

InterCom

THE COLLEGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ALUMNI MAGAZINE



“I’m so sorry ... our government shut down the electricity.”



**College of Information
and Communications**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**From the CIC to the Ukrainian
conflict frontlines**

Gen Z: The Future of Social Media | pg. 16

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12

GARNET, WHITE & LOVE

CIC alumni to marry in Rutledge chapel



15

CAROL CONNECTS THE CIC

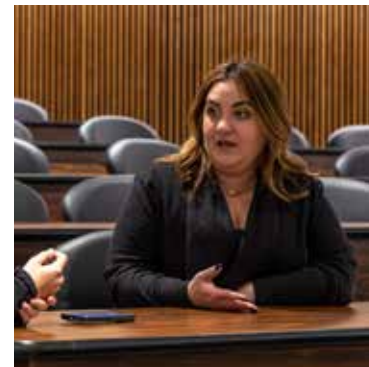
Providing real-world experience through corporate partnership



30

GET TO KNOW LYDA FONTES MCCARTIN

USC welcoming next director of the iSchool



36

FROM PLAYING FIELD TO THE BATTLEFIELD

The Washington Post chief of Ukraine bureau on how to tell a story

SECTIONS

- 4 | FROM THE DEAN
- 5 | INTERCOM STAFF
- 6 | QUICK TAKES
- 16 | FEATURE STORIES
- 40 | ALUMNI NOTES
- 42 | WAYS TO GIVE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 11 | TOP COMMUNICATIONS EXECUTIVE KEEPS ON GIVING
- 18 | WORDS & WARRIORS
- 24 | 100 YEARS OF GROWTH
- 28 | A CHANGE OF FIELDS
- 34 | AMERICA'S DEADLY SMALL TALK



On the cover
16 | Gen Z: The Future of Social Media
 CIC-sponsored UNESCO forum sheds light on the future of information in the age of social media — reaching as far as the front of the Ukrainian conflict with Russia



A NOTE FROM THE DEAN

Tom Reichert

We're wrapping up another year — our first full year released from COVID conditions. Like everyone else, we've been determining our new normal while forging ahead to foster an unparalleled educational experience for all our students. We're doing this by continuing to offer students a unique combination of educational tools, technology, instruction, support and experiences they won't find anywhere else.

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to tools, last year we made the decision to offer every student a free Adobe Creative Cloud account — a value of more than \$1,300 to them over four years. Students can create digital content using industry-grade tools on their personal devices wherever they are and whenever they want. We also invest in new equipment each year such as cameras, audio recording equipment and lighting kits so that students will be job ready when they graduate.

EXPERIENCES

Last summer we introduced our new low-cost study abroad option that allows any major to earn six credit hours while studying for a

month in Barcelona. The credits count toward their graduation requirements, and there is NO program fee. We've done this by reinvesting tuition to cover all instructional and residential costs.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

This year, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous alumni donor, we provided a free one-year membership for all graduating seniors. We sincerely believe they will be more successful connected to the Gamecock network than otherwise.

TOP-NOTCH INSTRUCTION

We continue to add new personnel who bring value to our experienced veteran faculty. In fact, over 50 percent of our faculty is new within the last six years. As for seasoned faculty members, Laura Smith is making us look good by recently earning a national teaching award offered through the BEA. In March, we sent six faculty and staff members to SXSW to see the latest trends to bring back to the classroom.

CUTTING-EDGE COURSEWORK

Faculty members are building new classes in relevant areas such as blockchain, social media analytics,

cybersecurity, business basics, data visualization and so much more. They are also embedding industry certifications such as Google Analytics into their classes so that students get additional value beyond standard instruction.

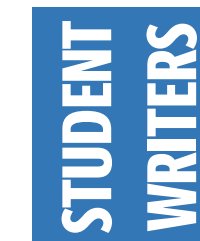
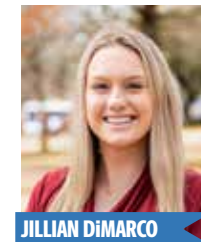
Pair all this with the passion instructors bring to the classroom and the strong support our students receive from their advisors, technology providers and career services team, and I know you'll agree it is an "unparalleled" combination.

You will see evidence of the commitment we are making to students in the pages that follow — and so much more. I know you'll be both impressed and pleased. The best comment a dean can hear from alumni is, "I wish that was available when I was here."

As always, thank you for your support. We couldn't achieve these goals without your advice, your endorsement and your wide-ranging support. Forever to thee!

Tom Reichert

MEET THE STAFF



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QUICK TAKES

News and notes from the
College of Information and Communications

METEOROLOGIST TO MANAGER

Darci Strickland's Story

Story by Michelle LeClair



Darci Strickland, '97 SJMC alumna and award-winning journalist for WLTX Columbia, has always been naturally curious, but never considered journalism as a career until she was in college. After transferring to USC for her second year of college, Strickland switched from engineering to journalism.

"We're living in a better place because I'm not building bridges," she said with a laugh.

After 25 years in broadcast journalism, Strickland says it has become more of a challenge in recent years.

"We are living in an age where journalism has never been more important," Strickland says. "But ... people are less likely to believe what they hear." She counters this challenge by always being viewer-centered, solution oriented, honest and unbiased.

Strickland, no stranger to awards, finds greater meaning by making a difference in the community with her work. The Regional Murrow Award was awarded to her and her team for reporting on a child

losing his life as a result of Department of Social Services policy errors. The reporting from Strickland and her team gained the attention of policy makers and led to changes in legislation.

After getting her degree in journalism from USC, she got a certificate in meteorology from Mississippi State. She began her career with WLTX as a meteorologist. Strickland has recently entered a new role as content manager and senior journalist, spending part of her day managing and part of her day reporting and anchoring.

In the coming years Strickland wants to see her role grow in the areas of recruitment, retention and training.

"I'm at the point in my career where I don't know about doing this for another 25 years ... but I need to help grow a new crop of journalists," Strickland said.

BALANCING WORK, PHILANTHROPY AND PAGEANTRY

Story by Reese Damm

Chaunte' Turner's career has been marked by many twists and turns, but her commitment to serving the community has remained a top priority.

"That's what I feel like I'm here for is to make a difference in somebody else's life," Turner said.

After graduating from the University of South Carolina in 2007, Turner began working as an assignment editor at WLTX in Columbia. She credits her success in landing the job to a professor, Dick Moore, at USC. While assignment editor is not a popular job in the newsroom, she persevered through many different obstacles such as working 17-hour days. She learned a lot in her almost 15 years in broadcasting at Charleston's WCIV and WCSC-TV.

Working in the newsroom is thrilling and rewarding yet tiring. Now, as a corporate communications coordinator at Atlas Technologies, Inc., Turner is responsible for both internal and external communications. She is also on the positive impact team and morale team.

"Our positive impact team is the one that does the community service," Turner said. "They're the ones that spearhead the moves to find partners that need hands-on work."

The morale team plans events to increase company engagement. "I never knew I'd be a party planner," Turner said through a smile. "This team helps boost morale and engagement within the company."

Remote jobs can make camaraderie at work a scarcity. "A lot of our team members can work hybrid and work remote," Turner said. "Sometimes they're not always in office, so we try to plan events out of

the office where people can still get to know their colleagues."

While Turner isn't serving the community daily with news, she is recognized for her philanthropic efforts at Atlas. She also serves as co-director for the Miss Lowcountry, Miss Somerville and Miss North Charleston pageants. As a past competitive dancer, she understands the importance of pageants and giving back to the community.

