



# Jnotes

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN  
VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 1

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The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employer with a comprehensive diversity plan.



## A challenge to give

The challenge is on, alumni!

And your challenger? It's someone, like you, who cares a lot about the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and values our Journalism Alumni Association (JAA).

An anonymous college backer has provided a challenge grant of \$50,000 if we can raise \$50,000 in support of the Journalism Alumni Association Fund by Dec. 31, 2010. When realized, this permanent endowment will have grown by \$100,000, and its annual income — not the principal — will provide much needed resources.

Each year, the association relies on the endowment to fund its programs and activities, including graduating student receptions and alumni award activities. Unless the endowment is increased through this unique challenge gift opportunity, it is likely these alumni activities will be shelved.

Composed solely of alumni volunteers, the JAA hosts receptions for graduating students each May and December. At these events, new alumni members are presented with a writing portfolio and are officially recognized and welcomed as Nebraska journalism alumni.

The association also coordinates the nomination and selection process for the college's alumni awards presented during J Days, a week-long event highlighting alumni achievements and the rewarding careers possible through a journalism education.

The goal of the Journalism Alumni Association is to help create and support a life-long connection to the college for its alumni, and it is proud of the more than 5,600 alumni who live and work in all 50 states and in more than 24 countries.

The college and its alumni share the same objective: maintaining a tradition of excellence in journalism education at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Increased financial support for the JAA will allow the organization to maintain its current level of activities and to seek new opportunities to engage and recognize alumni.

Will you accept the challenge? Because of this unique opportunity, now is the best time to support your Journalism Alumni Association. Please consider making a contribution of any amount to help reach this goal. Send your gift made payable to the University of Nebraska Foundation to: Journalism Alumni Association Fund, University of Nebraska Foundation, 1010 Lincoln Mall Ste 300, Lincoln NE 68508-2886. (Please include Fund 5417 on your check memo line.)

For more information about the challenge grant and supporting the college, please contact Joanna Nordhues, director of development, at 402-458-1178, toll free at 800-432-3216 or at [jnordhues@nufoundation.org](mailto:jnordhues@nufoundation.org).

# Leading the way

## New J school dean's career has put him at the leading edge of media change

*Rick Alloway and Charlyne Berens sat down with the college's new dean, Gary Kebbel, in May to explore the past and the future of both media and journalism education in general and of Kebbel's career in particular. This is an edited version of that conversation.*

**BERENS:** *Tell us a little about how long you've been involved with journalism and what made you interested in it to start with.*

**KEBBEL:** I've been in journalism ever since high school. I think the reason I got interested in it was that it was a way, even then, I felt, to make a difference.

When you look around at the various professions and think you can help others in this way or that way depending on what the profession is, in journalism, you have an opportunity to help any of a variety of people wherever there is a problem. So, it's a way to do a job, but also feel rewarded every time you do it.

**BERENS:** *Where did your career begin?*

**KEBBEL:** Well, I started in Collinsville, Ill., where I was in high school and I was, I think, a reporter and eventually an editorial page editor for the high school newspaper. And then when I went to college at Illinois State University, I was city editor of the newspaper there, the *Daily Vidette*. And then, from there, I went and got a master's degree in journalism at the University of Illinois.

Following that, I worked at Northern Illinois University in a setup that they called the DeKalb News Service. It was a class designed to have a city editor who was really not part of the faculty — and that was me — whose job it was to work with area newspaper editors as sort of a regional news service.

So the reporters would be assigned beats like the DeKalb City Hall or the DeKalb Schools and the Rockford area Planning Agency, and the newspapers in the area then would have the opportunity to have reports from those meetings. ... The newspapers, even then, didn't have the opportunity or the number of staff to cover those meetings. So it was a great

supplement.

So I would say every semester, 200 to 300 student-published articles were printed. So those students would leave the class with clips, and at that time, a newspaper clip was what you needed in your portfolio to go on to your next job.

One day I had a guest speaker who happened to be the publisher of the *Rockford Register Star*, which was a Gannett newspaper, and he said it would be really good if we could give the reporting students a bigger, broader picture of the whole journalism process.

So he said, "Why don't I bring down my marketing director and my advertising director and PR and I'll bring in a city editor so they can have the whole picture of what goes on at a newspaper?" And that was great for me.

Then he said, "And let's use this as a model to apply to the Gannett Foundation for a grant, and we'll use this grant to bring in the same sort of people but with national reputations."

We ended up bringing in a circulation director from Knight Ridder Newspapers. One of the people who came to the class on this grant was Gannett's first woman, black publisher. Her name was Pam Johnson, and she was the publisher of the *Ithaca Journal* in Ithaca, N.Y. So she came to class as part of this grant.

