By Colin Allen

I did exactly what you’re not supposed to do as a journalism graduate. I moved to New York City. The big magnet in the journalism world, the proud home of the best newspapers in the world. Madison Avenue advertising and a large serving of p.r. agencies. It is all here, not to mention everything else you can think of. So how could it be to get a job?

My timing turned out to be outstandingly poor. A month after I moved into my Brooklyn apartment, the world changed. I was at home when the planes hit the twin towers of the World Trade Center. From my rooftop, I watched them fall. Another man up there had skipped out on work that day. He was supposed to be working in one of the towers.

There are countless 9-11 stories to be heard in this city. Although the stories are less frequent, I’m still as fascinated by them as I was six months ago. If anything good came from that day, it is that the tragedy truly brought all New Yorkers together. For a short time, everyone forgot their problems and mourned together.

I am slowly developing a large portfolio of 9-11 stories. A million-plus stories to report in NYC.

Colin Allen at the sphere of the World Trade Center, a sculpture in Battery Park, Manhattan. Photo courtesy of the author.

Dr. Eric K. Gornly will have a book review in an upcoming edition of Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly. He served as research chairman for the religion and media interest group at the 2002 conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. He also helped judge the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association competition.

Dr. Richard Wells is the new president of the Texas Public Relations Association. He presented a program in March at the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association on how journalists should cover the military.

Best wishes to Dr. Meta Carstarphen, assistant professor, who has accepted a post at the University of Oklahoma.

Tina Mercurio, who has been named editor of “Strong Words” for the academic year 2002-03, will do a summer internship at the Wise County Messenger in Decatur.

Josh Baugh will do a summer internship at the Denton Record-Chronicle. His freelance articles have appeared recently in Alliance Regional Newspapers.

Kathy Clark is one of two recipients of the first George E. Haddaway Scholarship for Excellence in Aviation Journalism. She was honored April 2 at a Dallas gala benefiting the Love Field-based Frontiers of Flight Museum. The scholarship will be awarded annually to college journalism students who have a demonstrated interest in the science and history of flight. Clark, a Mayborn scholarship recipient, student pilot, and air race enthusiast, will pursue freelance feature writing and photography with a focus on aviation.

Dr. Meta Carstarphen at the White House. Photo by Melanie Barry.

Strong Words

Send submissions and suggestions to: Tina Mercurio, editor, 2002-03 (mercurio@bkbrow.net)

Elizabeth Clark, editor, 2001-02

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The Mayborn Graduate Institute, founded in 1989 at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, is supported by the Frank W. and Anyse Sue Mayborn Foundation of Temple, Texas.

Calendar

May 11: Graduation
May 29-30: Regular registration for Summer I begins 6 p.m. May 28. See Schedule of Classes. May 27: Memorial Day (observed)

June 3: Summer I classes begin
June 7: Last day to apply for August graduation without late fee
July 1-3: Regular registration for Summer II begins 6 p.m. July 1. See Schedule of Classes.
July 4: Independence Day (NT closed)
July 5: Final exams, Summer I
July 8: Summer II classes begin
July 12-27: Fall advance registration. See Schedule of Classes.
Aug. 9: Final exams; Summer II
Aug. 10: Summer graduation
Aug. 22-24, 4-6 p.m: New graduate student orientation, NT Lyceum, University Union
Aug. 26: Fall classes begin

Sept. 2: Labor Day - no classes
Sept. 5: “Internships – What You Need to Know,” career development lunch and program, noon-1:30 p.m. Free. Sponsored by Farmers & Merchants State Bank, Denton.
Sign up at: neanes@unt.edu

Congratulations to our May 2002 graduates
Brent Baker
Elizabeth Clark
Peggy Heinkel-Wolfe
Christina Jackson
Martha Newman
Douglas Pils
Laura Short
Lisa Swinmelar
Joy Waldron

Looking for a job or internship? www.journalism.unt.edu

Strong Words

Institute awards $200,000 in graduate scholarships

Twenty NT journalism students will receive $10,000 Mayborn scholarships for the academic year 2002-03. Winners in the fourth annual scholarship program were announced May 1 following a competitive selection process.