"While I'm not making a difference on a daily basis, giving people the news in town, I'm able to make a difference in a different way by giving back to the community through community service," Turner said.



WHAT IMPACT ARE YOU HAVING OVER THE HORIZON?

Story by Bennett Dickison

Ed Chambliss poses this question for his students as a School of Journalism and Mass Communications adjunct professor, author and former CEO.

“If you lift students view and gaze beyond products and profits, you can make students think about why they are doing what they are doing,” said Chambliss.

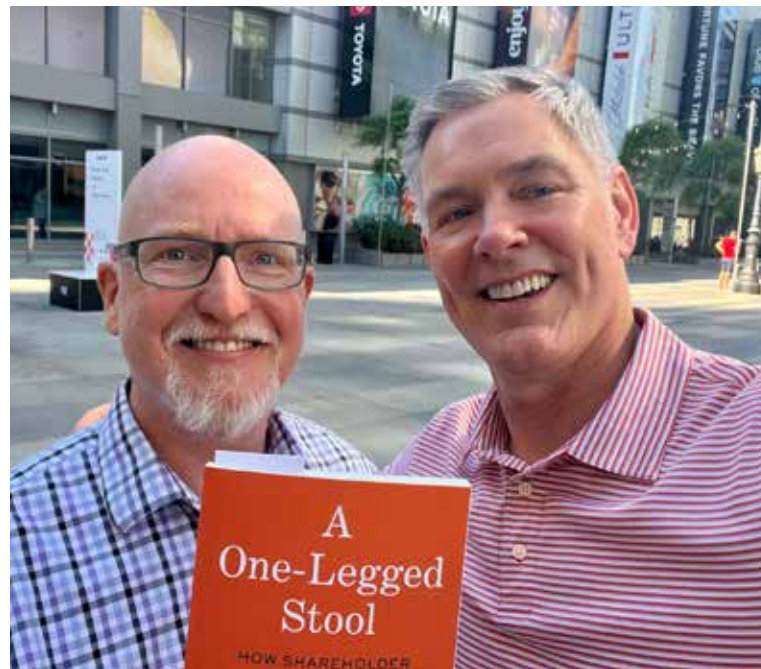
Chambliss’ aim with this philosophy is to teach students the way to help a company improve itself by focusing on shared needs and what humanity wants. From his time as a student in the SJMC he recalls a rich environment of learning.

“Experiences that don’t feel educational but are, are the most important learning,” said Chambliss. “The J-school is all about understanding other people and communicating with them, and being exposed to an environment where everyone is talking and learning.”

Ed Chambliss has helped build many kinds of brands and businesses since graduating from USC in 1989. Chambliss worked on everything from electronics to food to tourism, based on what they meant to people. During his 35 years in marketing, he has seen many smart clients hurt the foundation of their companies by making short-sighted decisions.

Seeing these repetitive mistakes inspired Chambliss to write “A One-Legged Stool: How Shareholder Primacy Has Broken Business (And What We Can Do About It).” This business book kick-started a four-year journey for Chambliss which culminated in a national book tour.

After Chambliss finished up his book tour in October 2022, he met with Dean Reichert at a Starbucks in downtown Los Angeles. A meeting that was



supposed to be 30 minutes turned into an hour and a half long conversation, leaving Ed Chambliss with a job opportunity.

“I’ve always had one leg in teaching, one leg in marketing,” said Chambliss. “I have always been a teacher.”

In January 2023, Chambliss began teaching two online courses in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications: one asynchronous course for senior advertising majors and an asynchronous course in data planning.

“Asynchronous education is like courting someone in Victorian England,” Chambliss said on his experience thus far. “Maybe in a month you’ll get some correspondence back.”

Despite the problems of technology with online learning, Chambliss expressed he has had a great and relatively seamless transition into his new position.

Ed Chambliss (left) and Dean Tom Reichert (right) in downtown Los Angeles, California.



HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

EMAIL DANIELLE MCNAUGHTON AT DANIMCNAUGHTON@SC.EDU



INTERN TO FULL-TIME FUNDRAISER

Story by Anna Lee Litchford

SJMC alumna Keith Ellis Prest, '22, returned to her hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, after graduation to work for fundraising and awareness at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

After being a social media intern for the organization her senior year, she was offered a full-time position as its specialist for social media communications engagement. “It’s an iconic brand, and it’s one of the largest fundraising companies in the world,” Prest said.

She creates captions, social media posts and design concepts for the brand, putting her visual communications skills to the test. Prest credits Jason Porter’s design of online content class for teaching her how to “be mobile first.”

“He always talked about making content look good on mobile first, and we always talk about that here,” Prest said. “Catering towards being platform-specific is super important, just so not everything is a duplicate copy on every platform.”

Capturing content at annual events and working with St. Jude’s corporate partners is a perk of the job, Prest said. “I work a lot with our corporate partners like Domino’s, Five Below and bunch of other ones on our website. They need to meet with our team to create co-branded social code,” Prest said.

For her, the most exciting part of the job is working events like the PGA FedEx Classic and the Country Gears concert. A personal favorite, she said, was working on a KIA commercial filmed at the hospital.

“It was really cool being around all the high commercial filming equipment,” she said. Constantly expressing gratitude for the opportunity of her initial internship — she gives current students some advice. “When I was a junior at USC, I was like, ‘I know I need a job,’ and I think looking at internships like this one, where it’s such a big company, is really rewarding because you’re able to work hands-on and learn the ins and outs before you become on your own,” Prest said. “Definitely just apply where it makes sense to you.”



FOCUSING ON FUN



Story by Mayson Beckham

It was her sophomore year of high school when Katie Turner realized she was destined to be a reporter. She was enthusiastically reading aloud in her English class when her teacher pulled her aside and helped her begin the journey to her career.

"My English teacher held me back after class and said, 'You have a great voice for speaking. Have you ever thought about going into news?' And I said, 'No, honestly, I've never thought about it.' And it was literally on that day that I completely changed the course of my life," Turner said.

From that point on, Turner got herself in her high school news show, where she was an anchor. As she was approaching college, she decided to attend USC's CIC to pursue a degree in broadcast journalism.

During her time as a student, Turner aspired to bring a different approach to storytelling. While other students aimed at reporting more serious subjects, Turner wanted to focus on fun.

"I was pitching things like, there is a dog costume contest at Jake's. And I was so into that. I loved a fluff story," Turner said.



Her unique approach led her to attain a segment on the university's Student Gamecock Television. They called it, 'On the Burner with Katie Turner.'

"It was so silly, but it was so much fun. I got to do like little pop culture hot news bits. And I was on a green screen. And I just had fun with it. And I should have known back then I ended up doing lifestyle stuff because that was my bread and butter," Turner said.

Now, Turner continues spreading the news of all things fun. As the host of Living Local on WCBD News 2 in Charleston, Turner gets to cover all the exciting events and happenings around the city.

In a fast-moving industry, Turner applauds the CIC's broadcast journalism program for preparing her for success in her career.

"I remember staying at the J-school until like 2:30 in the morning, editing my packages and just wanting them to be so good. And now it's finally paid off because it's something that I do every day," Turner said.



LET'S GET CONNECTED

Join the CIC Alumni LinkedIn network! bit.ly/cicgroup



TOP COMMUNICATIONS EXECUTIVE KEEPS ON GIVING

Story by Ellie Houff

Most people assume public relations is solely about communications. Ashley Dusenbury, CIC alumna class of 1994 and senior communications director at Aflac, challenges that idea.

