averages. This is a model we are investing in and amplifying across the college. Neatly put: this is my top priority as dean.

The School of Journalism existed for more than a century as a college in its own right, with its own dean and a seat at the academic officers' table until the merger in 2019. This shift in independence and identity has been a hard pill to swallow for many alumni. What would you say to them?

Dear Journalism School alumni: *thank you*. One of the reasons this position appealed to me is because of your school and the rich tradition and reputation you created.

CAM is at an amazing moment of reinvention: Creating a new college identity; establishing a shared culture that is inclusive of all arts and media. To have a school of journalism woven into the ethos of the arts gives me hope for the future and the nation. This is a rare and wonderful moment. 🍷

Pollner Professorship carries on in COVID

WHAT A YEAR for our Pollner Professors to join us at The University of Montana.

E. Tammy Kim came on board in the fall semester of 2020 and had to teach her class fully masked and distanced from her students.

As the T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professor for fall 2020, she helped advise the Kaimin and taught a seminar on labor reporting titled “The American Worker.” Tammy’s lecture to the community was an interactive live-streamed event from the Don Oliver Television Studios in Don Anderson Hall. In reflecting on her time at UM, Tammy wrote, “Every day, in the classroom and the Kaimin office, the UM students astonished me. The articles they read, the music they listened to, the recipes they tried; their desire to be good. They made cold calls and arranged socially distanced interviews. They did legal research and turned ethical questions over and over in their heads. They wanted to know the far beyond, but felt proud of where they were from. Despite the limits of pandemic life (talking through masks, a truncated semester, no beautiful seminar room, no late-night drinks after putting the Kaimin to bed), they gave me four months of joy.”

Tammy is a freelance magazine reporter, a contributing opinion writer at The New York Times, and a co-host of the “Time to Say Goodbye” podcast, based in Brooklyn, New York. Her work has appeared in outlets including The New Yorker, The New York Times Magazine, The New York Review of Books, Columbia Journalism Review, and The Nation. She previously worked on the editorial staff of The New Yorker and as a national features writer at Al Jazeera America. Before becoming a journalist, Tammy was a legal-services attorney and adjunct professor.

Geoff McGhee joined us as the spring Pollner professor and contracted COVID on his move from Seattle to Missoula. It was a rough start to the semester, but Geoff and his students managed to cram



ABOVE Fall 2020 Pollner Professor Tammy Kim (left) with J-School Professor Emerita Carol Van Valkenburg (center) and Director Denise Dowling. AT RIGHT: Spring 2021 Pollner Professor Geoff McGhee.

NEXT POLLNERS

FALL 2021: Jan Winburn, who spent 25 years editing at CNN, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Baltimore Sun.

SPRING 2022: Daniella Zalcman, an award-winning photojournalist, grantee of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and the National Geographic Society, and founder of Women Photograph.

a lot of teaching and learning into the mostly remote classes. Geoff’s class was entitled “The Infographic Story,” and students learned how to find, visualize, produce and report data-driven features.

Geoff is an infographics and multimedia journalist whose work spans the mass media and academic worlds. He is a veteran of The New York Times, ABC News and France’s Le Monde, and spent nine years working at Stanford University creating original journalism, interactive graphics and dashboards exploring contemporary and historical topics around the North American West. In addition to working with such clients as Schema Design, The Committee to Protect Journalists and the Oxford University Press, Geoff serves as the visuals editor for the Water Desk at the University of Colorado and the Associate Editor of “...& the West,” a digital publication covering western environmental and public health issues. In 2009-10, Geoff was a Knight Fellow at Stanford researching data visualization, which resulted in the widely-cited video documentary “Journalism in the Age of Data.” In 2015-16 he was the lead writer on National Geographic’s “Data Points” blog.

Pollner Professors

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

THE J-SCHOOL has now hosted 27 Pollner professors since this endowed professorship started in 2001. We reached out to past Pollners to report on what they've been up to. Here is what we heard back from those who responded.



JONATHAN WEBER ▲
SPRING 2002
Course: *Globalization and the Press*

The Pollner professorship was life-changing for me in many ways, starting with the fact that I met my wife in Missoula and stayed for eight great years. I started a media website called New West, an early adventure in online journalism, and later went on to do several more startups. I just started a new job as editor-in-chief of Here/Say Media in San Francisco. Before that I was the global technology editor for Reuters News, which I had the privilege of doing from Singapore for several years—a fascinating immersion in all things Asia—until the pandemic chased us back to San Francisco.

I have many great memories of hanging out in the old Kaimin office, meeting and working with students who are friends to this day. The Pollner lecture was also a highlight. It was the first time I had really told the story of the rise and fall of the Industry Standard in proper narrative

form. And I enjoyed hanging around and teaching some classes in subsequent years, including a favorite on “how to start a publication” that helped produce at least one major entrepreneurial success. I’ll forever be grateful for all that the Pollner professorship made possible, and look forward to staying in touch with the lovely family it has created.

TOM CHEATHAM
FALL 2002
Course: *War Correspondence*

I’m now retired in Durango, Colorado. As the second Pollner, my highlight of that semester was getting to know my students, their challenges and aspirations. I’m still in touch with some of them almost 20 years later.

After the Pollner, I eased out of television news with NBC and began a second career in photojournalism. My most rewarding assignments in that realm were undercover reporting and photography in Myanmar for Radio Free Asia. This was during the military dictatorship that gave way to Aung San Suu Kyi in 2011. Now, sadly, the military there is back in control, having deposed her on Feb. 1.

MAURICE POSSLEY
FALL 2003
Course: *Investigative Reporting and Criminal Justice*

I was a Pollner while I was a criminal justice reporter for the Chicago Tribune. My course was about causes of wrongful convictions, and my students investigated an actual case. It is impossible to pick a

favorite memory—there were so many. The faculty retreat was pretty great. We debated issues during the day and played poker at night. Bob McGiffert had a nightmare that there was a squirrel in his bedroom. Or maybe that was real? I rely on others for a fact-check. I think I treasure most the long lasting friendships forged in just a few months. And I have always felt honored Jessie McQuillan, one of my students, became the first director of the Montana Innocence Project. I returned to Chicago and worked for the Chicago Tribune until 2008. I visited Montana many times on reporting and fishing trips. In 2009, I took a research position at the Northern California Innocence Project at Santa Clara University Law School. Since 2012, I have been senior researcher for the National Registry of Exonerations, an online database of nearly 3,000 wrongful convictions in the U.S. since 1989. The Registry is a joint project of Michigan and Michigan State law schools and the University of California Irvine Newkirk Center on Science & Society. During my time at the Registry, I have written more than 2,000 narratives detailing wrongful convictions of men and women from every state in the U.S.

NANCY SZOKAN
FALL 2004
Course: *Opinion Journalism*

CHRISTINE BOESE
FALL 2005
Course: *Blogs and the Media*

My course was on blogging and the citizen journalism movement. That fall

we had an amazing object lesson with Hurricane Katrina and its horrific aftermath, and the role that local reporters for the New Orleans Post-Crescent and citizen journalist bloggers played in telling the story of a dramatically altered landscape.

My Pollner lecture focused on my own experiences hosting blogs for independent journalists on the ground in Iraq while working at CNN in the run-up to the U.S. occupation of Baghdad in the Iraq War in early 2003, as the traditional media was stepping in and curtailing even their freelancers' blogging activity as a competitive threat.

In the time since that amazing autumn in Montana, I moved to Brooklyn and jumped into working in digital media with both feet, first for Condé Nast for two years in a posting for the digital agency Razorfish, working on websites that incorporated interactivity and audience participation, Style.com (at the time, incorporating the site for Vogue), MensStyle.com (incorporating GQ), and Flip.com (a user-generated lookbook site for teenagers, associated with Teen Vogue). I also worked on a new magazine and digital financial site for Condé called Portfolio.com (before the 2008 crash, when it died). One of the most enjoyable projects I got to work on during my six years at Razorfish was on the team for Disney that did a major redesign of ESPN.com, which won two Webby awards.

After that, I jumped to client-side, working in Pharma, Fintech and cloud computing for clinical drug trials. About three years ago, I landed as a VP at JPMorgan Chase, where I work on user experiences for cloud computing, technology infrastructure, and now, communications strategy and usability for an AI and machine learning modernization team of data scientists and engineers.

I love thinking about how to explain the black box inner workings of deep learning and natural language processing in a layperson's terms, using words, infographics and other interactive tools.



HENRIETTE LÖWISCH ▲
FALL 2006

Course: *Foreign Correspondence*

I spent the past year guiding Deutsche Journalistenschule in Munich through the pandemic. Students masked up for video journalism and magazine production courses, while reporting, podcasting and design all moved online. Science journalism instruction got a boost, thanks to COVID, as did newsletter, community and Instagram projects. Some, like #coronasolutions, were reported internationally, in the tradition of the foreign correspondence course I taught as a Pollner prof in 2006. The connections I made at UM have lasted over the decades: Shane McMillan, a former Montana Kaimin staffer, is now a regular teacher and project leader at Germany's premier journalism school.

JOHN WOESTENDIEK
FALL 2007

Course: *Superfund Dumping Ground*

Editor's Note: We're sad to report that John died at age 66 on June 24, 2020, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is our first Pollner Professor to have passed on since the program began.

He died in hospice following complications from a stroke, and following health struggles with heart and kidney failure.

Before his Pollner professorship in 2007, he won a Pulitzer for his investigative reporting at the Philadelphia Inquirer that exonerated and freed a Delaware County man convicted of murder.

While he was a Pollner, his students examined a small Montana town where

tailings from the nation's largest superfund site were deposited. Their work was published in the Missoulian.

After his Pollner he returned to the Baltimore Sun, then in 2008 moved over to work at the Lexington (Kentucky) Leader, where he stayed until 2000. He retired from newspapers and turned his attention to writing a daily blog, Ohmidog!, about his canine companions and issues involving man's best friend. In 2010, he published his first book, "Dog, Inc.: The Uncanny Story of Cloning Man's Best Friend," followed by a podcast, "Travels With Ace," which recounted his year-long cross-country road trip with his dog. That led to an appearance on "Nightline."

He kept blogging until just before his death.

MARYANNE MCNELLIS
FALL 2008

Course: *Follow the Money*



CHRIS JONES ▲
FALL 2009

Course: *Narrative Non-fiction*

I was honored to be the Pollner Professor in the fall of 2009. I can't remember exactly what my course was called, but it was about writing narrative journalism. My favorite memory is when the Kaimin kids stood up strong against the felonious football team and won. Makes me emotional to think about to this day.

Since 2009, I continued to write for magazines, including Esquire, until 2016 or so, and now I work mostly as a screenwriter. My first series, "Away," was on Netflix last year, starring Hilary Swank. I also have a book about creativity, "The

Eye Test,” coming out in early 2022. I live in Port Hope, Ontario, with my partner and two boys. Charley was four when we were in Missoula, and he still talks about the “Emmy M”—the big M on the mountain. We loved every minute in Montana, and we’ll be returning this fall for Kevin Van Valkenburg’s wedding. Can’t wait!

ELI SASLOW

FALL 2010

Course: *Newswriting*

I’ve spent the last year continuing to report for The Washington Post and writing a book that comes out this fall (“Voices from the Pandemic”) and a movie that was released over the summer (“Four Good Days”). But mostly what I’m up to is trying to replicate our wonderful Missoula life in Portland, Oregon, where we live now with our three children. That means lots of camping trips in the mountains, hikes and breweries—although I still can’t find anything that stacks up to Cold Smoke.

KAREN COATES

FALL 2011

Course: *The Savvy Journalist*

It’s hard to believe a decade has passed since my Pollner days! I write to you now from my home in New Mexico, having

just returned from my first in-the-field reporting trip in more than a year (see photo below). My husband (J-School alum Jerry Redfern ’01) and I spent the past year reporting remotely and bringing our first feature-length documentary film to its final stages of post-production. “Eternal Harvest,” based on our 2013 book, reveals the devastating effects of unexploded ordnance in Laos remaining since the U.S. bombings during the Vietnam War. Between 1964 and 1973, U.S. forces dumped more than 4 billion pounds of explosives on Laos, making it the most heavily bombed country per person in history. An estimated 80 million bombs remain in the soil today, threatening millions of civilians. After six years of work, the film is nearly done (just needs color and sound correction), and we’ve started submitting to film festivals. Stay tuned, as we will soon release a new trailer and more!