About a month later, I got this call from her saying, "How would you like to come and go to school at Cornell and be my city editor?" I thought that sounded like a great opportunity. So the city editor part came to happen, and the going to school at Cornell never did because the city editor part sort of subsumed life there.

From Ithaca then, I became the managing editor in Glens Falls, N.Y., which was much further east and a little more toward the Adirondacks in the Lake George area. Then I was managing editor in Troy, N.Y., which was a great city to be doing newspaper work in because Albany, Schenectady, Troy right next to each other each had a daily. So, it was one metro area, really, with three competing dailies. It had great newspaper competition, so it was a lot of fun to be there.



Dean Gary Kebbel

Then, through work on the Associated Press graphics committee, I ended up becoming the night graphics editor at *USA Today* and was there for a while. After a few years, publisher Tom Curley sent a note around saying, “We’re interested in seeing if any staff members want to participate in a new digital venture that we’re thinking about.” He didn’t say what it was.

I said yes, thinking that it was CDs, because at the time educational CDs were really big and *USA Today* was starting to get into that. About six months went by and nothing happened, and then all of a sudden it was like, OK, let’s start *USAToday.com*. So the group of us that applied for that and ultimately got screened ended up starting *USAToday.com* which launched April 17, 1995.

I remember that date because two days later was the Oklahoma City bombing, and I was the editor in charge that day. I remember thinking that this is a different medium.

We have the opportunity to do news differently here. I don’t know what that means, I don’t know how to do that, but I know that I have the opportunity to guess. I have the opportunity to try things, because there was no right, and, therefore, there was no wrong.

It was great fun to be in digital media, online media, particularly at that time because you were always able to try something, and if it didn’t work out you tried something else.

On that day I was fortunately working with someone who had worked in graphics at *USA Today*, and we both knew that the graphics department always had the television monitors tuned to the news channels. So we could run downstairs and do a video framegrab of the (Alfred P. Murrah Federal) building, save it as a JPEG, put it on the hard disk, and then run upstairs and insert it into the server and publish it.

It’s totally illegal today and totally unethical. You should not do this. But in those

days, you did it. So we ended up beating AP online with the photo because they did it the right way.

Nonetheless, we had this photo of the building, and then we started thinking, “Well, what else would people want to know?” If I was around the country, and I had family in Oklahoma City, and they worked in that building, I would want to know, number one, if they’re alive, and number two, what hospital they’re in.

So we went down to the library at *USA Today*, got the Oklahoma City phone book, came upstairs and typed in the phone numbers of every hospital and published that. It was about 24 hours later that AP did a 1-800 hotline number for all of the hospitals. But again, we were ahead in the way we thought about what would people want to know as a result of this kind of coverage.

The other thing we did that is so commonplace now that no one would even think that people were nervous about doing it was that we published a sentence at a time. So when the news broke, we published one headline: “Apparently a bombing in Oklahoma City.” Then, I think the next sentence was probably that the Murrah Building is bombed. And then, sentence after sentence as take after take came, we would publish more and more and then we had the photo and then the story would grow.

But this was absolutely against everything we have ever done in our lives because we worked for a newspaper where the deadline was 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. and you hope that in that time, that intervening 12 hours, you figure everything out, you verify it, you’re reporting the facts.

So here we were, saying we have no verification of any of this information. It’s coming from one source, the AP, at that moment. And yet, television is using that, and CNN and MSNBC are using that. Why shouldn’t we? So we decided to just publish a take at a time of whatever we knew.

That’s exactly the way news is covered online now. What we’ve learned since then, I think, is that the public is very tolerant of mistakes that are made honestly in the heat of reporting, so that if a news event is happening and you say three people are dead, and 30 seconds later you say five people are dead, the public understands that the story is evolving.

A day later, if you still have it wrong, the public rightly will be angry at that and bothered and will believe you’ve not done a good job. That’s correct also. But I think the public has this dividing line: During the breaking news event, they’re willing to toler-

ate the fact that the facts are changing, but once there is an ability for people to nail it down, then you have to nail it down.

**ALLOWAY:** *Were you getting feedback from viewers of the site of that point? What was the response?*

**KEBBEL:** You mean from the maybe four people that saw it? It was brand new. So no.

But that's a really good question because it points out the fact that the medium allows us to do so much more than the print medium does or just radio or just TV. We have interactivity online. And your question presupposes that, of course, you're going to have feedback from the audience. The capabilities were embedded in there, but we didn't know how to use them yet.