She finds many ways to personally give back to SJMC students today, connecting on LinkedIn, sharing her story in the classroom or helping students land local internships in the Columbia area through her network. She serves as a true advocate for CIC students. "I feel like I need to return that giving I felt. That's why I love to visit with students in the classroom. I love to talk to students."

Dusenbury encourages young professionals to understand PR fundamentals and the key drivers of a particular business to curate the most effective messaging for a company.

"Don't be afraid," Dusenbury said. "Why would we limit ourselves as communicators or PR pros? I mean, if we have a fundamental understanding of the company and what drives business to the bottom line, then we could easily be the president, executive director, right?"

Dusenbury's college experience didn't begin on USC's main campus. First, she attended USC Salkehatchie, a USC system campus, for two years.

"I've always considered it [attending USC Salkehatchie] a gift because it gave me the opportunity to adjust to college and get involved on campus, but on a smaller scale and at a rate I felt comfortable," Dusenbury said. "Being a part of Salkehatchie really laid the groundwork for a great start to my USC experience altogether."

Once she got to USC's main campus, Dusenbury joined the SJMC. She's forever grateful for the SJMC professors who provided her with unlimited internship opportunities and the fundamental skills to succeed in the process.

Dusenbury never strayed far from her Carolina family since graduating in 1994, and she now has 28 years of working in communications.

At Aflac, she explains how every day is different, fueling her passion for keeping up with the media in a world that is constantly evolving. She advises young professionals to try everything and anything.

"Every position you have builds on what you learned in your previous position. Enhance your skill set across all areas of work in the field, and always stay humble."

GARNET, WHITE & LOVE



Shutters found not only her husband at the university, but the experience she needed to pursue her passion.

"It's senior semester. You're in Carolina News. You're doing it all. Anchoring, directing, reporting, producing — that experience is really almost like a job. Without Carolina News, I would not have had that anchoring experience and probably wouldn't have been promoted that quickly after college," she explained. "I chose the best university in the world to go to, and I wouldn't change a thing. It has set up everything for me. Whether that's my fiancé, work or anything."

Shutters and Parsons will be married in September 2023 right here at their alma mater.

"Everybody took all of their classes in that building," Shutters explained about their decision to choose the historic Rutledge Chapel as their venue. "The fact that we're about to get married in that building is really special. We're over the moon about it. One of our main colors is definitely going to be garnet."

Story by Sarah Fulwider

A Gamecock Wedding! News anchor and CIC alumna Sabrina Shutters to marry on the Horseshoe this fall.

From student peers, to fiancés, to colleagues, Sabrina Shutters and Ben Parsons have been a team since they met here at USC. Now, these CIC alumni are preparing to say, "I do," this fall.

Shutters worked as a reporter and Parsons was a producer for separate shows on the Student Gamecock Television Network during their time as students. On Nov. 30, 2016, Shutters' microphone stopped working and she couldn't record the weekend preview on the Horseshoe. Her producer called Parsons, and he sprinted over with a new one. On that day, the pair met, and news was successfully reported.

Years later, the two are engaged and live and work together in her hometown of Augusta, Georgia.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

SJMC alum becomes instructor one year after graduation

Story by Madison Brown



Jesse Breazeale, 2022 graduate of SJMC, is teaching in the SJMC just a year after graduating. What's more, he also has a full-time position at the USC Alumni Association.

"As digital media content coordinator, I create and develop content strategies for the Alumni Association's digital content channels — social media, web, email, advertising, etc.," Breazeale said. "I also manage brand assets and create print/digital collateral to support membership programs, promote events, sell merchandise and engage alumni through clubs and councils."

Breazeale was a visual communications major, with a minor in theatre. During his time at USC, Breazeale

helped to make the posters for on-campus theatre productions, along with production and even acting while he was a student at USC.

His graphic and theatre talents caused the SJMC to offer Breazeale a job teaching the graphic portion of Journalism 534, which publishes InterCom magazine as a final class project.

"It was evident from the start that Jesse had a theatre background because of his effective teaching style and stage presence," Parks Rogers, co-instructor of JOUR 534, said. "Jesse conveys the message in an entertaining way, reflecting his acting background."

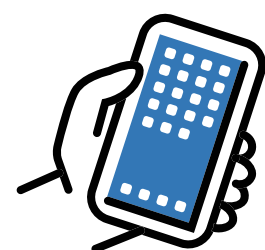
"It's a lot of fun, and it could definitely be a little entertaining. We always had shows that were close to being sold out," Breazeale said.

After college he worked in New York as an intern for REV Theatre Company. "I got promoted to an associate during my last month there doing marketing for them, doing social media and doing sponsorship graphics and sponsorship documents. Generally, marketing stuff, doing commercials for things. It was great because I got to work with some really cool artists."

Students on-campus can spot Breazeale running around campus on the Alumni Association golf cart going back and forth from work and teaching.



Thanks to a gift from a donor, all May 2023 CIC graduates receive one free year of membership in the USC Alumni Association.



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CAROL CONNECTS THE CIC

Story by Patty Tidd

Carol Kirkland is the External Relations and Partnerships lead for the CIC. Her office is tucked in the corner on the second floor of the J-school through a pair of double doors. A College of Charleston graduate with a history of teaching women's leadership, Kirkland has recently settled at her new home within the university.

Kirkland has 20 years of experience in the private sector developing programs for nonprofits. Since joining the CIC in 2022, Kirkland's ambition is "connecting people and connecting opportunity," she said. Kirkland works closely with CIC Dean Tom Reichert developing and achieving strategic initiatives and managing external partnerships with the CIC.

"The College of Information and Communications Corporate Partnership Program is instrumental in connecting our students with industry professionals who share their expertise through providing educational content, mentorships, intern opportunities and recruiting events that all help launch their careers," Kirkland said.

In February 2023, Kirkland and Reichert traveled on a three-city tour — including New York — speaking with sponsors about potential opportunities at the CIC.

The pair got the CIC its first exclusive sponsor, from Hearst Television, for its spring career fair.

"Hearst is not only going to sponsor the career fairs, but the day before, they are bringing in one of their media trucks and a team with their cameras, and they're going to share a live experience of what it's like to work with their trucks and broadcast," Kirkland said.

The extra day of exposure from Hearst Television allows students to learn more about CIC's external involvement with the company and elevate their level of experience in journalism or broadcasting.

Kirkland's job as lead of External Relations and Partnerships is twofold: connecting the school with partnerships and meeting people face to face, to improve the overall college experience for students.

Kirkland compares the J-school staff to an Olympic team.

"We're all in the Olympics running a track and field event. We're all running together but in our own lane with our individual responsibilities, and there's a secondary layer to it all where we are purposely coordinating all our teams together," Kirkland said.

The CIC Corporate Partnership Program offers four levels of partner packages that all provide each partner the opportunity for brand recognition, unique touch points within the college along with a strong pipeline of skill-ready students.

Want to be a corporate partner or collaborate with the CIC? Reach out to Kirkland at ck52@mailbox.sc.edu.



**"CONNECTING PEOPLE
& CONNECTING
OPPORTUNITY"**

DREAM WALKING Jackson Filyo's path in pro sports

Story by Dylan Ortuno

What do the words magic, mystics and wizards have to do with USC? Not a Hogwarts-lite experience. The bookstore doesn't offer wands (yet), but, rather, they're about the journey J-school alumnus Jackson Filyo took after graduating in 2016.

"My first job out of college was working as a communication intern with the Orlando Magic, which was awesome," Filyo said. "The Magic job right after graduation was my first opportunity to fully dive into the NBA PR experience. They gave me the chance to do absolutely everything, so that was a really, really rewarding year."