COVID really shifted our work (and also sent me on a potential new book project, about elder care), but we are eager to resume regular in-person reporting! And travels! Shortly before everything shut down, we had the fortunate opportunity to visit Georgia (the country) as part of an IREX international exchange, which links journalists in the U.S. with those in Georgia. I had worked

with IREX years earlier, as a media trainer in Azerbaijan, and helped build this link with SPJ Rio Grande here in New Mexico when the opportunity arose. Several local newsrooms hosted a group of Georgians when they visited in August 2019. We look forward to the day when such trips are possible again.



HANK STUEVER ▲

FALL 2012

Course: *Popular Culture Journalism*

I stepped down as the Washington Post’s TV critic at the end of 2020, after 11 years in that beat and God only knows how many TV shows watched and reviewed. I’m still at the Post, going on 22 years—now senior editor for Style, working with writers and editors to elevate the daily feature section’s mix of culture and politics. I also still occasionally write, but very much enjoy editing—parts of which remind me of the fun I had teaching during my Pollner semester. I still live in downtown Washington, still with my partner Michael, and am sorry yet somehow relieved to report no major news in the last nine years, certainly none from the last year or so, which is a good thing. I’m delighted by the continued success of the Pollner professorship and the range of talent it draws.

TAMARA JONES

FALL 2013

Course: *Training the Professional Observer*

I packed up my car and drove from D.C. to Missoula in 2013 for my amaz-



Karen Coates on her first field reporting trip in more than a year, doing an archaeology story at White Sands National Park. (photo: J-School alum (and Coates’ husband) Jerry Redfern ’01)

ing Pollner adventure that fall. After hovering up every Flathead cherry within devouring distance, I settled in with a class of kickass students. Our topic was “Training the Professional Observer.” As the kids learned how to interview thoughtfully and absorb the detail and dialogue around them to build scene, I relished my own observer status as teacher, watching them grow more confident in their craft and getting the chance to experience the world from the perspective of a generation that refused to be easily defined. My favorite memories—other than making my nature-loving students read harrowing narratives about outdoor adventures gone terribly wrong—were outside the classroom. I had a standing offer to treat my students to breakfast one-on-one, and spent many cozy mornings plotting out career paths or story structures at The Shack, soaking up their insights as I shared mine. The camaraderie of the J-School faculty carried beyond Anderson Hall to the sticky floors of The Union Club and the welcoming kitchens of newfound friends who fed me but wisely kept their Flathead cherries out of sight.

Since the fellowship, I’ve returned to ghostwriting memoirs and still enjoy mentoring young journalists.

WILLIAM GLABERSON

FALL 2014

Course: Covering the Courts

I am writing from my campervan from an oceanfront cycling paradise where it turns out it is easy to forget about email.

A year or two after my wonderful semester in Missoula I fully embraced retirement, went backpacking with my kids in Glacier during two summers, learned some new stuff, bought a campervan in time for the arrival of (three!) grandchildren and generally decided not working had its advantages. So my honors and humiliations from 30 years in news will just have to stand.

My top memories of the journalism school experience were those fairly frequent moments when you could see a student realize there could be a place for her in our business. Sometimes it was

simple things, like when she suddenly saw the work done by the unnoticed little word “said,” as in: “The governor’s spokesman said there was no truth to the allegation that...” Or when he learned that we don’t really use...in news stories. I so clearly remember a few of our students in that instant when they glimpsed a couple of decades in a calling that is quite noble and crazy fun and liked what they saw. As a teacher it was really something to think you might be a reassuring little voice in their ear in tough times, like when a mistake gets into print. I probably should have tried teaching sooner.

My wife is joining me in retirement this year after 50 years as a lawyer. So we may be in that cool-looking black van parked nearby, maybe even in Montana. I do still have a few ideas for writing projects though. Don’t we always?



RON REASON ▲

SPRING 2015

Course: Design and Disruption

What I’ve been up to: My time in Missoula and enjoyment of wilderness prompted a permanent move from Chicago to Portland, Oregon, where I’ve continued my consulting work with news media organizations and journalism programs. Most recently, I traveled to Mumbai and Kerala to conduct workshops in visual and mobile storytelling strategies for 50 journalists from India’s largest newsrooms. I’ve also helped Northwestern University’s Medill School with its marketing and outreach efforts for the last three years, focusing on its master’s programs, Local News

Initiative, and alumni magazine.

Favorite memory of time on campus: Taking up mountain biking, heading out for backpacking and camping in the Rattlesnake right out the front door of my condo (a lovely nest enjoyed through the years by many Pollner profs).

KEVIN VAN VALKENBURG

FALL 2015

Course: Sports Writing

I think about my magical semester as the Pollner Professor at least once a day. Watching students read—and fall in love with pieces of writing that I’d introduced them to was as rewarding as any professional experience I’ve ever had. I have a playlist of songs we used in my class to talk about the perfect details of storytelling, and in my mind, those songs will always feel like they were that fall’s soundtrack, whether it was the lyrics of Jason Isbell, Carly Simon, Warren Zevon, Kendrick Lamar, Johnny Cash or Taylor Swift. That year made me a better writer, better father and better mentor. Telling my students stories about T. Anthony Pollner, who was a friend and classmate of mine when I attended the University of Montana, helped me feel like his ambition and humor and curiosity could live on forever.

I’m still writing for ESPN, coming up on 10 years with the company. I’ve done a little bit of everything there, writing stories both long and short, and I’ve been blessed to work with hundreds of brilliant, creative, driven people. I’ve been to multiple Super Bowls, a dozen golf majors, the NBA Finals and the World Series, traveled overseas multiple times and made friends with a group of co-workers who now feel like an extension of my family. I’m currently part of our investigative unit, working on big projects that appear both in print and on television, but I still occasionally pitch in with event coverage or writing narrative essays. This year, I took my daughter to the U.S. gymnastics trials to see Simone Biles and wrote about the experience for ESPN.com, a story that is one of my favorite pieces I’ve ever published.

In 2017, fellow UM grad Matt Thompson invited me, on behalf of the U.S. State Department, to speak about freedom of the press in Latvia, where he was serving as the Cultural Affairs Officer in Riga. Afterward, we shared a drink and toasted the happy accident that led two ex-Grizzly football players to become journalism majors who then ended up promoting democracy around the world. It's not something we ever could have imagined during late nights working on *The Kaimin*.

I live in Baltimore, Maryland, with my wife, Tiffany Sanchez, and our three daughters, Sophia, Molly and Keegan.

SALLY STAPLETON

SPRING 2015

Course: Advanced Multimedia Storytelling

I have quite a few great memories from such an ultra-talented class, but I loved that we were able to pull off a Roxy Theater presentation of our final multimedia projects with community members and the subjects of the stories in the audience.

Since Missoula: In 2016, I joined the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette as its photo director and was named managing editor eight months later. The staff was recognized for its coverage of the Tree of Life synagogue massacre with a 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News Reporting.

Following that, I was asked to return to The Associated Press to launch a new department, a global religion team. The public announcement noted that part of the reason I got the job was due to my ability to “produce and present great multi-format content for readers around the world.”

MELISSA MCCOY

FALL 2016

Course: Reporting and Writing Sensitive Topics

I've continued my work with the J-School by representing the program as a lecturer and recruiter at California community college events throughout the state. I also work as a writing coach, writer and trainer for Cal Poly Pomona University. From 2017 to 2019 I was a full-time caregiver for my parents, and

I'm now writing fiction in addition to my other work, and busy penning a novella set in California.

ANNE BAILEY

SPRING 2017

Course: Video Across Platforms

I taught Short-Form Video Storytelling as a Pollner professor. After years of working and teaching across the country and the globe, it was exciting to return to the place where I earned my master's to work with the next generation of journalists. I remember watching my students' final videos at the end of the semester and feeling so proud that they had stepped outside the traditional journalism box to tell stories more creatively.

A lot has happened in the four years since. I had my daughter Noor in the fall of 2017, launched the Montana Media Lab at the J-School in 2018, got pregnant during the pandemic in 2020 and had my second daughter Vivienne in March 2021. Since then, I've been learning how to juggle two kids plus work and producing a podcast about being a Single Mom By Choice (SMBC) that might be done by the time my kids are in college, if I'm lucky.

CHERYL CARPENTER

FALL 2017

Course: Leaked Documents-Ethics and Practice

DEBORAH POTTER

SPRING 2018

Course: Journalism and Public Trust

It's hard to believe it's been three years since I had the privilege of teaching a fantastic group of students about the challenge of restoring trust in journalism. I loved my time in Missoula, including the hours spent at the Kaimin and at the breweries in town, which I blame for the 10 extra pounds I came home with.

Since then, I've stayed busy training journalists. I helped the Solutions Journalism Network spread its work into local television newsrooms, traveling all over the U.S. in 2019. This past year, I trained journalists all over the world (on

Zoom of course), and also tuned up my video editing skills by producing services and “virtual choir” pieces for my church. And this year, I got vaccinated, so perhaps one day soon I can get back to Missoula.



BEN MONTGOMERY ▲

FALL 2018

Course: Investigative Storytelling

My favorite memory: The Kaimin staff planned a game night in the office, so I showed up on campus at 7 p.m. with five board games I bought at Target, plus a two-gallon tub of Cheeseballs, some salami sticks and a few other assorted snacks, ready to have an old-fashioned good time. To my chagrin, someone had changed the date and failed to tell the Pollner professor. I shamed them thoroughly on Slack with a selfie of me and my games standing outside the shuttered newspaper office. They turned the selfie into an illustration for the mock front page of my walk-away Kaimin.

In the few years since, I finished a book I'd started working on during my time there, “A Shot In The Moonlight,” my fourth, published in January 2021.

I've also been writing a daily newsletter for the new media company Axios, called Axios Tampa Bay, and trying to keep up with the successes of my Montana journalism students.

PRESTON GANNAWAY

SPRING 2019

Course: Intimacy and Longform Journalism

I've spent most of the last year hunkered down at my Northern California cabin

in the redwoods. In my time since UM, I've been doing work for ACLU Magazine, ESPN and The New Yorker. But mostly I've been making sourdough, playing with my cat and documenting pandemic life with a vintage Polaroid SX-70. During my time in Missoula, I didn't realize that the extreme weather and blizzard isolation would be such good training for the months to come!



LEAH SOTTILE ▲
FALL 2019

Course: Narrative Journalism

Since teaching as a Pollner, I've released the podcast "Two Minutes Past Nine" with BBC Radio 4, documented the rise of a new far right movement for The New York Times Magazine, and continued to chronicle the unique tensions and complexities of the West as a correspondent for High Country News. I'm currently writing my first book and making a new podcast. Whenever I have a bad day, I think about the time a J-School student chased me down in the hallway to talk about journalism ethics, and how fulfilling it was to see firsthand that though the industry continues to shift and evolve, the UM continues to produce reporters committed to truth.

CHRIS JOHNS
SPRING 2020

Course: Conservation Photojournalism

I had the honor of being the Spring 2020 Pollner Professor. My favorite memory is how resilient our students were when we pivoted to teaching by



Chris Johns (center left) at Wild Horse Island on Flathead Lake, where he went to assist Tommy Martino '14 (left) and Jiakai Lou '20 (center right) who were there shooting a video on Douglas Emlen, UM Division of Biological Sciences professor and author of "Animal Weapons."

Zoom immediately after spring break. My class had students scattered from Portland to Milwaukee to Missoula, but everyone remained engaged, energetic and eager to learn. And the Kaimin did not miss a beat, having the same kind of positive can-do attitude. The challenges COVID-19 presented brought out the best in our students.

Being a Pollner Professor convinced my family and me that Missoula is the best place to live. Elizabeth, our three dogs and I are settled in the upper Rattlesnake neighborhood and appreciate being part of a vibrant, thoughtful community. The Pollner opportunity also made me realize how much I enjoy teaching. With my Pollner and Zoom experience in hand, I am now teaching Photojournalism and Environmental Journalism at Oregon State University, my alma mater.

Above is a photograph taken this past summer on top of Hungry Horse Island at Flathead Lake. I went there to assist a pair of star UM journalism

students, Tommy Martino and Jiakai Lou, for a "Grizzlies In the Wild" video about Dr. Douglas Emlen, UM biological sciences professor and author of "Animal Weapons." It illustrates one of the many reasons my family made Montana our home.