Recipients are: Brad Andrus, Melanie Barry, Josh Baugh, Laura Cipriano, Nyyre Doucette, Audrey Easley, Ruth Ann Hensley, Scott Karafin, Dan Malone, Tina Mercurio, Charles Myrick, Jon O’Gaun, Greg Pearson, Mark Rele, Jeff Ryder, Syed Shakel, Anita Varghese and Gene Zipperlen.

These scholarships, which are awarded each year, are made possible through a generous gift from the Frank W. and Anyse Sue Mayborn Foundation Advise and Consult Fund at Communities Foundation of Texas, Inc.

NT wordsmith rides verbal rollercoaster at the White House

By Kathy Clark

When Charlene Fern, First Lady Laura Bush’s speechwriter, stood alongside fellow White House staffers hosting survivors of the Sept. 11 national tragedy, few words were spoken, she said. “Just tears and hugs … and a ‘Thank you,’ ‘Good luck,’ or ‘Peace,’” she recalled. “Some eyes were a shade of hollow emptiness I hope I never see again,” she told a crowd of 220 at “Celebrate Freedom,” the annual C.E. Shuford Journalism Spring Banquet.

Fern, an NT alumna and guest speaker, read excerpts from her personal notes during Texas Gov. George W. Bush’s speech. “We think we’re laughing,” she read, “but find tears running down our cheeks …” When her voice broke, she said, “I found my voice here at North Texas.”

She also offered insights into a career with words,” Wells said. “Communications is the most important job in the world.”

A 1990 NT graduate, Fern earned a bachelor of science degree in journalism with concentrations in English and political science. Dr. Richard Wells, Mayborn Professor of Journalism, arranged for her Denton visit.

“Whatever she does today is create magic with words,” Wells said.

Fern, who prepares Mrs. Bush’s words for the world, observed that she knows Mrs. Bush’s voice “better than my own.”

“Working in the White House is a wacky carousel ride,” she said. “Sometimes you want to get off, and sometimes you want to go around one more time.”

See Celebrate Freedom, Page 3.
Strong words: an NT journalism tradition

By Tina Mercurio

A formidable knowledge of the English language, along with enthusiasm and a positive attitude, are keys to success as a journalist, says Mel Tittle, NT alumnus and managing editor of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal. "I am a rare bird," he said. "I got an offer from the Lubbock paper for $80 a week to be a general assignments reporter in 1968. That was a pretty good offer back then."

After only eight months on the job, he was drafted to serve in the Vietnam War. "I went down to the draft office and chose the one flyer that did not have guns on it," Tittle said. "I joined the Navy for four years to do that; then I went back to Lubbock to be a public affairs writer."

After five promotions at the Avalanche-Journal, Tittle became managing editor four years ago. He maintains a passionate devotion to NT's journalism department and hopes that students take advantage of its rich tradition.

"News writing is the backbone of the department," Tittle said. "I do not want students to lose sight of that strong heritage."

During the mock job interviews, Tittle was impressed by the maturity of the students he met. When meeting potential employees, he said, he appreciates two characteristics: enthusiasm and attitude.

Managing editor Mel Tittle, seated, edits copy for an extra edition the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, at the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal. Observing, from left are AME/features Karen Brehm, reporter Ray Glass who had just developed a story on the shutdown of the Lubbock airport, and publisher Mark Nubaum.

Photo courtesy of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal.

He also recommends that young journalists develop "a formidable understanding of the language."

"When I was here at UNT, I was taught the words mean things," Tittle said. "They should be used precisely, correctly and sparingly. Students should develop an appreciation for the language."