After a year with the Magic, Filyo was offered a communications position with WNBA team the Washington Mystics and a pair of startup Arena Football League teams. He accepted and continued learning from experience in his time there.

"At these smaller leagues, you get a more 'all hands on deck,' everybody doing a little bit of everything, feel to [the job]," Filyo said.

After three seasons with the WNBA, Filyo then landed his largest opportunity to date — a digital communications manager with the Washington

Wizards, an NBA team. There, he would create content for the team's social media and website through articles, podcasts, video series and live coverage.

Filyo had no regrets after almost four seasons with the Wizards.

"By the end of my time, I was essentially serving as the full-time liaison between the marketing department and all things PR and basketball operations," Filyo said. "That was really exciting. It has always been my dream to work in the NBA and be a part of a team's media process."

Filyo's NBA journey is currently at an end. He is now joining Marriott International.

However, what remains the same throughout is the experience he had at USC.

"With what I was able to do professionally, I want to take some of the credit because I'm a hard worker and think I'm decent at the jobs I do, but I owe a lot of what I've been able to do over the last seven years, which has quite literally been my dream job, ... to South Carolina," Filyo said.

GEN Z: THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

How a CIC forum highlighted social media's impact



Kuziva's electricity shut off while she was speaking. She later rejoined with only a flashlight to light her.

"We wish to show the real Ukraine, not the one that people may —"

Alexandra Kuziva suddenly disconnected from Zoom during USC's social media forum.

She reappeared minutes later in complete darkness. The only source of light beamed from a flashlight held below her face.

What was initially thought of as a poor internet connection was really a government blackout. Air raid sirens had been ringing throughout Ukraine that very morning.

"I'm so sorry ... Sometimes we have blackouts unplanned because our government shut down the electricity ... because when the rocket bombs in the working electricity, it is worse than to reconnect it," Kuziva said from a basement in Ukraine.

Kuziva was one of many social media users,

experts and influencers appearing at a forum titled "Influencers, Ideas and Uncertainty" at USC on Feb.

3. The forum included both in-person and virtual panelists who discussed social media use and Generation Z.

The forum's three sessions were moderated by USC alum Kenneth Moton, a 2004 graduate of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and former ABC correspondent.

The forum's first session, "Voices of Youth," featured USC students and a high school student from North Carolina. Virtual panelists joined from countries such as Taiwan, Kenya and Romania.

"I think that the majority of people do not post their bad days as much as they post their good days," said Christine Magoma, a representative of the Africa Center for People, Institutions and Society from Nairobi, Kenya.

"When [younger people] view this information, they end up comparing their lives to a really tiny percentage of one person's life," Magoma said. "And that then leads to mental health issues. However, there are other influencers, both locally, regionally and internationally, who really play a critical role in just bringing information to people."

The forum's main theme centered around social media misinformation and disinformation — a large focus of the College of Information and Communications, said Dean Tom Reichert.

"Our college is uniquely positioned to study the flow of information through social media, which is where all of the conspiracy theories, everything, is coming through social media," Reichert said. "So that's kind of how I'm setting our college up, is to address this big challenge."

The forum touched on other topics, including children and social media, data privacy and free speech. The second panel, "Influencers and Content Creators," discussed lifestyle and political influencers.

Aqsa Masrat, a 10-year-old influencer from Kashmir, India, has 60,000 followers on Facebook. She makes videos about Kashmir's beauty and issues.

"I've learned that the joint effort of every single person in the society can actually help bring a change in the society," Masrat said. "If you want to do something, if you want to bring a change into society, you should start from yourself — because you are the one who's actually going to bring change in society."

The forum was held in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, promoting international cooperation in knowledge and communication. Last year, USC was offered a UNESCO Chair position — one of 22 chair positions offered in the United States — thanks in large part to professor Randy Covington.

Covington is a professor in the SJMC and is also the director of the school's Social Media Insights Lab. He established the school's relationship with UNESCO in 2021 and was integral in organizing the February forum.

"I think this is becoming a defining characteristic

of the School of Journalism," Covington said. "It's not the only one, and it may not be the most important one, but today, there's so much more to prepare our students for, basically, the global stage."

The forum was an ambitious undertaking — although unable to provide answers, it provided perspective, Covington said.

"UNESCO's mandate to us was, 'we want to hear some young people,'" Covington said. "All right, well, we've got 30,000 young people right here that have something to say."

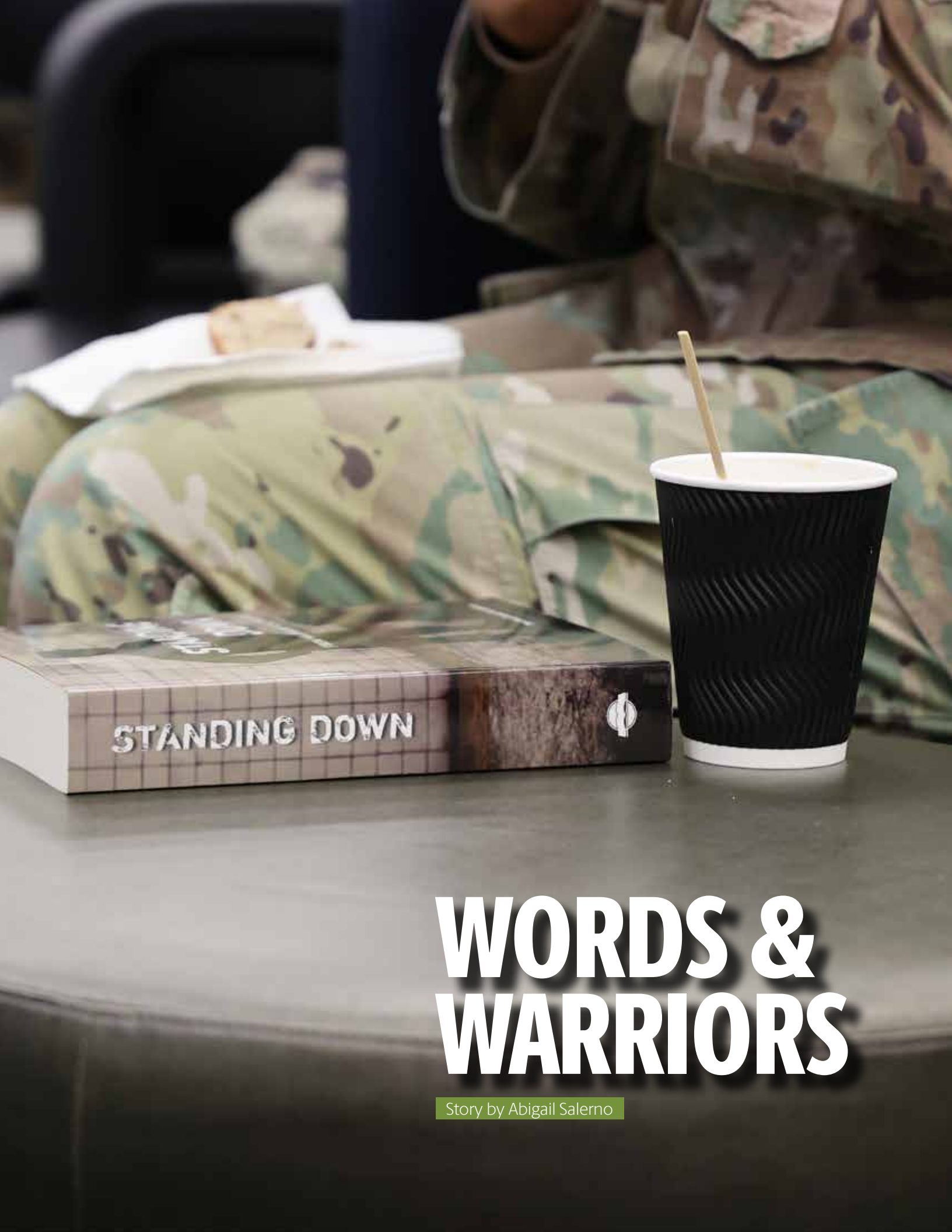
The third panel of the forum, "Social Media and Social Change," hosted influencers and journalists discussing their use of social media for larger purposes—including SJMC alumna Annie Wu Henry, who oversaw Sen. John Fetterman's social media campaign, and Alexandra Kuziva from United24 in Ukraine.