E. TAMMY KIM
FALL 2020

Course: Covering Labor and Workers

As spring comes to New York City, I've been thinking about the snowy backyard dinner (of delicious Kamoon Arabian) that the students and I shared not so long ago, on Beverly Street. Since my return to the East Coast, I've resumed full-speed freelance journalism and podcasting, and am working on a book proposal while teaching at a local university. Miss you all very much!

GEOFF MCGHEE
SPRING 2021

Course: The Infographics Story 

Students cover turbulent elections, legislature

WHILE THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE grabbed national attention, a capstone class of juniors and seniors covered Montana's statewide elections last year. Professors Lee Banville and Dennis Swibold's students followed the twists in the campaigns, which ended in Republican control of the governorship, all statewide elected offices and both houses of Legislature for the first time in 16 years.

Students profiled Montana's federal and statewide contests and ballot issues. They fact-checked debates for MontanaPBS. On Election Day, students scattered across the state to record exit interviews with voters for an online website that added voices to the expert post-election analysis.

In January, two students in the elections class packed their bags and moved to Helena to cover the 67th Montana Legislature. Junior Austin Amestoy writes:

"I had the pleasure of joining fellow student James Bradley and adjunct professor Courtney Cowgill as a member of the UM Legislative News Service, a program sponsored by the Montana Newspaper Association, the Montana Broadcasters Association and the Greater Montana Foundation that provides print and radio coverage to




Austin Amestoy photographs the 67th Montana Legislature, one of two J-School students that moved to Helena in January to cover what turned out to be one of the most contentious sessions in recent history. Their reporting provided essential coverage to news outlets across the state.

publications around the state during each biennial meeting of the Legislature.

"Between Zoom sessions and the distancing and masking mandates that were in place for the first few months, it was hard to meet lawmakers and build the trusting relationships that all good Capitol reporters value. Luckily, James and I had a huge support team to help us find our way, both around the maze-like Capitol and the complex issues being debated inside.

"I reported stories on the passage of hotly debated bills restricting the rights of transgender youth, limiting abortion

access and cracking down on voter access. But my favorites were the issues outside the limelight, like expanding tax credits for film productions and stripping protections for landowners who live near gravel pits.

"The experience offered great challenges and even greater rewards for a pair of student journalists. James and I walked into the Capitol on January 4 bright-eyed and overwhelmed, and left April 29 with a library of reporting to be proud of, and a 'rolodex' stuffed with connections and opportunities." 

J-School resumes summer camp for high schoolers

WHEN 35 HIGH SCHOOL students showed up on the University of Montana campus for the first day of journalism summer camp in July, they immediately went on assignment.

And we didn't give them an easy assignment. They were tasked with spending three days covering one big—and complicated—topic: the future of journalism.

They pitched story ideas based on what matters to their communities, they asked the hard questions, they kept their minds open, they sought different perspectives

and they put all their coverage together carefully and in context.

In other words, they practiced the kind of journalism we hope they will use to shape the future of journalism themselves.

What's more is they had some fun doing it. We promised them at the start of the camp that one of the things they would learn, in addition to the role of journalism in democracy and the importance of journalism in informing and connecting communities, is just how fun it is to spend your time talking to people about stuff that matters.


When we asked students at the end of the week what the best part of camp was for them, overwhelmingly they said it was all the time spent making friends and connecting with their camp counselors, professors and professional journalists.

One of the campers summed it up nicely when she wrote that her favorite part was "spending time with smart people!"

That same student, Helena Brown of Billings, was one whose definition of journalism at the end of camp helped us know we'd hit the mark we'd set when we first started planning this camp:

"Journalism is giving a voice to those who need it," she wrote.

Also spot-on was fellow Billings high schooler Hank Jagodzinski's comment on the role of local journalism (which he covered as his story during the week):

"Journalism is *the* central component in keeping local communities together through stories. Without it, we are merely individuals in the same area, not a community," he wrote. 

Study abroad class makes best of bad year for world travel

IT HAS NOT BEEN an easy two years for the students who planned to travel abroad with the J-School as reporters. A 2020 trip to Northern Ireland fell victim to COVID-19, so many of the same students re-enrolled this spring.

But with a clear possibility travel would not be back by May 2021, students did what so many of us did and moved their work virtual.

In February, they began holding class sessions with experts in the troubles that have dogged the UK region for decades, as well as political and legal experts in Brexit and the European Union. They soon began developing their own stories reported via Zoom and phone about everything from abortion policy in the region to Irish language schools in Protestant East Belfast to the impact of Brexit on businesses and farmers.

While the pandemic layered on the challenges, students had in Brexit a story both complex and deeply human. When Great Britain officially left the European Union at the end of 2020 it triggered a wave of changes and uncertainty. Our reporters were able to talk to everyday residents of Northern Ireland as well as experts about what was happening in real time. They also met remotely with dozens of residents of the region in hopes it would serve as pre-reporting for the trip in May 2021.

COVID, of course, had other plans. When word came down in early March that this year's trip would also be canceled, students didn't give up. They finished reporting their stories, then created a new website to feature their articles and that of future international trips. The site, Montana Journalism Abroad (journalismabroad.jour.umt.edu), launched in May and includes stories, interactive timelines and multimedia maps.

The reporters even had a bit of fun photo-shopping themselves into locations around Northern Ireland for website illustrations.

But not to be deterred, the International Reporting class plans to give it another go in May of 2022, traveling to Belfast and Londonderry to report in the immediate aftermath of elections. Like this year, they will first use Zoom, then hit the ground with a deep understanding of the region, its politics and culture. 🍷

Grad program keeps making waves

THE GRADUATE PROGRAM in environmental science and natural resource journalism awarded degrees in May to six graduates: Mary Auld, Katie Hill, Anthony Pavkovich, Kylie Mohr, Hannah Welzbacker and Peter Zimmerman. Members of the so-called "COVID cohort" spent much of their time in the two-year program studying remotely and doing journalism under extremely challenging circumstances. Yet despite those obstacles, the group completed strong graduate projects and portfolios of work based on deep original reporting.

The graduates are already finding success away from the university. Auld worked with the Montana Media Lab on a summer news literacy program for Montana Native high school students. Hill is an assistant editor at MeatEater, an outdoors media conglomerate based in Bozeman. Mohr accepted an internship at High Country News. Welzbacker is a reporter covering agriculture and the environment at the Times-News in Twin Falls, Idaho.

THE ANNUAL CROWN OF THE CONTINENT PROJECT, which pairs two students with professional journalist mentors to work on in-depth projects, led to two strong publications in professional media outlets this year. Kylie Mohr's project, which documented the conflict surrounding the routing of the Pacific Northwest Trail through Montana's Yaak Valley, was published by National Geographic's website. Hannah Welzbacker's project on scientific efforts to count bird populations was published in Cool Green Science, the conservation blog of The Nature Conservancy.

The Crown of the Continent dinner went virtual this year due to COVID-19. Graduate students made their pitches to a panel of professional judges that included Rachael Bale, an executive editor at National Geographic; Chris Johns, former editor-in-chief at National Geographic; and Breanna McCabe, a producer at Montana PBS. This year's winners are Bowman Leigh and Sierra Cistone. They are working with mentors Kate Gammon and Mallory Pickett, both freelance science journalists based in California.

This fall, a cohort of eight students will begin the graduate program. As always, they're an eclectic mix from around the country with backgrounds ranging from scientists and professional journalists to organic farmers and a musician. Program director Nadia White is away on sabbatical until January, and professor Joe Eaton is serving as interim director. 🍷

Sarah Mosquera (left) and Bowman Leigh are both busy earning master's degrees in Environmental Science and Natural Resource Journalism. ▶





TOP Scott Gion, Lame Deer's assistant principal, walks with a student to her first class of the day after she picked up her breakfast. ABOVE The cover of the 2021 issue. (photos, from top: Hazel Cramer, Sarah Mosquera)

Native News students investigate how tribes spent COVID funding

THE NATIVE NEWS Honors Project published its 30th edition in 2021, "Vital Relief," partnering with the Missoulian to investigate how tribes spent more than \$200 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funds. Student reporters found that tribes received anywhere from \$14 million to \$25 million each.

Tribes directed the money to various projects and programs, including repairing a long-leaking sewage lagoon in Frazer, which had hindered infrastructure and economic growth for two decades; the complexities of homelessness on the Flathead reservation, an epidemic that bears no tell-tale signs; and efforts by the newly federally recognized Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians to build a new Indian Health Service facility in Great Falls.


However, one story quickly caught widespread attention. "Insecure: The rise and fall of the Crow Nation Police" focused on the five-month tenure of a tribal police department. As both tribal and federal officials evaded questions, reporter Nikki Zambon and photojournalist Olivia Swant-Johnson found detailed accounts of how the Crow

tribe tried and failed to create a tribal-run police department.

Although Zambon and Swant-Johnson couldn't track down exactly how much cash was sunk into the police force, they found the tribe purchased about 30 new vehicles; two shipping containers meant to be used as holding cells; and spent \$2.5 million to purchase a former museum building without an appraisal.

The police force shut down after just five months, still with many unanswered questions, including whether the tribe had the authority to create a law enforcement agency at all. The reporting team researched the federal Indian Self Determination Act, which tribes must navigate before they can take over vital public services from the federal government like schools, hospitals and law enforcement.

Both reporters say there are still many mysteries surrounding the Crow Nation Police that will keep this story relevant for some time.

"Vital Relief" published on May 30 and was inserted into Lee newspapers across the state. It's also online at nativenews.jour.umt.edu. 

Audio-video classes tee up productions

STUDENTS FOUND WAYS TO report and produce meaningful multimedia content using video, audio, television and radio while keeping safe in the pandemic.

Students in Jeremy Lurgio's Advanced Video Storytelling course spread out across Montana to report on COVID-19's impact on the state's thriving fly fishing industry. They waded in rivers with fishermen and conservationists, floated with fisheries biologists and fishing guides, and learned to fly drones over the Blackfoot and Bitterroot Rivers.


Fly fishing plays a key role in Montana's tourism industry. COVID-19 largely shut-

tered this dynamic industry in spring 2020, and when the state reopened, record numbers of residents and nonresidents flocked to Montana rivers and lakes and created challenges for management.

The 27-minute documentary, "Weathering the Storm," aired on MontanaPBS in May, and online at: montanapbs.org/programs/weatheringthestorm, and was funded by the Greater Montana Foundation. The project earned awards including 13th in the Hearst Journalism Awards team multimedia competition and 4th place in Hearst's digital news/enterprise multimedia story category, awarded to Hazel Cramer.

Students in audio courses used boom poles, phone recorders and video conferencing to safely report from the field. Professor Denise Dowling's intermediate audio

students delivered live news broadcasts to KBGA College Radio. By doing several jobs at once they managed to stay distanced from each other and their guests. News anchors wrote the news, ran the control room board and rolled tape while reading the newscast live at 5 p.m. weekdays.

The same distancing happened in the spring semester's intermediate television course. Students doubled up on duties, working simultaneously as director/technical director, audio/prompter operator and camera op/floor manager. The crew pulled off a couple of superb live-streamed productions including the College of the Arts and Media's "Odyssey of the Stars" in March, and an eSports showcase featuring members of UM's popular and growing Griz eSports team as their final project in April. 

NEW PHOTO SELECTIONS FROM ALUMNI PHOTOJOURNALISTS

GENERATION AFTER GENERATION, the J-School has produced some of the most talented and capable photojournalists the world over. That tradition lives on, as you'll see in this selection of images submitted by alums. Under the guidance of professors Keith Graham and Jeremy Lurgio, and back to Patty Reksten and beyond, our photojournalists leave the J-School as ready reporters who often ascend to the top of the profession. We are proud of the work they do, and proud to share it here.

Bruce Ely took this shot of the Portland Trail Blazers celebrating their win over the Dallas Mavericks on March 19, 2021.



BRUCE ELY | CLASS OF 1998

After graduating from UM, Ely spent time working at newspapers with stops at the Evansville (Indiana) Courier & Press and The Oregonian. He is currently a staff photographer for the Portland Trail Blazers. “My approach to sports photography has always been to look for the storytelling moments away from the ball. This season provided some very unique moments as the team and fans learned to navigate the complications of working through the COVID pandemic.”

Greg Rec photographed this technician at a COVID testing site in Portland, Maine, as she prepared to test another person on March 16, 2021.