That's something that's really important about starting a new medium is that initially, you use it in the only way you know, which is as a sort of substitute for the old medium. So literally, *USA Today*, when it went online, was called *USA Today* online. And that's all it was: the paper online.

We weren't at that time using the video or audio or polling or interactivity or feed-

Newspapers do more than  
just publish ads and publish  
stories. They are an essential  
part of the democracy  
and the community.

— Gary Kebbel  
Dean

back or anything because a lot of it we didn't even realize we could do that yet. We hadn't thought about how this was such a new medium with such new inherent, native capabilities that it would change the way we do our work,

So now, of course, somebody who's 10 years old understands the inherent capabilities of the medium far better than we did 15 years ago.

**ALLOWAY:** *Along that same line, one of the ah-ha moments for us at the J school was that there were about five websites pretty much devoted to just Oklahoma City coverage in the few days following it. But three of the five were from outside the United States, and we thought, "Wow! You don't actually have to be on site to be covering this information." But it does raise some questions about how much of this is firsthand original reporting and how much*

*of this is the stuff that just gets routed around the circuit. That was another moment: "This is really going to change forever how we think about the validity and the accuracy and the timeliness of this information."*

**KEBBEL:** Exactly, and we can see how it has whenever there's a major news event. Often, some of the best organization of information about that event is on Wikipedia in terms of the number of links and the fact that those links are updated and curated and pulling everything together in a neutral way. And, it's often curated by somebody elsewhere around the world from where that event is.

**ALLOWAY:** *After you were at USA Today, you also started some other publications online.*

**KEBBEL:** From *USAToday.com* I went to *WashingtonPost.com*. And I was there during the Clinton impeachment era. I was the home page editor there. But in 1998, *Newsweek*, which had been on AOL for quite some time, decided it was time to go to the Web. *Newsweek* was owned by the *Washington Post*, so I ended up on a team to help launch *Newsweek.com* on the Web, and we did that in two ways because I was already on a team to create a new publishing system for *WashingtonPost.com*.

Going online was a jerry-rigged process that every paper created itself. By '98 we needed a publishing system. We needed templates. We needed a way to make this easier. So I was working with a technology company trying to design a template and publishing system that would work for *WashingtonPost.com*. Then we decided we could use that for *Newsweek*, also.

Maybe about two months before the scheduled launch, one of the executives says, "So how and when are we going to update the articles?" And a different person in charge of the launch said, "Well, every week when *Newsweek* publishes, we'll have everything updated on the Web."

And there was just this blank look around on like half of people's faces. We're only going to update once a week on the Web?

All of a sudden it dawned on people that whatever your news organization is, once you go online, you're no longer that organization. You're a different organization. You become, in essence, the equivalent of a news service: a 24-hour news service. So, if you were a newspaper going online, you're no longer a daily. If you were a magazine going

online, you're no longer a weekly or a monthly. You're all competing to be 24/7.

Fortunately, the publishing system we were creating had the ability to use different templates. So, in the next week, we created a *Newsweek* template, and we had the ability to publish sort of one to many. So when the news desk at *Washingtonpost.com* would update the news briefs section, would simultaneously publish to *WashingtonPost.com* in a *Washington Post* template and *Newsweek.com* in a *Newsweek* template. That was the solution then.

But it was another ah-ha moment for a lot of people. At the time, you're so embedded in the idea that you're working on a weekly magazine that, again, you don't initially realize the full capabilities of the new medium, and you always start thinking about the new medium from what you know in the old medium. Which is why it's so important to have so many people around who don't know the old medium, who know only the new medium. Because they can teach us the inherent, the native capabilities of that new medium.

**ALLOWAY:** *That speaks to a line from some of the written material that you sent us: "I've learned to leverage the productive tension between the past and the future." On the one hand, you can imagine the people on the digital side saying, "This is so cool. We can update this right now." But the people on the print side were saying, "Then what does that do to our print publication? Will no one read us anymore?" I remember that being one of the original tensions. Did that exist somewhere in there?*

**KEBBEL:** It 100 percent existed. The newspaper or the magazine would say, "Well, we can't publish first online, because we'll scoop ourselves." Or "We can't publish first online because if we do we'll alert the competition to what we have, and they can react to it before our print publication is in the hands of the audience." Now, all of those things are true. The question is, should we value those things in the same way when we have new media.

It took years to realize that a value that we had, competition and being first, should be looked at differently in a world where you don't have set publication deadlines, in a world where anybody can update anything, where anybody is a publisher and where the audience, therefore, expects, if news is happening, you better have it.