With 34 years of experience, Tittle continues to feel that journalism is really not work, in the traditional sense. "Being a journalist lets me use my God-given skills that were well nurtured by UNT and the Lubbock paper. I give people information that they need to know every day. Now, and in the future, our jobs will be to provide information to the readers," he said.

Basic training

Mr. Manners sets us straight

Students are using a new kind of stylebook, thanks to Dr. Richard Wells’ workshop, "Outclass the Competition: business etiquette and protocol." Wells offered the workshop to a class of 15 in April at the NT Gateway Center as part of Journalism Career Week.

Basing his lectures on The Protocol School of Washington, Wells gave an overview of conversational and dining etiquette, business protocol -- including how to enter a room and greet hosts -- and addressed questions during a formal lunch at which students practiced the continental (European) style of dining.

Wells attended The Protocol School of Washington, a representative of the Mayborn Institute, and he wanted to pass along the philosophy that good manners go hand-in-hand with leadership.

Nancy Eanes, career specialist for the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, organized the workshop in conjunction with the journalism department and hopes that students take advantage of its rich tradition.

"Dr. Wells and I hoped to provide this workshop to students who are looking for an 'edge' as they compete for jobs and internships," she said. "Knowing how to conduct yourself in business and social settings is essential in this tight economy. Companies are looking for employees who not only can speak and write effectively, they seek candidates who are confident, composed, poised and not easily intimidated by upper management or clients."

"The journalism department has an excellent record in teaching the basics of good writing. Now we can add that to the fundamentals of etiquette and protocol," Eanes said.

Dr. Dick Wells mingle with students at lunch during the business etiquette and protocol lunch. Photo by Tina Mercurio.

Shadow Days yield real-world journalism experiences

From D magazine to The Dallas Morning News and Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Mayborn students experienced days in the lives of professionals across the Metroplex during spring semester. Shadow Days, a new facet of the Mayborn graduate experience, is expected to continue as a key component of the program.

"Shadow Days does a number of good things," said Dr. Mitch Land, director of the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism. "It gives our graduate students who haven’t worked in the industry an inside look at what they may expect when they graduate. It provides all of our students networking opportunities they will benefit from for years to come, and it builds more strong relationship bridges between our program and the industry leaders who want our students on their side. And, it gives these professionals an opportunity to see just how outstanding our Mayborn scholars are."

Lisa Moffeit, who shadowed Philip Wuntch, film critic for The Dallas Morning News, described her day as “a great way for me to meet a professional in the film criticism business. Philip was a gracious host and was very nice about sharing tips to help me achieve my goals. I think Shadow Day is a great way for students to learn the inside aspects of a chosen career.”

Kathy Clark shadowed Jennifer Davis Dodd at D magazine in Dallas. Dodd is copy editor for D and managing editor for D Home magazine. Sitting in on an editorial meeting during “ship week” for the June issue, Kathy witnessed the intricacies of planning a magazine six months out. “It was really fun, and Jennifer is delightful,” she said.

Matt Smith spent time with Christopher Kelly, film critic for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. He also met music critic Dave Ferman, TV critic Ken Parish and entertainment editor Patricia Rodriguez. His day began at the Magnolia Theater, which has a new digital projector, and ended with lunch with a viewing of the re-released 1984 film, “Amadeus.” Says Matt: “I found Shadow Day helpful, but more importantly, it confirmed my desire to write about movies and music.”

Tina Mercurio, who shadowed Felicia Rogers at Decision Analyst in Arlington, explored the world of marketing research. “I learned that most of the research produced is quantitative; however, the company is working on a qualitative research group. It was a wonderful learning experience, and a great dose of what the real world may look like when I am finished with graduate school,” she said.

Beth Clark spent a day with Martha Sheridan, lifestyles copy chief at The Dallas Morning News. She met features and entertainment editors, visited a Page 1 budget meeting, and sat in on planning sessions for features sections.

“The Lifestyles staff has an impressive production process, with copy editors, graphic designers, editors and writers working as one team to produce a complete piece of work,” she said.