GREGORY REC | CLASS OF 1996

Rec was hired at the Portland (Maine) Press Herald after graduation, and over the past 24 years he's covered the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York City, been twice embedded with Maine Army National Guard troops in Iraq, reported on the impact of Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. In 2004, Rec was named Journalist of the Year with columnist Bill Nemitz by the Maine Press Association for their work in Iraq. In 2007, he received the Master Photographer award from the New England Society of Newspaper Editors. In 2011, Rec became Chief Photographer at the Press Herald.



RACHEL LEATHE | CLASS OF 2014

Leathe is a staff photographer at The Bozeman Daily Chronicle where she covers everything from wildfires to rodeos. She says her favorite thing about working at a daily newspaper is the incredible variety of people she is privileged to meet and photograph.



Rachel Leathe photographed 25-year-old John Birkholz from Laramie, Wyoming, as he gave the nod to open the gate during the Bucking Horse Sale Rodeo on May 15, 2021, in Miles City.

UPDATES FROM FACULTY AND STAFF

Associate Professor **JULE BANVILLE** was awarded a sabbatical for the 2020-21 academic year. She spent it reporting, pitching and producing a multi-episode audio narrative centered on a crime against a child in Billings in 1987. The case has important legal implications, both in Montana and nationally, and the project will air as a widely available podcast. In addition, Jule edited “Covid Solutions,” a series for Yellowstone Public Radio and Montana Public Radio about lasting recovery efforts in Montana, spurred by the pandemic. Her students’ work also aired on YPR and MTPR as “Project Little Shell,” a series of 18 stories about federal recognition of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa and what that means after an effort that took more than 130 years. The project and several Little Shell stories were named winners and finalists in the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards. Jule was awarded a merit recognition by UM, her third, based on these recent collaborations with the state’s public radio stations.

Professor **LEE BANVILLE** added a new project to his work at the J-School, joining the American Communities Project to report on so-called “Deaths of Despair,” a concept that measures the health of regions by monitoring avoidable deaths from drug overdoses, suicides and alcohol-related deaths. As part of the project he analyzed 20 years of death records from Montana to better understand how the pandemic affected places in the state. The reporting was featured on the American Communities Project site as well the Daily Montanan and Montana Public Radio. He also continues to be an often-cited expert on Montana politics and the media.

Associate Professor **JASON BEGAY** was invited to sit on a panel of experts earlier this year entitled “Why it Matters: The Native Vote in Montana,” where he discussed the barriers facing Native American voters in the state as



FROM TOP **Jule Banville's** sabbatical project is an audio narrative titled, “An Absurd Result.” **Joe Eaton**, meanwhile, is interim director of the grad program during Nadia White’s sabbatical.

well as other election-related issues in tribal communities. Begay also spent the year advising the Montana Kaimin. In addition to teaching, he also managed to buy a house, get married and welcome a foster child to his family during the pandemic.

Associate Professor **JOE EATON** is serving as interim director of the graduate program while Nadia White is on sabbatical. During the COVID-19 pan-

dem, he reported multiple stories on the impact to America’s nursing homes, whose residents account for about one-third of the country’s deaths from the virus. The work included a cover story in AARP Bulletin in December that details how decades of failed policy left the country’s nursing homes particularly vulnerable to the pandemic. He is currently developing a new class on the portrayal of war correspondents in Hollywood, which he will teach in fall.

Associate Professor **RAY FANNING** also serves as the associate director for the School of Journalism and just finished a three-year term on UM’s General Education Committee. This fall, he will begin representing the College of the Arts and Media on the Faculty Senate. During the summer break, he shot video for a MontanaPBS documentary on architect A.J. Gibson. Gibson designed and built many iconic buildings in western Montana, including UM’s University Hall and the Missoula County Courthouse.

Professor **KEITH GRAHAM's** Beginning Visual Journalism students created some outstanding video soundbite packages both semesters—even though they were restricted on what they could do because of COVID-19. In the fall semester, his Advanced Photojournalism/Multimedia class brought innovative pandemic-related projects including student perspectives on mask wearing, how musicians kept creating during challenging times for performers, and what it was like for a young teacher in one of Montana’s one-room schools. Spring allowed his Freelance Photography class to venture outside producing sunset portraits, lighting objects and buildings at night, adventure sports portraits, fashion, fine art and travel projects. Keith started shooting a photo documentary on Crossing Montana and began research on another documentary project—the 150th anniversary of livestock brands in Montana. Keith



Jeremy Lurgio walks on a suspension bridge while hiking with his family on the Hooker Valley trail in Aoraki Mount Cook National Park. In Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, Lurgio was on sabbatical in New Zealand. He hopes to lead a student journalism trip there in the next few years.

chaired, for the second year, the General Education Committee and was an active member of the new General Education Ad Hoc committee.

Associate Professor **JEREMY LURGIO** received a merit award for the creative work he produced over the past two years. This included documentary film work as well as an immersive reporting project about water quality in the Whanganui River in New Zealand, the first river in the world to be granted personhood. He says the highlight of his teaching was mentoring students in Advanced Video Storytelling as they researched, filmed, edited and produced a 27-minute documentary about the impacts of COVID-19 on the fly fishing industry. The film aired in May on MontanaPBS. Hazel Cramer's chapter on a fishing guide garnered 4th place in the Digital News/Enterprise Multimedia Story category at the Hearst Journalism Awards, while the film's website took 13th in the Team Multimedia competition. Professor Lurgio also taught Beginning Photojournalism, Interme-

diated Photojournalism and continued to co-teach the Native News Honors Project with Professor Jason Begay. The two professors mentored students who produced the 30th annual print and online edition.

Professor **DENNIS SWIBOLD** learned some new tricks while teaching classes last year both in person and remotely. "I was amazed once again at how inspiring and adaptable our students are," he said. The year's highlights included the Covering Elections course he co-teaches with Professor Lee Banville. Despite the pandemic, their students proved especially creative in covering state campaigns for a network of Montana news organizations. In addition to teaching required courses in writing, reporting and media ethics, he also taught off-campus groups to sift real news from disinformation. His audiences ranged from Montana high school teachers to a remote class of Chinese graduate students in Beijing. He also recruited and oversaw students who reported on the availability of

COVID vaccines statewide in collaboration with Kaiser Health News and the Montana Free Press.

Associate Professor **NADIA WHITE** is working on issues related to climate change news in rural communities during the second half of her sabbatical. She informed that work in June and July by leading a group of students on a month-long, 700-mile bicycle tour from Billings to Whitefish. The course, run by the Wild Rockies Field Institute, considers issues related to energy production and climate change impacts and mitigation. The class toured oil refineries, coal mines, wind farms and solar homes, and met with farmers, ranchers, small business owners and policy makers to better understand the changing nature of energy production, public policy and the impacts of climate change on Montanans. She completed leadership coaching and training coursework through the Teleos Coach Development Program and continues to work toward a certificate in executive coaching. 

Favorite Professors OF THE PAST

Ever wonder what past J-School profs are doing these days? We asked some beloved former faculty to fill us in.

BILL KNOWLES **RTV PROFESSOR, 1986-2006**

I still live in Missoula with my wife, Sharon Weaver-Knowles, who remains one of Montana's leading piano teachers.



After retirement I served a Fulbright assignment to Jordan in academic year 2007-08, teaching both at the University

of Jordan and Petra University in Amman. The message from my Fulbright administrator was, "Don't go to Iraq." I didn't. I did visit Al Jazeera's state-of-the-art headquarters in Qatar.

I spent 2012 to 2017 producing webcasts for a Bozeman continuing education company, Western CPE, owned by a close friend. It was there I was reunited with former student Cinda Davis, who worked for that firm for several years.

The University of Montana Press already has 547 pages—30 chapters—of the radio section of my marathon struggle at book authorship, "We Pause for Station Identification: Montana's Broadcasting Pioneers." Five of the eight remaining chapters, on television, are written. My promise is that my 750-

page tome will be complete and on the market in time for Christmas this year.

One more thing: I'm now 86, and received a print of this photo (at left), I think from a former student. My short-term memory is so bad I can't remember who sent it!

MICHAEL DOWNS **VISITING ASSISTANT PRINT PROFESSOR/ADJUNCT, 2000-2007**

When I left the J-School, it was to take a job teaching creative writing, in large part so I could devote more of my attention to literary writing and less to city council meetings.



It worked. Teaching creative writing has made me a more productive writer. I've since published my second and third books and co-wrote a fourth, working in both fiction and nonfiction. My latest—a novel about the dentist credited with inventing general anesthesia—has been optioned by an Italian film company that has made shows for HBO. And this September, I'll be off to Poland as a Fulbright scholar to write fiction based on Polish folktales. (More at michael-downs.net)

Journalism remains close to my heart, however. Towson University's graduate degree in professional writing offers all sorts of courses that can lead to careers, from technical writing to creative writing to what we call "journalistic writing" (a long and bureaucratic tale lies behind that sobriquet). I teach courses in the latter, naturally. Since 2019, I've also served as director for the program.

Though I've been asked to offer a favorite memory from my time at UM, I'll politely decline. All such involve students, and though this may seem a cop-out (and maybe it is), I'm unwilling to consider one student memory above all others. Here, though, is a moment of personal infamy. You might recall it if you were a student in a particular Current Events class.

Every semester (and summers), I played lunch-hour basketball on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the gym now called The Peak out at Blue Mountain. Those Tuesday and Thursday hours were sacred, and I never scheduled a class to conflict with them. That was why I was surprised one day to have a front-desk clerk come onto the court saying that I had a phone call from the journalism school. On the other end was my wife, Sheri Venema, a fellow prof, who said in a steely you-have-screwed-it-up-this-time voice: "A classroom full of students have been waiting a half hour for their final exam." Fifteen minutes later, wearing a sweaty T-shirt and shorts, with Rec Spec goggles dangling on my neck, I arrived. The students, bless them, applauded.

GREGORY MACDONALD **RTV PROFESSOR, 1974-2000**

In 2000, after 26 years of teaching, I decided to retire. But three months later I was recruited to be President and CEO of the Montana Broadcasters Association, where I spent the next 14 years representing Montana's over-the-air broadcasters in the state Legislature, Congress and before the FCC.



That included working with the Attorney General and Department of Justice to



Ray Ekness now serves as the director of the University of Montana Broadcast Media Center that houses Montana Public Radio and MontanaPBS-Missoula.

establish Montana's Amber Alert program, helping transition from analog to digital television and working to write and pass the first-of-its-kind "truth in political advertising" law.

I retired again in 2014, and Helen and I began exploring places to move. One trip put us on the north end of Washington's Olympic Peninsula in the little town of Sequim, where we ended up.

Local officials don't like to admit it, but this is mostly a retirement community where the standard question is not "Where do you work?" but "Where do you volunteer?" With 6,000 nonprofits in our area, there is no shortage of opportunities. Helen and I bartend for local community theater productions where I'm program photographer. We also cook and serve at local functions, but our biggest commitment is the New Dungeness Light Station Association, a nonprofit that maintains the 167-year-old lighthouse on the Dungeness Spit. It's a 365-day-a-year operation that, despite being an 11-mile hike (round-trip), sees more than 10,000 visitors a year. Even during COVID we've had volunteers on site 24 hours a day for security and maintenance. As association president, I used my know-how from years of grant hunting and writing at UM, and we're one of the few organizations that suffered no net loss during the pandemic.

As for what retirement is supposed to be about, I still scuba-dive and had three underwater photos selected last year for an 'Ocean Art' exhibit. I play guitar with the Washington Old Time Fiddlers Association, and the ukulele with a group called OPUS—Olympic Peninsula Ukulele Strummers. It's lots of fun. Helen and I also help a local winery with the grape crush, bottling and labeling of wine.

As for my favorite J-School memory, there are so many. The easy answer would be fundraising for the PARTV building, getting it designed and open on budget. But honestly my fondest memories are of toiling away in the old Journalism building (now Stone Hall) where facilities were outdated, equipment antiquated and, without any kind of cooling, we had to start television labs at 6 a.m. on weekends in the spring because by 11, equipment would overheat and shut down. That made for a lot of nice afternoon picnics. It's also where students overcame the severe limitations we had on equipment and facilities, and produced some fine programs and news stories.

Hope you are all well.

**PATTY REKSTEN
PHOTO PROFESSOR, 1984-1998**

After working as director of photography at The Oregonian from 1998 to 2010, I left there and taught for a

semester at Western Kentucky University in 2013 where I was photojournalist-in-residence.