**BERENS:** *So where did you go after Newsweek?*



**KEBBEL:** From Newsweek.com I went to AOL. I was the news director at America Online for about six years. That was during the real fun time before and during the merger with Time/Warner. AOL was just a wonderful place to work. AOL at the time was doing things way ahead of traditional news organizations because it was not bound by that creative tension that we just talked about. It didn't have the traditional values holding it back. And AOL was built around gaming and community and talking about those games.

So the idea of comments on stories was in the DNA of AOL at the time that news organizations were going, "We cannot allow comments on stories." And that's another thing: Our ethics and principles held us back from what users of digital media expected.

At WashingtonPost.com, in '98, '99, several of us were saying we should add comments to the stories. A lot of people want to comment on the stories. Our creative message at that time was message boards. Let's create a message board. Let's create a chat about this news topic.

Editors at the paper said, "Oh, no, because if it's unedited, if it's unfiltered, anybody could say anything. They could say dumb things, they could say mean things, they could say pornographic things. And it's the *Washington Post* name and brand that's at stake here. People expect the *Washington Post* to protect them from that and to edit for them and to create a quality that they have learned to expect over the years. And that quality does not include a free-for-all wrestling match."

So the news organization's leaders said, "No, we will not allow comments on the stories." At AOL we didn't have the history that said we're not supposed to have comments on the stories, so we put them in. And individuals who were creating blogs knew that they wanted to comment on stories, so they allowed others to comment.

What happened was that those readers who wanted to comment ended up being able to do so, just anywhere except on a newspaper's online site. In other words, they were taught how to comment in places that did not have newspapers' values or ethics or fairness. If we had been more proactive and said in 1998, "We're going to teach you good behavior in commenting, and we're going to teach community action and behavior," then perhaps at some sites we would have taught people more about how to comment relevantly, I think the lesson there is that news organizations need to and should want to be involved in all the latest technology. They shouldn't let the users learn how to use the

technology from a Silicon Valley firm whose only interest is in being sold. I think the news organizations who have interest in community building and democracy building and strengthening the democracy and helping people have information so they can make better choices in their lives — those are the values that should be leading adoption of new technology.

**BERENS:** *After all that experience, it seems like a logical connection to go and work for the Knight Foundation and administer the kinds of grants you did. Can you talk about that just briefly?*

**KEBBEL:** One of the reasons I was hired at Knight was because of my work at AOL — not only because I was working at an online news site, an online portal, an online community site but also because in that role, a lot of what I had to do was evaluate new products. At that time, anybody with a new idea could try to help that idea succeed if, in the phrase of the day, they got more eyeballs on their pages. And the way you get more eyeballs on the pages is you get an organization like AOL or Yahoo! to link to or use that new product or link to that new website.

AOL News was built on partnerships with *New York Times* and ABC and CNN and *Time* and many others. So we would evaluate a lot of the various sites and the various tools. That's exactly the skill that Knight Foundation wanted at the time: somebody who had experience evaluating digital products and tools. I was a good match for them, and it worked out nicely.

The Knight Foundation was newly headed by a gentleman named Alberto Iburgüen who had been the publisher of the *Miami Herald*. And he was realizing exactly what I was telling you, that newspapers were just putting the newspaper online. As he tells it, they were trying to make a movie out of the book. It usually doesn't work.

He also realized that the news industry was in trouble. Advertising revenue was going down. Circulation was going down. Young people were not even picking up a newspaper. Twenty-year-olds had never held one. He was looking around and saying newspapers do more than just publish ads and publish stories. They are an essential part of the democracy, number one, and the community, number two.

They help build community. They

strengthen people. They bring people together. They help tell somebody on the north side of town what it's like to live on the south side of town, so that you both feel part of the same, one community. Then, they help identify problems in that community and hopefully bring people together toward common solutions.

At the same time, they're also the key vehicles for strengthening the democracy and informing the people about who's running for school board or mayor or for congressman or senator and helping you make decisions in ways that will affect your lives for many years to come.

So the story of news organizations being in trouble is not just a business story. It's a much more important story than that, and Alberto realized that. So he said we need to see if these community-building functions, the democracy-supporting function, can be performed digitally online. And we are not seeing this kind of thought or creativity happening in traditional news organizations, and right now we see them kind of squeezed by the economy, and on top of that, they never committed that much research and development money anyway.

Nebraska is one of six ABC News On Campus bureaus; one of six Dow Jones News Fund training sites; and one of 12 Carnegie-Knight schools. There aren't many other schools that have all of those.

— Gary Kebbel  
Dean

So why don't we do that?