"Social media, digital in general, it's not going away," Henry said. "It's only going to get more and more prevalent in our lives. I always describe these digital tools, social media, as powerful — and I use that word really intentionally, because I think you can use power for good and you can use power for bad. And as these become more and more prevalent in our lives, the responsibility becomes higher."

Kuziva, still in the dimly lit Zoom box and holding a flashlight to her face, discussed how important technology and digital communication currently is for those in Ukraine.

"Russia uses drones right now to bomb, and rockets, and so on," Kuziva said. "[The information is] sent right to the Ministry of Digital Transformation, together with the Ministry of Defense Services. And it helps the Ukrainian army actually to fight with these rockets and to make our cities safe. ... Now, we neutralize around 80 percent of bombs that come into us."

"People do not post their bad days as much as they post their good days."



WORDS & WARRIORS

Story by Abigail Salerno

It was a head-turning moment — an epiphany really.

On a warm morning in June 2022, Karen Gavigan, then interim director of the School of Information Science, and Christine Shelek, the previous director of the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy, headed to Charlotte, North Carolina, for the Metrolina Conference. The conference was for librarians from across all of South Carolina and North Carolina.

On that June morning a member of the Wilkes County, North Carolina, Public Library System began speaking about the county's veterans book club. While in North Carolina, Gavigan and Shelek heard from members of the veterans book club, and they were automatically intrigued.

"It was just very powerful hearing them share their lived experience. It is cathartic for them to talk about it," Gavigan said.

During the drive back home, the idea of, "Can we make this happen in our community?" stuck in their heads. Gavigan and Shelek began thinking seriously about the idea of a veterans book club and thinking of their connections that could make this possible.

The University of South Carolina is No. 1 in the nation for its Department of Veteran and Military Affairs. What better way to bring it all together? Gavigan was determined to bring this idea to life.

She called a meeting with Elizabeth Hartnett, program coordinator for the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy, Grace Salter, director of outreach and engagement for Veterans and Military Affairs at the USC, and Jared Evans, director of military engagement and veterans initiatives. She proposed the idea of having a veterans book club for the campus. Everyone was on board.

"I asked the office of Veteran and Military Services to name this club because they deal with active duty and veterans every day," Gavigan said. "And they came up with Words and Warriors and that could not have been more perfect."

The School of Information Science serves as a sponsor for Words and Warriors. Gavigan, Hartnett, Salter and Evans all serve on the board for Words and Warriors. When the time came for the first meeting, they were all nervous about the turnout.

"Our expectations were exceeded," Gavigan said. "We had men and women of all different ages come from different branches of the military. Some were active-duty; others were veterans from different time periods. It was just so cool and very powerful," Gavigan said.

There are over 400,000 veterans in South Carolina and eight different military facilities throughout the state. The audience is there for Words and Warriors to be a comfort zone for many of the university's own veterans and their active-duty and veteran friends.

"Words and Warriors has provided a platform for our department to continue to emphasize and highlight the university's commitment to serving our veteran and military population," Evans said.

On March 17, Words and Warriors hosted its third meeting and first ever guest speaker, Rick Lowndes Stephens, who graduated from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications in the early 1960s. He is now a Distinguished Emeritus Professor at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Stephens retired in 2011 after a 37-year career as a professor. Stephens served in the Reserves for 23 years and received various awards during that time.

Stephens referred the group to the role of the media in times of war. He led the group discussion, sharing his experience of media in his time of service, and invited others to do so as well.

"It's important that we continue to provide settings where veterans and military service members can come together in a comfortable atmosphere to discuss topics that impact us all," Evans said. "The diversity of service we see from those who attend and the robust conversations we engage in have been an incredible value-add. that can positively impact our veterans and shape new narratives for our community moving forward."

NEW FACES, NEW PLACES



In the words of William Golding, “You’ll get back to where you came from.” That is just what’s happening for three out of the five newest professors at the CIC. Ryan Rucker, Marcia Purday and Eileen Waddell, all alumni of the college, are back to teach the next generation of young professionals.

Eileen Waddell

Eileen Waddell, who received her Master of Arts at the SJMC, has returned to USC as a CIC professor after working for 27 years in journalism. Waddell has had the opportunity to spread her journalism expertise all over the world including the University of Athens in Athens, Greece. She now brings her newsroom experience, advice and observations to the classrooms of the SJMC. Her students will become well-versed in story development, balanced reporting, thoughtful story choice and framing reflective of a community, all of which are her specialties.



Marcia Purday

With aspirations to one day write a book, Marcia Purday’s 30-plus years of experience in public relations will make a great story. Purday received her Bachelor of Arts from the CIC and then went to work with various Fortune 500 organizations, international companies and nonprofits. She is the author of many publications and has served in numerous leadership roles, receiving several awards. Now, Purday has returned to USC, teaching Integrated Communications Campaigns, Creative Strategy to Execution, a special topic course to help students secure certifications in Google advertising and graduate classes. Her teaching style involves integrating real-world experience into the classroom by focusing on teamwork and strategic communication. Purday is an advocate for preparing students for their future careers.



Ryan Rucker

There is no such thing as technical difficulties for Ryan Rucker, the iSchool alumnus who received his bachelor of science in technology support and training management and a Master’s of Library and Information Science from the CIC. In a technological world, Rucker believes it is essential to constantly adapt to the newest technology and its innovations. After being highly involved as a student at USC, such as coordinator of online learning in the Student Success Center and a desktop technician, he has seen firsthand how important it is to have strong technology skills. As a professor, Rucker aims to encourage students to become confident lifelong learners.



In addition to these alumni, the CIC has welcomed two more new faculty members to the Gamecock family.

Brandon Shulleeta

A proud owner of Goldendoodle “Scoop,” one of the SJMC’s newest faculty additions, Brandon Shulleeta has a “scoop” on journalism itself. Shulleeta brings real-world experience into his classrooms with more than 15 years in the field. As a former research specialist at the University of Virginia, Shulleeta investigated various subjects, including local and state government corruption, courts and crime, and law. His main focus as a professor is encouraging students to stretch their boundaries, pushing students to the point of failure so that they can become sharper and more confident as professionals.



Russell Gottwald

Russell Gottwald is a professor teaching Advertising Campaigns, Creative Concept Development, Copy Writing and History of Super Bowl Advertising. He loves to ask why. Working in the advertising industry for over a decade, Gottwald has been a strategist, copywriter and creative team lead. Gottwald brings his skills to the classroom, encouraging students to not only ask how but why, believing that this approach helps students grow their skills to be successful in advertising and other fields.