My husband, Jim Dopp, and I moved to the Oregon coast in 2016. We now live in Manzanita, Oregon, where I grow vegetables and flowers. I have been teaching picture editing at the Mountain Workshop in Kentucky for years, but because of COVID we didn't descend on a Kentucky town last year.

Our two grown boys live in the Seattle area. We have a mountain view but miss the mountains of Montana, and I will always miss teaching and learning from the great students and faculty at UM.

**RAY EKNESS
RTV PROFESSOR, 2000-2016**

I'm now serving as the director of the University of Montana Broadcast Media Center that houses Montana Public Radio and MontanaPBS-Missoula.

Over the past year, I've lead public radio and television teams through the pandemic while continuing to produce television programs like "Backroads of Montana" and "Live From Home: A MontanaPBS Home Video Music Special."

I also assisted the MontanaPBS crew on their coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, debates and elections. I'm happy that the BMC continues to host UM J-School students as interns in both television and radio.

**SHARON BARRETT
PRINT PROFESSOR, 1981-2007**

I've now been retired for 14 years. Yikes, that means I've been retired about half as long as I worked!



I spent the first few years close to full time in the saddle, riding and competing in area hunter-jumper shows. I write short stories and get some of them published. I spend a

lot of time involved in activities that require speaking and listening and reading in Spanish. My husband, Dick, who retired from the economics department



After Sheri Venema left UM to be with her husband Michael Downs, she taught journalism in Maryland for seven years before retiring in 2015.

at UM also in 2007, and I have traveled frequently—mostly to Europe and Latin America. And Colorado, where family lives, including two granddaughters. I hear often from former students, and such contacts are always welcome.

TERESA TAMURA
PHOTO PROFESSOR, 2002-2007

William Albert Allard, a former National Geographic staff photographer, said: “What’s really important is to simplify.”

I may be taking his quote out of context but I’m down to using an iPhone 12 Pro and a wooden pinhole camera equipped with a 4x5 film back.

After I left UM, I completed my personal photo project about Idaho’s Minidoka War Relocation Center, now known as Minidoka National Historic Site. It was a long process because I used film, made prints, scanned the images, then designed a book dummy while writing the text. My book was published by Caxton Press in 2013. A second printing will be released later this year.

Some of my Minidoka photos are included in a permanent display in the National Park Service’s recently opened visitor center, and some are part of an educational slideshow that I narrated for Wassmuth Center for Human Rights in Boise, Idaho.

Later this month I will be on the other side of a camera for an Idaho Public Television documentary about Caxton Press. I was asked to revisit the Minidoka site and talk about my book.

It brings me joy to hear from and reconnect with former students. And I am happy to write recommendation letters for those that I know.

A few memorable encounters with former UM students include singing with Keiji Fujimoto and Alli Kwesell at a Tokyo karaoke club awhile back, seeing Russel Daniels’ documentary work in the magazine of the National Museum of the American Indian, and visiting with Tim Kupsick and Meghan Brown after a Boise State University presentation just before the pandemic shutdown.

I will try to follow the advice of Robert Frank and end with this: “The eye should learn to listen before it looks.”

CAROL VAN VALKENBURG
PRINT PROFESSOR, 1982-2011

I’ve spent the years since my retirement focusing primarily on grandkids and golf. I visit Eamon, Connor, Molly, Keegan and Sophie often, and play golf as frequently as my back and knees will allow. My handicap has dipped to the single digits but is always threatened by regular blowups. My husband, Fred, and I spend winters near the ocean and have traveled regularly to Baltimore and Denver to see our grandkids’ parents (Kevin and Tiffany and Kristin and Terence) and have fit in trips to Kenya, Tanzania, Spain, France and Greece, with plans to soon explore more of Northern Ireland and Scotland. My free time in the last half-dozen years has been devoted to editing oral histories for the K. Ross Toole Archives at the Mansfield Library, which is a pure delight. Retirement cannot be beat, but after almost a decade, I still dearly miss those Kaimin kids!

SHERI VENEMA
VISITING PRINT PROFESSOR,
1992-2007

I left the J-School at the end of the Fall 2007 semester after trying a long-dis-

tance marriage for a semester when my husband and aforementioned professor Michael Downs moved to Baltimore for a teaching job. The long-distance thing wasn’t for us. In Maryland, I was a journalism professor at Anne Arundel Community College for seven years until retiring in 2015. Since then I’ve done a bit of freelancing—a few stories for the Washington Post and for a smaller local paper. I’ve also turned my hand to literary essays. And traveling! In 2017 Michael and I bicycled through the mountains of Poland, visiting medieval castles and testing our legs over 109 miles in three days. That same summer, we canoed for five days in Minnesota’s Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

My favorite memories of the J-School include the summer Grizzly Journalism Camp, which brought high schoolers from around the state to live on campus for a week. We hired J-School students to chaperone the dorms; they might’ve had more fun than the high-schoolers.

Another favorite is the Spring 2006 Feature Writing class, which dove into commemorating the 10th anniversary of the arrest of Unabomber Ted Kaczynski in nearby Lincoln. Students interviewed Lincoln residents, talked to FBI officials and tracked down the missing Unabomber cabin. One wrote to Kaczynski in his supermax prison in Colorado—and got a reply! The result was a 56-page magazine written, photographed and designed by J-School students. I’m honored to have worked with them.

I was also in awe of the dozen students who signed up for a 2004 winter-session course, The Veterans History Project. Our mission was to find veterans in the Missoula area and tell their stories. We had three weeks to research, tape interviews, write stories and build a web page. We had one photographer and one videographer. Those stories are now all online at the Library of Congress.

The J-School has always produced students who do great work. What I see as I follow the school from afar is that the tradition of excellence continues. Bravo! 🍷

Student work garners more national awards

JOURNALISM UNDERGRADS and graduate students did not disappoint in this year's college journalism contests. The work they produced in the pandemic caught the attention of judges in national and regional competitions.

The University of Montana School of Journalism boasted three national champions this year in The Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards. A special category was created for this contest year honoring outstanding work in covering COVID-19. The 2020 Native News Honors Project was the national winner with its "Quarantine and Coronavirus in Montana's Indian Country."

Also taking top honors at the national level were Quinn Corcoran in online/digital news videography for his investigative piece on the enrollment troubles at UM. Jiakai Lou also earned top national honors for his online/digital feature video for his piece entitled, "Meat for the Mind."

Graduate student Mary Auld was a finalist in the national competition (top three) for her audio work as part of a podcast project on the Little Shell tribe of Montana. Mary's radio report, Project Little Shell: Questioning Blood Quantum earned the nod in the Radio News Reporting category.

In the SPJ's regional contest, J-School students earned 15 first-place honors and nine finalist awards.

UM ended the Hearst Journalism Awards season with outstanding finishes in both photojournalism and multimedia. J-School students and team projects took 4th place in photojournalism and 10th place in multimedia based on strong showings in the monthly competitions.

Hazel Cramer placed 4th in the multimedia/enterprise category and 12th in news/feature photojournalism. Sara Diggins was a photojournalism semi-finalist for the second year in a row based on her 8th place finish in news/feature photojournalism and 12th place in picture story.

"Weathering the Storm," a documentary film produced by students in Jeremy Lurgio's course, earned 13th place in the multimedia digital news/enterprise story competition. 🎬



The Media Lab hit the road this summer teaching middle and high schools media literacy and digital storytelling using audio and video to create documentaries and podcasts.

Media Lab tours Montana, teaching news literacy and digital storytelling

THE J-SCHOOL'S Montana Media Lab moved to a blend of in-person and online instruction for much of the past year. Director Anne Bailey created several remote or socially distanced workshops focused on improving writing, talking to the media and creating podcasts. Professional journalists, professors, communication experts and community members took advantage of the opportunity to learn from renowned instructors remotely.

This summer, the Media Lab took our news literacy and community engagement project on the road. Four current or former J-School students led the charge to bring lessons and project work to four middle and high schools around the state. Humanities Montana is helping support this work teaching young people how to distinguish real news from fake news, fact check and look for biases. The students then share what they've learned with the greater community. The K-12 students also embark on a digital storytelling project, working with audio or video to create documentaries and podcasts.

The teaching team spent each week of June in Box Elder, Hays-Lodgepole, Heart Butte and Polson.

"(Students) learned to write effective interview questions, conduct authentic interviews and use professional audio equipment," said Hays-Lodgepole English teacher Natacha Messerly Doney about the workshop. "I am so thankful for this amazing opportunity and incredibly proud of our students for trying really hard on the podcast they worked together to make."

The Media Lab at the J-School is close to completion of the Jane Jeffers Rybus Pioneering Women Wall, paying tribute to outstanding Montana women in journalism and named for the first female ASUM student body president. Another alumna, Amber Bushnell, is designing and producing the art installation that will pay tribute to Jeffers and alumni who have made an impact on the media and journalism world. We hope it will be in place and ready to be seen by visitors at Homecoming 2022. 🎬

MERRILYN (WENTZ) ROBERTS '46

died of complications from a stroke on March 14, 2021. Born in Missoula, she was an editor of the Montana Kaimin and an active member of the Delta Gamma Sorority at UM, where Merry met a “handsome flyboy” and husband-to-be Jack Roberts. They moved to Bozeman in 1946, where Merry gave birth to the first of 10 children and Jack finished his degree. His job with Conoco sent their family around Montana and the Midwest. They settled in Billings and Merry stayed busy with volunteer work and the Delta Gamma organization.

After 52 years of marriage, Jack died in 1998. Merry is survived by eight children, their spouses, 20 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren and countless friends who will miss her dearly.

DONNA MAE FANNING BRYGG-

MAN '48 died in Fairfield, California, at age 93 on August 30, 2020. Born in Butte in 1927, she graduated from Girls' Central High School in 1944, then went to UM and the J-School where she made life-long friends. Donna was a proud Grizzly and a member of Kappa Alpha Theta and Sigma Delta Chi. After graduation she worked at an advertising agency in San Francisco and met Roy Bryggman. The two married in 1953 and raised four children in Salinas.

Donna leaves behind daughter Jan Chard, sons Mark and Terry, brother Ward Fanning and 11 grandchildren. Roy died in 2015. The two had been married for 61 years.

JACK SEIGLE M.A. '56 died at age 91 on March 19, 2021.

Jack earned his M.A. in journalism at the University of Montana and later taught in the graduate program in journalism and public affairs at The American University in Washington D.C. for more than 30 years.

Prior to that, he was editor of the Wolf Point Herald News and of the South Dakota Union Farmer.

Jack is survived by his wife of 63 years, Margaret Vallejo Seigle; son Paul; daughter Susan Washo and grandchildren Blythe and Jack Washo.

ZENA BETH MCGLASHAN '61 died at age 81 on June 22, 2021. Zena was known for her indomitable spirit and



her loud and proud championing of Butte.

Zena moved to Butte as a second grader and graduated from Butte High. She earned a B.A. in Journalism at UM in 1961 where she was a member of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

During a long and varied journalism career, Zena worked at the Montana Standard in Butte, The Daily Interlake in Kalispell, The Missourian, Aspen Illustrated News, the Albuquerque Journal and the Santa Monica Evening Outlook.

She earned her M.A. in Mass Communication from California State University, Northridge, where she taught as well. She went on to get her doctorate from the University of Iowa in 1978, and worked as a journalism professor at State College, the University of North Dakota and the University of Texas at El Paso before moving back to Butte in 1988.

She published “The M&M in Butte, Montana and Other Faces: Photography by Harley E. Straus” and wrote feature stories for the Butte Weekly. In 2010 she published “Buried in Butte,” after years of researching and writing, then “The Watchman’s Daughter,” an afterword in the 2019 printing of “The Biography of F. Augustus Heinze: Copper King at War.”

As one of Zena’s close friends said, “She was a feisty and funny loyal friend who looked fabulous in baseball hats, was dedicated to social issues, was an amazing historical researcher, was generous and put her money where her mouth was, had incredible knowledge of antiques, and was patient enough to get orchids to bloom again. She was the best friend anyone could ask for.”

Zena is survived by her husband, Michael Gamble; her children Grant McGLashan and Meg Guenin; and many friends.

LESTER HANKINSON '65 died on June 9, 2021, in Los Angeles, at age 78.

Les was instrumental in the creation of the Bigfork Summer Playhouse and was



founder and artistic director of the West Coast Ensemble Theatre, one of the most acclaimed 99-seat theaters in Los Angeles.