So Alberto created something called the Knight News Challenge, which is a \$25 million fund that seeks experiments and innovations over five years to find those new, different products or processes that might be able to be used by news organizations — or by anyone else. And that was key, too.

We weren't doing just research and development for the newspaper industry, nor were we trying to be a newspaper preservation organization. We were trying to create more digital tools and lower the barrier to the digital conversation for everybody. These are the experiments that the Knight News Challenge funds. It is now in its fourth year.

The News Challenge has created products that anyone can use to try to enter the

digital conversation in different ways. Whether that's with better mapping or better data visualization or easier ways to video blog or better ways to use community data, there's all sorts of different types of projects there.

So what I've been doing for the past four years at the Knight Foundation is seeking digital innovation, particularly from people who had never had any contact with Knight or perhaps any other foundation. We were seeking out individuals when, typically, Knight Foundation had sought out organizations and associations and universities. So we turned somewhat away from the traditional grantee and looked in areas where we had not looked before and looked worldwide for new ideas.

**BERENS:** *You had this evolving career with lots of digital work, and then you got to bring that all together and give people money to foster that at Knight. What made you decide you'd like to get into the world of journalism education?*

**KEBBEL:** The work at Knight Foundation is incredibly fun, and you're on the digital cutting edge, and you get to meet really exciting people with great new ideas. It's been a very enjoyable time. It has also made me a good panelist for anybody who wants to know sort of what's happening out there in digital media.

But I also realized that there's yet another step that I wanted to take and that was to bring that together and start being able to use some more of that. A university and journalism education is a way to take these experiments and pair them up with the natives who totally get it and see what we can come up with and see if, together, we can create a newer, better, more exciting, more relevant communication system. It's a way to take the research and make it even more useful and more tangible for people.

**BERENS:** *Where do you see this college now, and where do you see us going?*

**KEBBEL:** Nebraska's College of Journalism and Mass Communications is known across the country as an excellent journalism and advertising and public relations school. The industry has seen that through various ways. It has placed an ABC news bureau here on campus, one of five. We have one of the six Dow Jones News Fund sites for training young editors, and it's one of 12 Carnegie-Knight schools. So when you take the one of five, one of six and one of 12 — there aren't many other schools that have all of those.

So we have recognition from the journalism industry. We have recognition from

foundations that are looking into journalism education. We have recognition from broadcast. And recently, the National Student Advertising Competition team has just won its regional competition and placed in the top four nationally.

There's a total picture here of quality education from strategic communication to journalism in all of its forms, whether that's broadcast, print or digital. It's a fantastic journalism school with professors who care about educating the students and preparing them for the world.

And that world is now saying, "I want to be informed anywhere I am, using any device I happen to have near me or on me, at any time I want." That's the next step for us: taking the education that has been designed for the news and strategic communication industries as they have been and focusing it now on what they're going to be.

What they're going to be we can see from the students today who often don't carry a laptop because they have their mobile devices. And with their mobile devices, they can socially network. They can access the Internet. They can call home. They can do whatever they want to do in any form of communication or connecting with people or getting information.

I think a journalism school that is as embedded in quality education as we are is the ideal group, the ideal university to lead into the next era of digital communication, even if we don't totally understand it yet.

What we do know is that it's important to young people, it's important to the students. We care about the students, and we're going to make sure they're better educated to use those devices as reporting and advertising tools and to use them to receive that information. So we're going to be teaching them both active and passive use of this mobile media so that they can be better communicators in this brand new ecosystem.

**ALLOWAY:** *You told us that, in one of your interviews with Chancellor Perlman, you told him you wanted permission to occasionally make a mistake and fail. And the chancellor said, "I've done the same thing." Is that not a value to also be teaching our students? To not be hesitant about this.*

**KEBBEL:** That is absolutely right. And that is a part of the larger picture of the values of being an entrepreneur. That's another thing that we absolutely have to teach the students because it is unlikely now that a student graduating from here is going to go and work for the *World-Herald* or the Associated

## Bits and Bytes

Dean Gary Kebbel's Blog  
On Communication and Community

Read the dean's blog: <http://cojmc.unl.edu/kebbel>

Press for the rest of their life. That's not technically going to be the case.

What might happen is that they will be between jobs for a while. And in doing that, can they work as an entrepreneur? Can they use what they know about communication and what they know about audience, and can they put those two together and find a niche that becomes a need?

Can we teach students to be entrepreneurs, number one, and can we also teach them to work in small groups with people whose skills are very different from theirs? Because that is survival mode right now. As a journalist whose specialty is stories and storytelling, you still need to be able to understand the businessperson who's saying, "What's the business plan behind this? And how will this be sustainable? Where's the revenue coming from?"