Story by Mayson Beckham

'THEY ALL SHARED COMMONALITIES IN THE WAY THEY WERE RAISED'

SJMC Faculty's Work on Second-Generation Holocaust Documentary

Story by Michelle LeClair



"TRACES: Voices of the Second Generation," a documentary film, shares a fresh take on the ripple effect of the Holocaust. Rather than covering the Holocaust from a historical perspective, the film offers a new perspective, giving voices to the children of Holocaust survivors. The film highlights the unique experiences of the next generation.

Stacey Goldring is the founder of the nonprofit organization Searching for Identity, designed to give voices to second-generation Holocaust survivors. She started holding writing workshops allowing children of Holocaust survivors to share experiences and build a community around commonalities they shared in their upbringings.

Through this experience, Goldring knew that her workshops needed to become something bigger.

"She didn't know where to start," said Isaac Brown, a visiting professor in the SJMC. "I was like, 'Yeah, I could do this,' and here we are ... five years later."

Isaac Brown, who is from Florida State College in Jacksonville, Florida, directed the documentary.

"One of the really great things about making films is that ... every project is a new beginning," said Brown.

He has been working on documentaries since he was first introduced to them during his graduate program in 2004.

Two collaborating SJMC professors worked as associate producers. Jeffrey Williams and Sabrina Habib gathered the archival footage for the documentary.

The film's beginning as a writing workshop served to benefit the crew in production of the documentary.

"The subjects look very comfortable on film because [Stacey] has spent like five years developing relationships with them," said Brown. "It wasn't like a stranger asking these things ... it was a dear friend."

When working on a project of this nature, there are strict ethical guidelines to follow.

"Stacey was a real asset in that respect," said Brown. "If it made it through her ethical filter, we were okay." The documentary relied on personal stories that were

told by family members. The crew ensured that they were honoring the intention of what was said.

"There were uncomfortable moments for them, but ultimately it was really validating for them. So many of them had this feeling like they were different but didn't know how to articulate it," said Brown. "It wasn't until they were grandparents, a lot of them, that they made the connection that they were in this 'club.' They all shared these commonalities in the way they were raised."

The documentary displays artful animations depicting foggy memories and faceless characters. The animations were brought to life by Brian Oakley, who has worked with Brown for over a decade. Animations and carefully chosen archival footage aim to tell the story without graphic content turning viewers away.

"It's a film about the Holocaust that is not so much about the gore of the Holocaust, but it is about family and growing up and the consequence of what happens generations later," said Habib.

The documentary premiered in Jacksonville, Florida, with the initial screening filling an entire theater with over 500 viewers.

The goal of the project was to have it be seen by as many people as possible. Now the crew is working on submitting it to festivals all around the world. The film has already won an Award of Excellence from the Accolade Global Film Competition.

The crew is currently working to schedule an on-campus viewing. They are hopeful that it will be screened at some point in 2023. For now, to host a screening there is a form that can be filled out at [TRACESfilm.com](https://tracesfilm.com). It is available with no licensing fee.

This film aims to ensure that the stories of survivors are not be forgotten. "It doesn't matter if you are Jewish. These are stories of humanity, so it is important to share and to watch," said Habib.



A screening of *TRACES: Voices of the Second Generation* followed by a Q&A session with a producer.

Students welcome back Hootie & the Blowfish alumni at the opening of the new SJMC building in 2015.



100 YEARS OF GROWTH AT THE SJMC

Story by Ellie Houff

A lot can happen in a year. Think about how much can happen in 100 years.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications is approaching its 100th anniversary in fall 2023.

"There's certainly a lot to celebrate," associate professor Van Kornegay said while sharing his role in coordinating the upcoming celebration. Kornegay has been a part of the evolution of the school after working here for 37 years. He also served as interim director of the school from 2021-2023. One of the most dramatic changes that he talks about is the task of renovating and moving the school's location.

"Imagine having classes in the Coliseum basement, which had one window," Kornegay said.

The SJMC dedicated its new building on Sept. 16, 2015. Alumni, faculty members, students and friends gathered together for the ceremony which featured a massive banner display and performance on the Horseshoe.

Charles Bierbauer, the previous, longest-serving dean of the CIC remarks, "I was not particularly interested in the kind of cliché ribbon cutting when opening the new building. I knew we could do something better." And they certainly did.

Alumni Darius Rucker and Mark Bryan performed a live concert to several thousand students in honor of the brand new location.

The SJMC today is filled with not just one window, but many creating a bright, positive learning atmosphere for all students and faculty members.

The building is constantly abuzz with activity, students are engaged in learning in the classrooms, researching in the Social Media Insights Lab and shooting broadcast content in the Multimedia News Room. The opportunities are endless.

"Another milestone is the increase in majors offered by the SJMC," Kornegay said. The SJMC focuses on more

than just journalism by teaching broadcast journalism, mass communications, advertising, public relations, and visual communications. With the help of SJMC's professors, students can learn the importance of communication across all spectrums.

Technology and media innovation are new focuses at the SJMC. Basic communication teachings remain the same as in past years, with an emphasis on research and writing. New courses address the latest trends in technology.

The Multimedia Newsroom is an example. It was designed to facilitate learning and training across multiple platforms, providing graduates with skills that meet industry needs.

Located in the center of campus, the SJMC is a place of connection for all university students, with modern lighting and classrooms. Each visit by groups taking the official campus tour reveals students learning, researching and collaborating with their peers. Rushing to class, students walk with a pep in their step, excited to craft new messaging through the art of communication.

The SJMC centennial kickoff celebration will take place in conjunction with Homecoming on Oct. 14.



BIOMETRICS AND USER EXPERIENCE LAB

A unique CIC attribute

“We are in the top 10 or even top five public universities that have a lab like this,” said Taylor Wen, assistant professor at the University of South Carolina. “This lab is going to transform the College of Information and Communications.”

The CIC’s Biometrics and User Experience Lab, located in Davis College, offers students the ability to have hands-on experience measuring innate psychological responses, tapping into participants’ subconsciouses and involuntary behaviors.

Through the lab, participants can use cutting-edge sensors to track facial expressions, eye movement sensors, sweat gland stimulation and neuro-electrical activity measurements.

Eye-tracking goggles are one of the most popular features of the lab as researchers gauge reactions to branding and advertising measurements. Eye tracking uses near-infrared technology and an HD camera to track participants’ gaze direction and quantifies visual attention as they view sample advertising.

One way Wen is using this technology is in analyzing advertising. She will show the participants two



versions of a commercial and see which one grabs their attention more. She can also track what the participant pays the most attention to, whether that is the brand logo, tagline or product image.

The eye-tracking glasses also allow participants to go to different locations. Participants can go to the grocery store, and if they pick up a yogurt brand, Wen will be able to see if they read the labels or look at the price tag. This research is game-changing in the advertising field.

Another lab capability is a facial expression tool measuring seven different emotions and 21 facial action units, giving lab technicians authentic understanding of participants’ feelings.



Galvanic skin response, another tool, measures skin sweat glands, specifically on the hands and feet, triggered by emotional stimulation.

The lab is also capable of using electroencephalography. EEG, a neuroimaging technique, measures scalp electrical activity associated with perception, cognition and emotional processes.

All of the lab features allow mass communications students to accumulate more accurate data than surveys that might be easily influenced by participants’ responses. Whether the participants intend to or not, the biometrics research reveals their true responses.

Students in the CIC have a competitive edge over students in programs at other universities with access to similar biometrics lab equipment.

Wen recently traveled to the University of South Florida, observing the biometrics lab housed in its business school. Biometrics labs are typically housed in universities’ business schools or departments of psychology. “Not many universities have this type of lab,” Wen said. “There are probably only around 50 labs like this.