Les was born in Kalispell and graduated from Flathead County High School. At UM he earned degrees in Journalism and Theater, went on a USO tour and worked as an actor at the fledgling Bigfork Playhouse in the summers.

After graduation he headed for LA to pursue acting. Known as Les Hanson to the theatrical world, he brought more than 200 productions to the West Coast Ensemble Theatre, earning major awards and premiering thought-provoking plays and musicals. Les also worked for Joan Rivers, cooking and helping out as she entertained.

Les is survived by his brother, Monty.

NORMA SANDBERG (HOBER)

MASON '66 died of Alzheimer’s disease on December 8, 2020. She grew up in Missoula and attended the J-School, graduating with honors and making lifelong friends in the Delta Gamma Sorority.

But her favorite experience was UM’s Semester at Sea, traveling the world on water and learning about different countries, cultures and peoples. A proud journalist, she wrote for the Missoulian after graduation and worked at UM’s athletic department.

Norma raised three sons with Terry Hober and was a devoted stepmother to the daughters of her second husband, William Mason. She is survived by sons Todd, Brett and Jeff Hober; stepdaughters Kathryn Mason Vanderput and Pam Mason Foster; siblings, grandchildren and many devoted friends.

MARGARET LYNN STETLER

SCHWANKE '68 will be remembered for her love of life and ability to relate to everyone she met.

Starting as a copy editor while still in high school, Lynn had a 44-year

career at the Missoulian, where she was a general assignment reporter, police



beat reporter, education reporter, society editor, feature writer and editor, and city editor. She started the “Newspaper in Education” program, which she oversaw

from 1982 to 2002, created the youth pages, the Midway Dispatch and the children’s drawings featured on the weather page. She carried a camera everywhere and took many excellent photos for the paper.

Lynn moved to Missoula from California when she was 11. A horsewoman from a young age, she rode all over the Rattlesnake and occasionally to the downtown Missoula library. She also had an incredible green thumb and a “Snow White” way with animals.

Lynn always related well to young people and was active in the Treasure State Spelling Bee, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Target Range School, Big Sky High School, 4-H, the Five Valleys Reading Council and Habitat for Humanity. She remained engaged with UM throughout her life, serving a journalism honor society for women, the Matrix Honor Table and the Friends of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library board.

Lynn met her husband Bill Schwanke at the J-School, whom she married in 1968, the same year she graduated. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, their four children, five grandchildren, three sisters, numerous cousins and countless dear friends. Her family writes she was “everyone’s favorite something,” with tremendous courage and a deep love of life. Lynn died on November 3, 2020, from complications of Huntington’s Chorea.

STEPHEN ROBERT HANSEN '80 died in Bozeman on April 21, 2021, from a ruptured aorta.

Born in 1957 in San Jose, California, he was the third of six children and the peacemaker and jester of the family. His family writes, “With his passing,

the world lost the king of quick, witty one-liners.”

Steve had a photographic memory for sports statistics and trivia. He raised a baseball-loving son, Austin, a high school and college baseball standout. He also umpired for the Gallatin County Softball League.

After earning his B.A. from the J-School he wrote short stories, poetry and four unpublished novels. He also reported for the Mukilteo, Washington, newspaper, earned a law degree from the University of Puget Sound and practiced law in Washington before moving back to Montana where he worked in sales and construction.

Steve is survived by his son Austin and siblings Jeff, Bill, Jim and Mary Anne who encourage those who remember Steve to think of him the next time you wear a Hawaiian shirt.

JANELLE ELIZABETH PATTERSON '86 died unexpectedly in her Missoula home on June 5, 2021. She was 60.

Janelle was born in Missoula and raised on the family ranch west of town. She learned early how to drive a tractor and loved her 4H animals. Janelle graduated from Hellgate High School in 1979 and earned a B.A. in Journalism and a minor in Political Science from UM in 1986.

She worked at a New Mexico newspaper before being diagnosed with a mental illness and returning to Missoula for care and family support. Janelle was a lifelong member of the First Baptist Church and volunteered at the Missoula Food Bank and the Western Montana Clinic’s mental health center.

MADIE BELTRAN HATFIELD '01 perished during childbirth on August 6,



2021 along with her baby William Nathan “Nate” Hatfield. Madie graduated in Radio-Television and is fondly remembered by classmates and professors as someone full of life and love with a ready laugh and

a kind word for everyone she met. She is survived by her 13-year-old son Alex and husband Doug of Schaumburg, Illinois. She leaves behind her grieving mother Miriam, sister Tito, nephew Gavin and countless friends touched by her giving spirit.

Madie worked as a producer at KPAX-TV in Missoula in the early 2000s and then at several television stations in the Chicago area. In 2014, she took a job with the West Chicago School District where she found her true calling, working with children.


Madie loved Montana and returned as often as she could, always with son Alex in tow. She wanted him to love Montana as much as she did and she stayed in touch with her Montana family through the years. She loved with her whole heart and will be sorely missed.

An educational account has been established for Madie’s son, Alex. Contact Denise Dowling at the J-School if you’re interested in making a contribution.

The lovely, creative and talented **MIRA CHRISTINE REMIEN '06** died on October 29, 2020, after a long struggle with mental health. She was born in Missoula in 1979, attended Sentinel High School and later graduated with a degree in Radio-Television from the J-School.

She went on to study at the University of the Arts-London and received her master’s from Central Saint Martin’s. Mira wrote remarkable poetry and prose, was an accomplished photographer and was working on illustrations for a children’s book at the time of her death. She traveled the world extensively and intrepidly, making friends wherever she went.

She will be remembered by her family and friends for her beautiful smile, laughter, sense of humor, her many talents and unrealized potential. Mira’s family writes their “troubled Mira...is at peace and free at last.”

Mira is survived by her parents Dr. Jack and Anne Remien of Missoula, sister Erin and brother Dr. John Remien. 

THE LATEST FROM ALUMS

1950s

GARY A. SORENSEN '57 reported in from Missoula, where he's lived since 1993. He swings past the J-School from time to time and says it continues to provide top new blood for a challenging industry that is changing all the time. "At my age the slogan is 'stay active.' So I do," he says. "I have been retired for more than 30 years and spent 30 years in the Army doing a lot of public relations."

1960s

JUDITH BLAKELY MORGAN '60 continues writing and editing on special projects linked to her service as Trustee Emerita of the University of California San Diego's Foundation Board, whose campus rises within sight of her home in La Jolla. During COVID-19 quarantine, she used Zoom to interview UCSD scholarship applicants. She also is active on the San Diego Library Foundation board, with 36 branches. In 1995, she co-authored the biography "Dr. Seuss & Mr. Geisel" with her husband, Neil. Twenty-five years later, she remains the go-to authority on the life and work of Ted Geisel/Dr. Seuss, who was a friend and neighbor in La Jolla. When news breaks about Seuss' life or books, Judith has filed interviews with the BBC, Washington Post, the New York Times, National Public Radio and TV. Now mostly retired as a reporter, she spent 30 years as a freelance travel writer for newspapers and magazines, including National Geographic and Travel & Leisure. She returned from the Amazon River in January 2020, before the pandemic halted travel in March. It's the longest her passport has gone unstamped since 1961, when she left for Argentina on a graduate fellowship from the Inter-American Press Assn. A keen supporter of the J-School, she looks forward to the re-launching of the Montana Journalism Abroad program. Judith will be featured

on the "Pioneer Women in Montana Media" wall, slated for unveiling in the Montana Media Lab next fall.

MARK MILLER '67 is awaiting publication of his sixth book next year, "Rediscovering Wonderland," about early travel to Yellowstone Park. The work explores the Washburn Expedition that brought the area to wide attention and was instrumental in establishing the park 150 years ago. It follows his books "Sidesaddles and Geysers: Women's Adventures in Yellowstone Park" (2020) and "Encounters in Yellowstone: The Nez Perce Summer of 1877" (2019).

CARL GIDLUND '67 worked his way through the university as a smokejumper, graduating in 1967 with both a B.A. and M.A. in journalism. He spent five years in the Army Special Forces, including a year in Vietnam, then transferred to the Air Force and retired as a lieutenant colonel. Carl worked as a spokesman for numerous government agencies, including the Office of Emergency Preparedness (now FEMA), and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He also wrote for several newspapers including the Anchorage Times, Spokesman-Review and Tundra Drums, and he freelanced for many magazines. Carl and wife Sally are retired and living in Coeur d'Alene. They have two daughters, living in Virginia and Florida.

1970s

KEN DUNHAM '70 retired in June 2020 after serving as executive director of the West Coast Lumber & Building Material Association since 2006. In 2017, Dunham wrote "The Legacy of Lumber," a history book that tells the story of the lumber industry in America, from colonial times to the present, with a particular focus on the rich lumber history in California. His prior experience included ownership of a regional

advertising agency and public relations firm, political consulting and management, and as a television news director and on-air personality.

J.F. PURCELL '72 says COVID-19 affected the amount of volunteering he did in the past year, but he has still been able to further the work of fellow UM Graduate Gary Israel. Purcell has supported Israel's foundation to remember the artwork and philanthropy of Israel's mother. He is also a donor and supporter of arts-related organizations like GLOW and DREAMS in and around Wilmington, North Carolina.

RICHARD BANGS '73 retired in 2010 and has since self-published a trilogy of sci-fi novels. The most recent, "Forgotten: A Stepping Stone to the Stars," published in February 2020, won second place in the 2020 Colorado Independent Publishers Association EVVY Awards. His other books are "Forsaken: Searching for God's Fingerprints" and "Forgiveness: Finding a Path Home." Richard lives in Littleton, Colorado, with wife Susan Bangs '71. These days he spends most of his time volunteering for a non-profit land trust, riding his bicycle and promoting his books.

MARJE BENNETTS '73 is retiring from her career as a hotel general manager and public relations expert. After 45+ years she is returning from Southern California and moving back to Great Falls in the fall of 2021. She is looking forward to being close to family and friends, and doing some volunteer work. She says she will miss the beach but is excited to take the next step in life by returning to her native Montana.

DEIRDRE MCNAMER '73 published her fifth novel, "Aviary," in April of this year. McNamer retired from the University of Montana English department last year, after 25 years teaching creative writing at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Currently, she's on the

fiction faculty of Bennington College's low-residency MFA program in writing.

MICHAEL PANTALIONE '75 retired in January after coaching soccer for the last 32 years at Yavapai College in Arizona. In the history of men's intercollegiate soccer, he is the all-time leader among coaches at any level in winning percentage (90%) and the only coach to average over 20 wins per season.

DON OYLEAR '75 writes, "While mostly retired, I recently completed my first book. It's commercial fiction. "The Marco Polo Alliance" is a fast-paced action adventure and a murder mystery with just enough thriller aspects, a little romance, infused humor and a spice of believable future technology. Now I'm searching for an agent. Query letters. Lots of query letters."

1980s

JAMES BRUGGERS '81 marked three years in May as a staff reporter for Inside Climate News, a national nonprofit newsroom covering climate, energy and the environment, after 31 years in newspapers. In 2020, Bruggers' work won first place in the Society of Environmental Journalists' small market beat reporting category. At Inside Climate News, he most often covers the Southeast, and has partnered with news organizations as diverse as NPR, the Weather Channel, WMFE public radio in Orlando, newspapers in Tennessee and Kentucky, and just this spring, The Seattle Times. He recalls writing his first stories for the Montana Kaimin on typewriters and covering a controversy over the spraying of herbicides on the Oval. He lives in Louisville with his wife, Christine Bruggers, the deputy director of the Society of Environmental Journalists.

SUSIE REBER ORR '81 has a weekly show on Missoula Community Radio, "Susie Q Till 2," which focuses on community issues with local interviews of policy makers, politicians and other Missoula movers and shakers.



Shane Bishop '86 covered his third Olympics this summer in Tokyo, producing features for NBC's Sports desk. He's been a producer for NBC News and Dateline for 27 years.

KYLE ALBERT '84 writes that wife Judi traced her Scottish ancestry to Robert the Bruce, William Wallace and Sir Roger Kirkpatrick. When the crown of Scotland was up for grabs, Bruce and Red Common met in a church to decide which of them would reign. Bruce came out of the church and said his adversary was wounded but still alive, so Roger whipped out his dirk and said "I'll make sure," and went in and finished the job, for which he was knighted. The Kirkpatrick family crest consists of a bloody dagger and "I'll Make Sure" in Gaelic. On a tour of Scotland in 2018, Kyle and Judi found that the place where that historic moment happened is now a parking lot with a plaque. Kyle continues to write and edit all manner of marketing and advertising materials in all media for clients nationwide in a virtual freelance environment under the guise of Copy Chef, Inc.