And you need to be able to understand that the developer or the programmer who says, "What do you want this to do and how do you do it?" Even if you don't speak the language of computer systems or computer open-source software like Drupal or Django or Python, you still need to be able to understand what the programmer is trying to tell you and be able to try and tell back to the programmer what you want.

We need to be able to work in small groups with people very different from us who use a language we're not fully accustomed to yet, and that's part of being an entrepreneur and being willing to take risks.

I would say that applies to journalism education as well as to the students who graduate from here because the risk-taking is going to be key. If we have a tolerance for risk, then we will continue to experiment. We will continue to innovate. We won't self-censor. And we might find some new invention, some new process that otherwise we never would have gotten to.

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# Lieberman establishes reporting prize to encourage students to excel

By Blair Euteneuer, 2011

Trudy Lieberman was a journalism student under William Hall and then Neale Copple, notoriously tough deans and teachers who expected a lot from their students. From the beginning, she rose to meet their expectations and demands for excellent reporting. Her journalism skills, along with her own curiosity, inquisitiveness and desire to “give a voice to the voiceless,” marked her as a standout.

During her sophomore year of college in 1965, the Journal-Star Printing Company and then School of Journalism selected Lieberman as one of six students to receive a Gold Key Award. The prize recognized her budding journalism skills and early academic achievements.

Receiving the award was a pivotal life moment; as Lieberman said it gave her confidence to not only pursue journalism but to excel in her profession.

“I remember thinking, ‘Wow, I can really do this; this is the encouragement I need to be a journalist,’” she said. “That prize was very significant, in terms of them saying to me, ‘We have confidence in you, and you can go on to be the best you can be.’”

Upon graduating in 1968, Lieberman worked at the *Detroit Free Press* as one of the first full-time consumer reporters in the country. Her investigative reporting initiated changes in legislation, set high standards for hard-hitting consumer stories and became a model used by consumer reporters across the country.



Trudy Lieberman visits with students during J Days in April.

In 1977, Lieberman graduated as a Knight-Bagehot Fellow with a certificate in economics and business journalism from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York, and she became an economics writer with *Consumer Reports* soon after.

At *Consumer Reports*, she worked her way up to become a senior economics writer, senior investigative editor, health policy editor and eventually director of the Center for Consumer Health Choices. Throughout her career, she has received 26 journalism awards, including two National Magazine Awards and 10 National Press Club Awards, a Society of Professional Journalists Award for public service and the Jack Newfield Award for investigative reporting.

Lieberman has also contributed her talents to other respected news organizations, including *The Nation*, *AARP Bulletin*, *Los Angeles Times* and the *Columbia Journalism Review*. She has critically covered a variety of health issues such as health care reform, Medicare and health politics, Social Security privatization, insurance and medical guidelines. Her work has had a major influence in changing media coverage of health reform. Many of her investigative stories have had a strong impact on the media.

Lieberman uses her journalism expertise to teach aspiring journalists. She has held various teaching positions at Columbia University, New York University, State University of New York at New Paltz, Case Western University, and the CUNY

Graduate School of Journalism. She has received various fellowships from the University of Michigan, Harvard University, the American Council on Germany and the J. William Fulbright Scholarship Board, which enabled her to study the lack of health insurance in America, the media coverage of new medical technology, and German and Japanese health care.

Lieberman's prominence in the



Trudy Lieberman

“I was raised knowing I was going to go to college and do something important.”

media has led to international speaking engagements and opportunities to serve the public interest on many boards and advisory committees. She has also authored five books: on life insurance, personal finance, retirement planning, political influences on the media and long-term care for seniors; the latter was named by *Library Journal* as one of the best consumer health books for 2000. She helped establish the Association of Health Care Journalists and served as president for five years.

To recognize her achievements, as well as her groundbreaking work in public interest journalism, the University of Nebraska awarded Lieberman an honorary doctorate of humane letters in 1997.

Lieberman said her education at the University of Nebraska laid a strong foundation for her career success. The Scottsbluff, Neb., native also said her parents were very supportive throughout her endeavors.

“I was raised knowing I was going to go



to college and do something important," Lieberman said. "That's what my parents wanted me to do, and they were proud of what I accomplished."

Lieberman, in turn, wanted to pay tribute to her parents and the College of Journalism and Mass Communications by creating her own prize for aspiring journalists. She established the Abe and Belle Lieberman Prize for Excellence in Reporting, named in honor of her parents. Her multi-year gift commitment to the University of Nebraska Foundation will allow the college to award annual prizes to recognize a senior journalism student who has demonstrated the potential to become an outstanding reporter.