“Out of those 50, less than 10 percent are in the school of journalism or college of communication,” Wen said.

The lab was built for the students, and Wen hopes that all students take advantage of their free access to it. The biometrics lab gives CIC students an experience and opportunity that only a few other students across the U.S. are offered.

The CIC faculty’s goal is to integrate the lab’s technologies into the classroom. Scott Farrand and Jason Porter, two J-school professors, are planning to bring their classes into the lab to work on students’ portfolios and design projects, giving hands-on

experiences and showing how people respond to their design projects.

The BaUX Lab’s next step is creating a VR eye-tracking room, one of the few VR research labs integrating eye tracking.

By adding eye tracking, lab technicians will track participants’ movements, showing what they are looking at and what draws their attention first.

Now, Wen and Porter are working on a mockup of an art museum for the VR room.

New biometric lab advances allow Wen to search for partnerships within the local community, like with advertising agencies and communication firms.

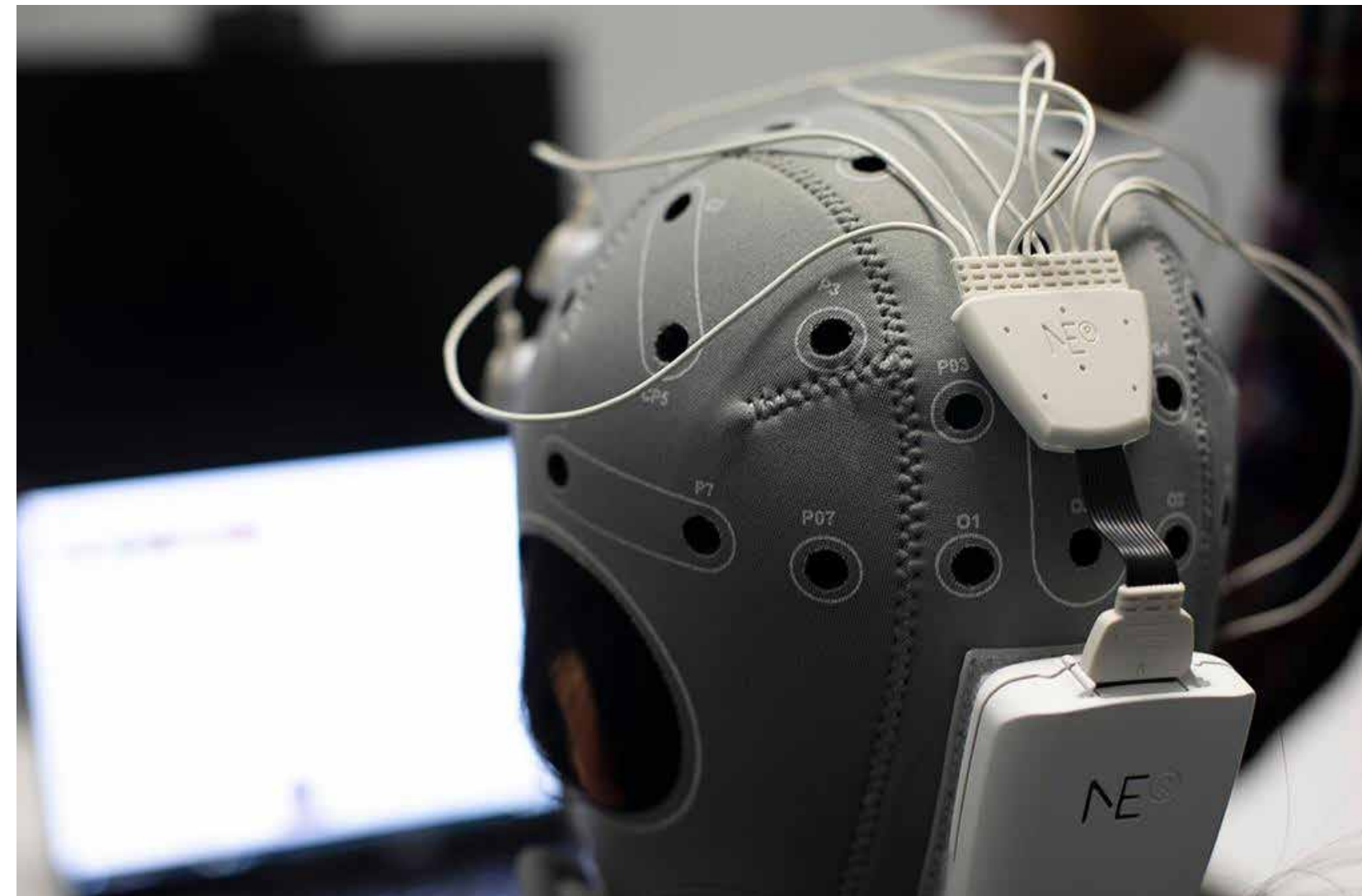
“Right now, we’re focused more on academic

research, but one of our goals is to move forward and try to reach out to advisory boards and industry partners,” Wen said.

The CIC is also looking inside the university. Wen plans to reach out to the College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, College of Social Work, College of Education, and Darla Moore School of Business.

This is only the beginning of the lab, and “I cannot wait to see how the future of this lab will transform the College of Information and Communications,” Wen said.

Story by Rachel Jackson



A CHANGE OF FIELDS

Two SJMC grads leave their careers as athletes to inspire others through visual communications.

Story by Rorie Amos

It's SEC Championship time. Here we go.

Mercedes-Benz Stadium turned into a sea of red and purple as fans filled in each empty seat eager to watch the 2022 SEC championship — Louisiana State University versus the University of Georgia. All that could be seen on the field from the top view were moving specs of gold and red as Jarray Jenkins ran 33 yards to a touchdown. His gold helmet reflected in the light, the purple LSU letters in bold, placed on the top to be seen by fans above, representing hard work and power. SJMC graduate Elijah Heatley knew the helmet's design well as Louisiana State University's graphic designer. "There's just something about that logo," he said.

Heatley gets up at 7:30 every morning, puts on his headphones, dims the lights and starts designing graphics that give off that same representation of hard work to new recruits, putting that same bold-lettered logo on everything he creates.

He got his start making graphics for himself when he played football at Blythewood High School. "I was still a high school teenager, so I was like, I need some photos you know, I need some graphics ... and it changed my perspective on a school."

Going through that recruitment process himself gave him a passion for the creative side of sports, and before attending USC, he committed to playing baseball at USC Sumter.

Across that same campus, an injured Zachary Kelley sat on the bench alongside the tennis court, out of sheer boredom, with a camera. He began photographing his teammates during matches. Like Heatley, Kelley left behind Sumter, and tennis, to

major in visual communications at USC. He is now the creative services coordinator for the University of Georgia. Kelley travels with the gymnastics team and does their photography, videography and graphic design.

"Expressions are some of my favorite parts," Kelley said, when talking about why he loves photographing gymnastics. "Some people tear up, some people scream."

Photography, in Kelley's opinion, brings a new intimacy to sports. He gets to capture the expressions the athletes make when putting in countless hours of work pays off.

"It broadens how we see things, not just as photographers but as spectators. You don't get to see the raw emotion that we see sometimes. If I'm right in the end zone at the game-winning touchdown, if you're in the stands you see everybody celebrating — you hear a lot of screaming — but when I'm on the sidelines, I'm seeing this guy cry because it was his first career touchdown." Kelley explained. The University of Georgia won 50-30 in the 2022 SEC championship. A month later Kelley pushed through a crowd of 200 people fighting for spots at the National Championship to get the perfect picture of quarterback Stetson Bennett's last game. Later on, having lunch with his boss, he stumbled upon a familiar picture on the cover of "Flagship Magazine". It was Bennett kissing the National Championship trophy through a fog of confetti, and it was Kelley's picture.