SHANE BISHOP '86 just returned from working for NBC Sports at the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo. It was his third Olympics working for NBC's Sports desk, a rapid response news unit that also produces features during the Games. He's been a producer for NBC News and Dateline for 27 years.

FRANK FIELD '86 combined his love of running, fly fishing and storytelling in a freelance print story published in the Seattle Times and Big Sky Journal. Frank connected with a group that runs across the Bob Marshall Wilderness each year and went along on the adventure to lift his spirits in the pandemic, be a good dad and set a meaningful example for his kids. Frank says the Times, "...let me keep the copyright (I dunno if it was an accident, but when they sent the agreement, I signed and didn't say anything!). Because I had the copyright, I was also able to sell the story to Montana's own Big Sky Journal. I'm super-proud that they took the story because this is a magazine that has published words by people like William Kittredge." Frank remains a communications manager for T-Mobile and lives in Seattle.

JUDI BLAZE '87 just published her 5th book, "Riding in the Backseat with my Brother."

DAVID PLEASANT '87 is in his 32nd year at KPAX-TV in Missoula. He says he still loves his work every day, adding that "We have a new grandson, so life is good."

NICK EHLI '88 resigned in December from the Bozeman Daily Chronicle after 20 years, the last 14 as its editor. He teaches in the Honors College at Montana State in Bozeman.

JYL HOYT MA '88 says hello from Boise, Idaho. After graduating with a master's in journalism, she joined Boise State University Public Radio as special projects director, a position she held until retiring in December 2009. "I am so grateful to Montana Public Radio for 10 wonderful years prior to graduate school and altogether for more than 30 incredibly rewarding years as a public radio journalist."

KEVIN MCRAE '88 and Beth McLaughlin '90 live in Helena, where they work in state government and raised their two kids. Daughters Clara and Eliza both attend UM. Beth is the chief administrative officer of Montana's judicial branch. Kevin is a deputy commissioner in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

MICHELLE WILLITS '88 of Oregon, Wisconsin, recently was promoted to publisher at the Credit Union National Association, the trade association for all of America's credit unions. She develops publishing strategies for Credit Union Magazine's print and digital content, news website, podcast, and award-winning newsletter for credit union boards. "Journalism grads should know that there are many industries that need storytellers," she says. "I started out in newspapers, and now I'm at a trade association sharing stories about the passion credit unions have for their members. For me, more enjoyable than Holloran's public affairs class. Kid-ding...sort of."

1990s

JULIE WALKER '91 has earned a Genealogical Research Certificate from Boston University. She's in the process of completing additional education to make a career transition to a profession-

al genealogist. A case study she wrote about her great-great grandmother, Hannah Roe, has been chosen for publication in the summer issue of Minnesota Genealogist, a quarterly journal of the Minnesota Genealogical Society. Julie married George Parisot in June of 2020 and lives in Helena.

JILL MURRAY FERRIS '93 has written a cookbook titled "Cheers to 50 Years! Women That Inspire Me & The Recipes They Inspire." Her husband Chad was the photographer for the book. That grew into a cooking show called "Jill's Inspiration Kitchen" now available to more than 35 million households on the RCN and LVTN networks, on Roku at You Too America (YTA), and locally on KULR-8 in the Billings area. Jill and Chad also own the 307 Bar, Grill & Casino in Columbus, Montana, and Jill continues to sell medical devices for Olympus America. Jill and Chad's son Max is 11.

THOMAS NYBO '95 writes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, "I've been working mainly in the DR Congo for the past three years, covering Ebola, civil unrest and now child miners digging for the cobalt used in our phones and laptops. Also doing a project for the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund on critically endangered Grauer's gorillas in the Congo. I spent the winter

in the mountains of Utah homeschooling my kids and snowboarding."

URI FARKAS '98 serves as the Deputy Athletic Director for Northern Arizona University, overseeing all external aspects of the athletic department, including communications. Uri looks forward to welcoming the Griz to town when the athletic teams visit Flagstaff.

TOM MULLEN '98 says he uses his journalism muscles every day as senior director of content based in Santa Monica, California, for Fair, an auto marketplace. He is a creative content and communications professional with more than 15 years of experience in brand development, corporate marketing/editorial, journalism and public relations. In August 2021, a feature film Tom wrote with brother Tim, "Vacation Friends," debuted on Hulu.

SONJA (LEE) NOWAKOWSKI '98 was recently named the administrator of the Air, Energy and Mining Division at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Nowakowski previously led the Office of Research and Policy Analysis at the Montana Legislature.

DANIEL SHEIRE '98 left a 20+ year career in the Washington D.C. area to take a job at the Cornell Lab of Orni-



Julie Walker '91 earned a Genealogical Research Certificate from Boston University and is busy working on a career transition to be a professional genealogist. She married George Parisot in June 2020 and lives in Helena.

thology in Ithaca, New York. Daniel joined the newly formed Center for Conservation Media and is currently working with partners around the world focusing on media that shines a light on major environmental issues at a regional and global scale. Daniel spent his time in Washington contributing to National Geographic, PBS's Frontline, Nature and Nova, Red Bull Media House, Upworthy.com, as well as HHMI's Tangled Bank Studios. He is especially thankful to UM professor Bill Knowles and professional instructors Terry Conrad, Ray Ekness and Gus Chambers for passing on their knowledge and for their mentorship while finding his way at UM. "Cornell has nothing on you folks. My UM education gave me a leg up in every professional situation I've ever encountered."

SARAH (SCHMID) STEVENSON

'98 recently accepted a position doing political communications work for Moonsail North, a public relations firm co-located in Michigan and California. Previously, she spent almost a decade serving as the editor of Xconomy Detroit, an online publication covering the business of technology and innovation. Stevenson lives with her husband Chris and cat Chico on the northwest coast of Lake Michigan.

2000s

SAM DEWITT '01 continues his work for Compassion & Choices to expand end-of-life choices for terminally ill patients. In a year that was very active legislatively, he led a team that passed the Elizabeth Whitefield End of Life Options Act in New Mexico, which was signed into law in April and will go into effect in June. As of this writing, he is still working on passing similar legislation in the state of Nevada. He lives in a "fortified compound" in East Denver with his wife Rebecca, two daughters Winnie and Vivian, and dog Missoula.

As Senator Jon Tester's former chief of staff (2017-2019), **AARON MURPHY**

'01 co-wrote Tester's recent memoir, "Grounded: A Senator's Lessons on Winning Back Rural America." Ecco Press, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, published "Grounded" in 2020. Murphy is now pursuing a full-time writing career and has just co-written a second book that will be published this October.

NATE SCHWEBER '01 has written his first book-length work of narrative non-fiction. "This America of Ours: Bernard and Avis DeVoto and the Forgotten Fight to Save the Wild" features scenes at UM and in Missoula, he writes. HarperCollins is scheduled to publish in July 2022.

ANNIE WARREN '04 is the communications manager at Mid-Columbia Libraries serving southeastern Washington. From 2015-2019, Annie served as the chair of the library's community partnership group, the Tri-Cities Latino Community Network. She led special projects including the video series "Inspiring Latinos / Latinos inspiradores." The project was a bronze winner in the 40th Annual Telly Awards social video series: culture & lifestyle category.

JOE FRIEDRICHS '05 is the news director at WTIP, North Shore Community Radio in Grand Marais, Minnesota, and the founder and producer of the WTIP Boundary Waters Podcast. In 2020, the podcast won a regional Edward R. Murrow Award in the "Best Podcast" category. Joe is also the author of the book, "Her Island: The Story of Quetico's Longest Serving Interior Ranger," published in November 2020 by 10,000 Lakes Publishing in Minneapolis.

KATHERINE SATHER '05 is a program manager at Microsoft focusing on content experiences in search engines. She and her husband have two children, and their family splits their time between Whitefish and Seattle.

ELYSE HUGHES '06 was recently promoted to Executive in Charge of Production at Story Syndicate in Brooklyn, New York. Prior to the promotion, Elyse line-produced the Netflix series "The



ALUMNI SURVEY

Help students find their path and help the School of Journalism make informed decisions about curriculum, recruiting and more by taking a quick alumni survey on our website.

Visit jour.umd.edu/alumni/alumni_survey.php or go to jour.umd.edu and follow the "Alumni" tab at the top of the page.

Innocence Files" and the Amazon Prime film, "All In: The Fight for Democracy," about voter suppression and Stacey Abrams' work in Georgia. Upcoming releases include a film following Mayor Pete's historic presidential campaign on Amazon Prime and a Jacques Cousteau film for National Geographic.

KRISTINE PAULSEN '06 continues to run a photography business in Missoula while simultaneously working remotely as a senior technical writer for Webflow, a progressive company that empowers people to design websites without code.

STAN PILLMAN '06 was recently hired as the VP Of Digital Operations for MediaCo, which operates the iconic radio brands HOT 97 and WBLS in New York City. Stan says he's still wearing flip-flops in the winter, still playing hockey and still fly-fishing. GO GRIZ!

MARITSA GEORGIU '07 just accepted a new position as a Montana-based national reporter for Newsy, after years as an anchor at NBC Montana. There she earned the 2021 Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism for her coverage of USPS collection boxes being removed before the landmark 2020 election in which a majority of the state would be voting by mail. She also interviewed Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dr. Deborah Birx and Dr. Robert

Redfield while working from home for the entire pandemic, allowing her to spend more (and much needed) time with her family.

LINDSAY GJERDE '07 is currently a production manager running concerts for Live Nation throughout the Midwest. On occasion she gets her camera out and shoots the shows.

JEREMY POOL '07 left the Washington Huskies where he was the Director of Football Technology for nearly four years. This year he returned to the Jacksonville Jaguars as Director of Football Systems. Pool writes he's back to "where it all began" for him; he was the Assistant Video Director with the Jags from 2007-2017.

MARNEÉ BANKS '09 started a new job as Vice President of Communications at Global Strategy Group, a public affairs and research firm based in New York and Washington D.C. Following her time as spokesperson for Senator Tester and Chief Communications Officer at the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, she will now be leading communications campaigns for multiple corporate and nonprofit organizations.

When **ALLY (WELLER) DAVIS '09** isn't chasing her 3-year-old twin boys, she is working in marketing, event planning (mostly weddings) and making promo videos for businesses and families.

In 2020, **NATALIE NEUMANN '09** finished her Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin and Master of Public Health from UTHHealth Science Center. She missed the mountains so much that she moved to Colorado, and this year started working for the Colorado State Employee Assistance Program providing therapy for state government employees.

JORDAN TREECE '09 recently won his 4th Northwest Regional Emmy Award for his work with KING5 television in Seattle. Treece was part of the team that won the Best Morning

Newscast award for their coverage of downtown Seattle rioting in 2020.

2010s

ANDREW DUSEK '10 is starting a new role as a Press and Public Outreach Officer at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) within the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. Andrew currently serves as a Senior Information Officer for USAID, where he has worked since 2018. In this role, Andrew has provided regular reporting on complex humanitarian emergencies and sudden onset disasters in Colombia, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan and South Sudan. Prior to joining USAID, he served as the on-the-record spokesman for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Myanmar from 2016 to 2017.

ALISON SCHEEL '10 moved from Las Vegas to Texas and is the Key Account Manager for creative agency The Hive. Alison represents liquor brands by curating events and securing menu features. Previously, she lived in Las Vegas for six years pursuing performance and gig life.

ANNA KRATZ '12 worked as a digital producer at Helena's KTVH before moving to St. Peter's Health where she is a scheduler. Anna got married in 2019 and she and her husband bought their first home.

MARCUS CHEBUL '13 has recently been promoted to production manager at Warm Springs Productions, a television production company based in Missoula. Marcus has been working with WSP since 2017, producing various un-scripted programs including History Channel's long-running series, "Mountain Men," and on Animal Planet's first season of "Louisiana Law."

BROOKS JOHNSON '13 is a reporter with the Star Tribune's Duluth bureau, which was rebooted in 2019 as the paper expanded its footprint across Minnesota. Brooks and wife Caitlin have a 2-year-

old son, Ellis, who asks for the sports section every morning.