The Lieberman Prize will also encourage journalism students to pursue their craft with vigor, and in the spirit of "giving a voice to the voiceless," the winners will have an interest in public interest journalism and value journalism as an instrument of social change.

Lieberman said the future of the profession of journalism lies in excellent reporting, and she fears that its foundation and core values are being lost in the "new digital world in journalism."

"I don't want this craft or skill, which is so fundamental in portraying both wrongdoing and good things, to be lost," Lieberman said. "If journalism is to be important in a democracy, we have to have reporters who will get in there and dig."

Lieberman said she hopes this prize will encourage journalism students to be the kind of reporters who will effect change and make an impact on the world.

## The Baxters are passionate about inquisitive minds

By Blair Euteneuer, 2011

Mike Baxter and Jo Stohlman Baxter have always shared a passion for journalism. During college, they met while working at the *Lincoln Evening Journal*, where Mike was a general assignment reporter, and Jo was the "death and weather girl," writing obituaries and weather reports and eventually becoming a copy editor.



Florida couple Mike and Jo Baxter support students with endowed journalism scholarship fund

The two fell in love, married during college and then graduated with degrees in journalism. After college, they moved to Miami, Fla., where they both began successful journalism careers. The couple has strong Nebraska roots, though, as Jo is a Lincoln, Neb., native and Mike moved from Illinois to Sidney, Neb., while in high school.

Even as a young person, Mike was enamored with the *Miami Herald* and dreamed of working as a journalist for the newspaper. His dream came true out of college, and he began a successful career there in 1968. He started as a general assignment reporter and took on other various reporting and editing roles before eventually retiring as deputy managing editor in the mid '80s.

Among numerous journalistic awards throughout his career Mike and his colleague Jim Savage, received The Associated Press Managing Editors Award, the Florida

Distinguished Journalist award and the highly coveted George Polk Award for their investigative reporting of U.S. Senator Edward Gurney's involvement in a 1974 influence peddling scheme surrounding the Watergate scandal.

Jo took on several journalistic endeavors in Miami as well, working for *Miami News*, Everett Clay Associates (Miami's oldest public relations agency) and eventually Baptist Health South Florida, now the largest not-for-profit health care organization in the Miami area. Jo has worked for Baptist Health South Florida for more than 30 years and currently serves as corporate vice president of marketing and public relations.

Jo said she and fellow female journalists of her time had to break through gender barriers, and one of her biggest obstacles was working her way up into senior management positions, which she successfully accomplished after completing her MBA in 1990 at the University of Miami.

"We both feel very strongly about the fact that we received a phenomenal education at the (Nebraska)," Jo said. "We are very proud of our education."

During college, the Baxters said they were fortunate to have scholarships as Jo was a Regent's scholar, and Mike received journalism scholarships. Mike used his job at the *Lincoln Evening Journal* to put himself through college, but when he was financially strained, the dean found available scholarships that allowed him to stay in school.

"We feel we owe the journalism college a huge debt, not only because of our scholarships but because of the education we received," Jo said.

The Baxters' gratitude, generosity and loyalty to the University of Nebraska have prompted them to create the Joanne K. and Michael J. Baxter Journalism Scholarship through a gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation. The permanently endowed fund will provide annual scholarship awards to undergraduate journalism students. Their gift also supports the university's current Campaign for Nebraska and one of its highest priorities of providing support for students.

Jo said she hopes their contribution will help students gain a broader perspective of the world, as well as gain strategic journalistic skills.

"It will always be extremely important to have people able to express themselves in writing," Jo said. "That's the foundation our education gave us."

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# Scholarship will aid students who want to change the world

By Blair Euteneuer, 2011

Artist. Entrepreneur. Environmentalist.  
Farmer. Philanthropist.

Verne Holoubek has been all of those. He's led a life that a boy from a family farm near Clarkson, Neb., might've never dreamed. His creativity, ambition and down-to-earth nature, however, led him to follow his passions and pursue his dreams, which took him far beyond his family farm.

Holoubek ventured to Lincoln to attend college in 1961. His time at the University of Nebraska was filled with discovery, exploration and even business ventures. He combined his knack for drawing and his young enterprising drive to create a T-shirt business together with a high school friend in the basement of Holoubek's fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho. The duo soon became street artists, selling airbrushed T-shirts at carnivals, festivals and state fairs across the country.

"We were like beach bums, only we were airbrush artists," Holoubek said. "It was kind of like pre-rock-and-roll tour days, only we never got a speeding ticket and never went to jail."