CARLI KRUEGER '13 teaches digital design as an adjunct professor at Arizona State University's Cronkite School of Journalism. She says she's also furthering her career as a designer in the multifamily industry. On the side, Carli designs curriculum books that teach kindergarten through 8th graders STEM concepts through sport.

LILIAN LANGSTON '13 works as a freelance field producer for reality television programs airing on HGTV, DIY, A&E, Discovery and Fox Business. Lilian is also a licensed Realtor in Montana's Flathead Valley.

JESSICA MURRI '13 is a training consultant with Sit Means Sit Dog Training in Portland, Oregon. She says she uses the interviewing skills she gained at UM to talk to dog owners about their pups, their challenges and hopes. Jessica has earned the company's top sales awards year after year and credits her success to her journalism education.

CONOR BALLANTYNE '14 was able to work remotely for the NFL Network and moved back home to Missoula from Los Angeles this past year. Conor worked for NFL Network for seven seasons and recently resigned to create a digital textile print studio with his fiancée opening in Missoula in 2021.

KENDRA COUSINEAU '14 worked at the Sheridan (Wyoming) Press after graduation, but then returned to Missoula to work in tourism. Kendra recently landed her dream job as a digital marketing/communications specialist with Project Healing Water Fly Fishing, Inc., and will be moving to Alabama this fall.

CHARLIE EBBERS MA '14 regularly contributes to the gear and travel content in Outside magazine and loves chasing conservation features for Bugle magazine. He worked as a researcher on a Montana cold case, an editor and writer on a case study dissecting leadership



Andrew Dusek '10 is starting a new role as a Press and Public Outreach Officer at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) within the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

qualities on 19th century Nantucket whale ships and as a writer for a scientific journal about national climate change policy. He still leads trail crews and is currently in Wrangell St. Elias National Park restoring airstrips with chainsaws and shovels.

TIM BLODGETT '15 started his career as a video journalist at KHQ-TV in Spokane. Five years later, he is now reporting for KFMB in San Diego. This summer Tim was nominated for his first local Emmy for his reporting on the death of Kobe Bryant in Los Angeles.

ASHLEY STIDHAM '15 has worked in marketing and communications jobs since graduation. She will make a “huge career change” this fall by pursuing an MFA in Interior Architecture.

MICHAEL WRIGHT '15 became the Managing Editor of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, replacing fellow J-School alumnus Nick Ehli.

MICAH DREW '16 attended graduate school in an “entirely unrelated field.” One year ago, Micah signed on with the Flathead Beacon to report from the “beautiful Flathead Valley.”

CARLY VESTER '16 is producing outdoors-focused documentaries full-time with her production company Vester Media. Her first full-length documentary, “700 Feet Down,” premiered on Amazon, Apple and on-demand channels in July. The film chronicles the collapse of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, “Galloping Gertie,” through intrepid divers exploring a reef of wreckage and witnesses of the bridge’s collapse.

After more than two years of reporting for IFLScience, **MADISON DAP-CEVICH '17** has returned to the Rocky Mountains. She is now based in Missoula working remotely as a (mostly) science reporter for the fact-checking website Snopes. Madison will also be returning to the E/V Nautilus, a deep-sea research vessel that explores the world’s oceans to seek out new discoveries in the fields of geology, biology, maritime history, archaeology and chemistry. She’ll spend two months at sea working as a communications lead to explore and map the seafloor from southern California to Hawaii and back again.

SYDNEY MACDONALD '17 writes that the multi-part mini documentary series she’s been working on over

the past year as a creative producer, “Incarceration Nations: A Global Docuseries,” was featured at the Tribeca Film Festival in June. Four of 10 total episodes in the series were screened in the section titled “Tribeca Now.”

BENJAMIN ALVA POLLEY '17 married fellow journalist Cassidy Randall and this summer will move back to Missoula and continue his freelance work. Polley’s work has been published in Popular Science, Esquire, Field & Stream, Sierra, Mountain, Earth Island Journal and other publications.

KATY SPENCE '18 started a new job in January as the Communications & Engagement Director of the Montana Environmental Information Center.

ASHLEY NERBOVIG '18 says she is a pen for hire in Mountain, Central and Pacific time. Flag her down at anerbovig@protonmail.com.

MARTI LIECHTY '19 is enrolled in UM’s joint JD-MBA program and expects to graduate in 2023.

In May, **SKYLAR RISPENS '19** left her job as a breaking news and education reporter at the Great Falls Tribune to cross the divide and cover education at the Missoulian. Skylar says she’s eager to continue her passionate reporting on the K-12 education beat and expand into higher education reporting. 



NEWS UPDATES

Shoot us an email and let your classmates know what’s up in your world.

journalism@mso.umt.edu
32 Campus Drive
Don Anderson Hall
Missoula, MT 59812

Thank you to our donors!

AS THE NEW director of development for the J-School (and a '98 UM J-School grad), I want to thank you for your support of this fantastic program. Your financial support allows our students to thrive. Donations to the Journalism Unrestricted Fund allow the J-School the flexibility to direct funds where they are needed most.

In the past year this fund has provided emergency tuition assistance to students. Faculty and staff have received support to help smooth the challenges of teaching during the pandemic. In prior years it has allowed our students to attend award ceremonies and conferences around the country.

Like many of you, my experience as a student in the School of Journalism was life changing. My classroom experiences, exposure to professional journalists working in the field and opportunities to take part in experiential learning all helped shape who I am today. Personally, I support the J-School for these reasons. I want to ensure that current and future students have similar life-changing experiences that help launch them into meaningful careers.

I hope you will consider a gift to the Journalism Unrestricted Fund. I look forward to meeting you in person. Thank you so much for your support!



BETH COGSWELL

—Beth Cogswell

The following individuals and organizations contributed to the UM School of Journalism between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021

John Adams	Timothy and Moraine Byrne	Frank Dugan and Tanya Reid	Newell and Kaye Gough
Bryan Allen	Moraine Byrne Associates	Ken and Janelle Dunham	Orville and Vera Graddock
Jonathon Ambarian	Glen and Marilyn Cameron	John Eaton and Danelle Reisch	The Greater Montana Foundation
Sidney Armstrong	Frederick and Ellen Caruso	Richard Ecke	Christa Handford
Howard Arnett	Vanessa Ceravolo	Raymond Ekness and Pattie Corrigan-Ekness	Richard Hargesheimer
Steve and Jane Baldock	Glenn Chaffin	Mae Nan Ellingson	Lyle Harris
Marneé Banks	Andrew and Marilyn Cier	Adam Eschbach	C. Mark and Tere Hash
Steve and Lexie Barr	Cathy Conaway	David Fenner and Nikki Walter	Tor Haugan
Carla Beck	Michael and Dee Ann Cooney	John and Hadley Ferguson	The Hearst Foundations
James Beyer	Matthew Cooper	Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund	Steven Helmbrecht
Paul and Teresa Billings	Thomas and Lisa Cordingley	Frank Field	Jerry Holloran
Michael Billings and Patricia Haffey	Cordingley Foundation	Jonni Fischer	Jana Hood
Cherry Billings	Mary Cottor	Peter Flintoff	Brian Hood
James and Linda Boatman	John and Ellen Counihan	Kevin Foley	Roger Hopkins
Gary Boe	Emile Cowdery	Kevin Foley Rev Trust	Jyl Hoyt
Mollie Bond	Jacob and Courtney Cowgill	Thomas Foor and Peggy Kuhr	Humanities Montana
Bonnie Bowler	Cowles Montana Media Company	Mark and Jill Friedman	Eugene and Julie Huntington
Dorothy Bradley	Brian and Jordan Crosby	Vicki Gale	ImpactAssets
Bart Brazier	Erik Cushman	Arthur J. Gallagher Foundation	Leilah Isaacson
Janet Brown	Cinda Davis	Les Gapay	Suzanne Ives
Larry and Lysandra Bruce	Dayton Foundation	Trenton Gary	Janus Henderson Investors
Kelly Buechler	Depository, Inc.	Sheila Gary	Kristina Jeske-Miller
Robin Bulman	Samuel Dean	Matt Gibson and Emily Brock	Charles Johnson and Patricia Hunt
	Michael Dennison and Susan O'Connell	Michael Beltz and Dori Gilels	Peter Johnson
	Raymond Dominick	Kevin and Rebecca Giles	Cory Johnson
	Diana and Thomas Dowling	Shane Gillette	KECI TV
	Mark and Marilyn Dues	David Glass	

John and Teresa Kafentzis	Montana Newspaper Foundation Inc.	James and Jeanne Rolph	Pat Syskowski
Frank Kamlowky	Judith Blakely Morgan	Tom and Pam Rybus	Keila Szpaller
Brian and Lisa Keller	Shane and Geri Morger	Sage Accounting	Gordon and Brandie Terpe
Patricia Kennedy	Douglas and Patsi Morton	Joseph Sample	Shannon Thomas
Verna Kessner	Sally Moskol	John Saul	Mark and Barbara Thompson
Michael Kiely	Milo Moucha	Jeremy Sauter and Rebecca Jasmine	Michael Thompson
Gita Saedi and Jason Kiely	Theresa Murphy	Berna Saxton	Jill Thompson Black
Douglas Kienitz (USN, Ret.)	Kim Neill	Brett and Jessie Schandelson	Alice Thorpe
Stephanie Kind	Robert Newlin	Scripps Howard Foundation	Norma Tirrell
Shannon Kinsella	William and Robin Nichols	Charles Schwab & Company	Judith Tritz
Arthur Klemm	Roy and Eloise Nollkamper	Amberlee Schwanke	Eric Troyer
Robert and Janet Koostra	Seanna O'Sullivan Hines	Donald and Rose Schwennesen	John Twaddell
Jack Krout	Hoover Ogata	Susan Sharon	Daniel and Valerie Valdez
James LaCorte	Baylee Oligmiller	John and Polly Shinner	Margaret Vallejo Seigle
Francine Lange	Kate Oliver	Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc.	Fred and Carol Van Valkenburg
Laura Lantz	Donald and Karen Olson	Dana Smith	Kate Walker
Robert Lazich	Julie Omelchuck	H. Smith	Frank Walsh
Lee Procurement Solutions Co.	Karen Oset	Gary and Hazel Sorensen	Annie Warren
Crystal Ligori	Nicky Ouellet	Robert and Bonnie Speare	Jane Weaver
Mike and Dawn Lopach	Walter and Margaret Parker	Lauren Stack	Jan Weiner
Susan Lubbers	George and Barbara Peck	Laurel Staples	Christina Wernikowski
Jeremy and Caroline Lurgio	Gregory Petesch	Michael Sternoff	Matthew and Kathleen Whetzel
Cynthia Lyle	Rick Phillips and Beth Cogswell	Jeffrey Stevens	Randall and Elizabeth Williams
Linda Lynch	William Phippen	Sara Stidham	Martin Perry and Barbara Williams Perry
Mario and Kristy Madden	William Platt and Paula DelBonis-Platt	Lonie Stimac	Richard and Paula Wilmot
Cheryl Marple	Estate of Ben R Pollner	Kathleen Stone	Richard and Joan Wohlgenant
Darrel and Esther Mast	Maurice Possley	Colette Stroia	Wilbur and Elizabeth Wood
Brian McGiffert	J.F. and Francine Purcell	Roman Stubbs	Michael and Betsy Wood
Dan McIntyre	Paul Queneau	Eileen Sullivan	P.J. Wright
Edward and Stephanie McLoughlin	RBC Wealth Management	Julie Sullivan-Springhetti	Leah Young
John McNay	Anna Rau	Dennis and Julie Swibold	Estate of Zenon Zazula
Virginia Merriam	J. Bart Rayniak		
Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Inc.	Kimberly Reed		
Lee and Donna Metcalf Charitable Trust	Mark and Carolyn Reynolds		
Microsoft Corporation	Samuel Richards		
Kelley Moen	Chris and Emily Richardson		
Montana Broadcasters Association	Kate Ripley		
Montana Community Foundation	Kenneth Robertson		
Montana Free Press	Rocky Mountain Interiors, Inc.		
	Teddy and Marcie Roe		



HELP SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

Donor support plays a major role in fostering the success of our journalism students.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the UM School of Journalism. Visit jour.umn.edu/alumni/giving.php.

COMMUNIQUÉ

School of Journalism
32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812-0648

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MISSOULA, MT
PERMIT NO. 569



CLASS OF 2021