Holoubek eventually started his own print shop, Holoubek Studios, in downtown Lincoln at 1311 S. 11th Street, in a building where he pioneered the heat transfer process that created the T-shirt iron-on in 1967. Holoubek's friend and fellow journalism student, Dan Nelson, helped sell and print shirts. Business boomed as T-shirts were sold to organizations on and off campus.

Many of the T-shirts Holoubek designed featured catchy phrases and artwork. His skill for designing and writing "a few simple words that carried a message" were enhanced by some of his college advertising classes, one of which was a course on writing billboards.

One of the first to receive an agriculture journalism degree from the University of Nebraska, Holoubek graduated in 1967 after taking a year off to join the Air National Guard and to marry his wife, Carol "Terri" Terrill, also a student at the university.

At the time of his graduation, Verne and his wife had enough money saved to open a retail store, PJ's Corner, at 16th and Q streets in Lincoln. Then in the summer of 1968, they moved to Pewaukee, Wis., to

build Holoubek Studios together from the ground up.

Their once-small print shop turned into one of the leading printers in the nation and became known for quality and innovation in the industry. Holoubek, Inc. expanded nationally and internationally, and the Holoubeks became industry legends, acquiring major clients such as Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Budweiser, Miller and even reaching Hollywood as the business printed T-shirts for major motion pictures such as "Star Wars" and "Batman" along with legends in the music industry. The Holoubeks' biggest break came when Harley Davidson became a major client. Throughout their endeavors, many of their T-shirts became collector's items for their originality and design.

After nearly 40 years in the business, they sold the company in 2005. Their retirement, however, has since been filled with their interests, aspirations and causes. The Holoubeks used the proceeds from the sale of their company to start their own foundation in 2006. The Terri and Verne Holoubek Family Foundation focuses on helping children, education and the environment.

The Holoubeks are dedicated to environmentalism in particular. They have nearly 200 acres of organic-friendly farmland and gardens where they produce their own food and give much of it to food pantries. Their land is also equipped with innovative environment-friendly technologies, including their home, which produces all of its own power with an array of 104 PV solar panels. As one of the largest independent systems in the state, it produces 20 kilowatts of electrical power.

Verne said his attention to the environment stems from his "roots."

"I've always been interested in alternative energy," he said. "It's from being in agriculture, in farming practices, and seeing what's happening to our land."

The Holoubeks' passion for both the environment and journalism, along with their devotion to philanthropy, prompted them to create the Terri and Verne



Terri and Verne Holoubek

Holoubek hopes that journalism students will be encouraged to report on environmental issues.

Holoubek Family Foundation Environmental Journalism Scholarship Fund. Their 10-year gift commitment to the University of Nebraska Foundation will provide an annual \$5,000 scholarship award to support upperclass journalism students who have a career interest in environmental issues. Their gift also supports the university's Campaign for Nebraska and one of its highest priorities of increasing support for students.

They hope the scholarship will give students the opportunity to help change the world. Using the same investigative and inquisitive skills he learned as a student, Verne said he hopes environmental-savvy journalism students will be encouraged to report critically on environmental issues and help point the public to innovative solutions.

He said he thinks the media "has taken a turn" in its effectiveness at reporting on environmental issues and that journalists should be helping figure out what can be done right now, rather than questioning who's to blame.

"There's not much written positively about environmental efforts," Holoubek said. "Even if I could encourage one student to write about solar and wind energy and what can really be done, that might make a difference."

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## THE ISSUE

**Meet the dean:** Kebbel's career has put him at the leading edge of media change

**Fundraising:** Alumni receive unique challenge to give

**Donor profiles:** Trudy Lieberman; Mike and Jo Baxter; and Verne Holoubek

**Donors:** Private support continues to be the backbone of the CoJMC. The college is grateful its donors choose to invest in the J school

## COLLEGE

**Workshops** tackle writing, grammar, PR and photography

**Profile:** Bender and Walklin chair important UNL committees

**Study abroad:** J school offers trips to Greece, Japan, southeast Asia, Costa Rica and Bolivia in 2010

**J Days:** Honorees are Stacy Fuller, Phil Witt, Lise Olsen, Trudy Lieberman, Rich Bailey, Todd Baer and Ron Hull

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Students land internships in NYC and LA; sophomore's documentary screens at The Ross; ACES students attend editing conference; students selected for Dow Jones News Fund internships

## ALUMNI fyi

Catch up with Julia Stumkat, Daryle Brown, Monte Olson, TJ Montemer, Brittany Jeffers, Elicia Dover, Matt Waite, Kirsten Wilder, Sean Powers, and others ...

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