"It was eye-opening to see that there's so much more I can do. I'm not just limited to the sports I was doing

UGA Gymnastics, photo by Zachary Kelley

at South Carolina," Kelley said about the impact the experience had on him, which was, in his words, "a dream come true."

In a video of him at one of his first home starts his senior year playing football for Westwood High, Elijah Heatley, jittery and with a wide smile, talks to the interviewer about how it felt to win. He has that same excitement in his voice when he talks about turning that passion into design — in his own words, his "dream job." His love for recruiting and branding made sports a bonus for him, but the combination of all three makes it his dream.

"I come here every day, I'm laughing, I'm joking, and sometimes it feels surreal. I'm 23, and I'm already loving everything I do." Heatley says the love of sports matters a lot in the business of creating content, and that while anybody can create content, an interest and a passion shows through their work. "If you're not passionate, you don't take ownership and don't take leadership of what you do," Heatley said.

When UGA Gymnastics competed at LSU, the two content creators had dinner together. Four years together in all the same classes, and now they were reunited through their competing SEC teams. They probably talked about sports, and maybe trash talked about the championship, but they definitely reminisced about living their dreams.



Elijah Heatley designs graphics for recruits, official visits and social media posts.

GET TO KNOW LYDA FONTES MCCARTIN

USC welcomes next director of the iSchool

Story by Kayla Eddy



After 17 years at the University of Northern Colorado, Lyda Fontes McCartin is leaving the Rocky Mountains for the Palmetto State's CIC. Sunshine, school spirit and SEC football await her arrival as the next director of USC's School of Information Science (iSchool).

McCartin was the director of the University of Northern Colorado's Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

"There, I oversaw campuswide faculty development in pedagogy and assessment," she said. "So it's a very different kind of teaching where you're working with faculty to make sure that the students are getting a good experience."

McCartin emphasizes her commitment to enhancing students' learning experiences, preparing them for life after college.

McCartin has held a number of other positions at the University of Northern Colorado — from library practitioner to faculty member to department chair.

"The iSchool faculty and staff, Dean Reichert, and I are extremely pleased that Dr. McCartin is our new iSchool director," professor and interim director Karen Gavigan said. "Lyda brings years of experience in the field, research and teaching expertise, and strong leadership skills to our program. She will be an asset to the iSchool, the CIC and USC."

"USC is committed to promoting the dissemination of knowledge, cultural enrichment and quality of life for the state's citizens," she said.

McCartin is excited about the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy, Cocky's Reading Express, the Words and Warriors book club and the school's library program.

"These programs are really working to engage the community, and that was a big draw for me," she said.

McCartin hopes to establish the iSchool as "the destination program for students who want to impact technology, information industries and the library profession," she said, by prioritizing student learning enhancement and community outreach.

McCartin envisions getting USC's iSchool ranked No. 1 in the country, growing the school's Bachelor of Information Science program, she said. McCartin

wants to build partnerships with local businesses, providing students with valuable field experience, paid internships and post graduation job placement.

"We want to ensure we're a competitive program," she said. "We want to make sure students have the soft and hard skills that they need to get hired and be successful in those jobs."

McCartin plans to engage alumni with the question, "If you could go back and do it again, what would you do differently?" She hopes to learn from their feedback and make the necessary changes to improve student career readiness.

McCartin holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Meredith College, a Master of Library and Information Studies and a Master of History from the University of Alabama and a Ph.D. in Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership from the University of Northern Colorado.

Calling herself a "military brat," McCartin lived in many places, including Hawaii, England and Guam.

After years of travel, accommodating her mother's military career, McCartin landed in Virginia Beach for high school.

McCartin moved from Colorado with her husband Charlie, their two dogs, Chai and Louise, and their Eastern Box Turtle, JP. She is a huge reader, foodie and adrenaline junkie who enjoys snowsports, hiking and rock climbing.

"Colorado is a fascinating place because you'll be snowboarding and you think you're doing this really cool thing, and then you see a two-year-old fly past you," she said. "Same thing when you're hiking and someone's doing it barefoot, or you're rock climbing and someone's doing it without a rope." McCartin uses these examples to push herself harder.

After a cold and snowy winter, McCartin is ready to move to the South. She explains how selling and buying a house at the same time can be stressful, but she is excited to move into her new Lexington home and explore Columbia.

More than anything, McCartin is eager to engage with iSchool alumni, students and faculty members and find her place in the USC community.

VR: TODAY'S TIME MACHINE



Story by Dylan Ortuno

How a USC professor used VR to re-create Rome

Decades ago, it would have been outlandish to think about getting a lifelike experience of Rome viewed from the 1700s. Outside of art or literature, there wasn't a way of getting in touch with Italy, or really anywhere, in their past forms.

However, technology today has created a way to experience far-away, fantasy or historical experience from almost anywhere: using virtual reality.

Jason Porter, an instructor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and his research team received the Aspire II grant and used a combination of VR and USC library records to re-create 18th-century Rome from the eyes of a classical Italian artist.

The idea started from the research of Jeanne Britton, curator, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, on Giovanni Piranesi.

"USC has the entire [Giovanni Piranesi] collection, one of the few places in the world with the full collection, and [Britton] has been pouring through these volumes and digitizing them in order to make them more accessible for folks who don't have the full set," Porter said.

As they discussed Britton's digitizing project more, Porter realized that there was potential in reviving Rome through Piranesi's image beyond just the

records.

"What's really cool about his illustrations is that they had depth to them," Porter said. "They were full with people, with animals, with a lot of environmental elements that made the illustrations feel alive."

However, Piranesi added his own spin to his work in addition to re-creating the city.

"[The art was] all kind of fake, they're just based on reality," Porter said. "He took his artistic license and made things seem bigger, or taller, or put these massive things closer together to make the composition of the illustrations feel much grander than they were."

Porter, coming from an advertising background, saw Piranesi as an "advertiser" who was getting people in the 18th-century to come explore Rome.

Britton's prior research, which Porter described as finding Piranesi's "early examples of hyperlinks" left in the form of footnotes throughout his works that led to his other pieces, as well as the warped reality displayed in the art, led Porter to utilizing VR as a medium of displaying USC's collection.

"If [Piranesi] wanted us immersed in these things, making up these spaces by putting things closer together and making things bigger and larger than

they were, why don't we make a VR scene that allows you to go into the world that he created?" Porter said.

Porter, Britton and Evan Meaney, a USC professor in media arts, wrote the proposal for the Aspire Grant II.

"The Aspire II grant is an internal grant awarded to folks who are developing interdisciplinary projects with different colleges," Porter said.

The professors used the grant to make a VR game where users were able to travel through Piranesi's world. However, it did not just stop at the visual re-creation.

"Not only could you go into his world in this VR space and explore what he would have made, you're also going through all of his annotations to figure out where, how, was the Pantheon made," Porter said.

"Scholars debate it all the time, so we figured, 'Let's let other people debate it, and depending on the

26 annotations hidden throughout, it's up to you to figure out your own opinion.'"

After working on the game through the latter half of 2022, Porter and team have completed the game and await USC approval to showcase it on VR stores.

Porter says that while the project was more of a hobby-like experience for him, he hopes to take his knowledge and apply it to future classes looking to use VR technology as a means of displaying information more interactively.

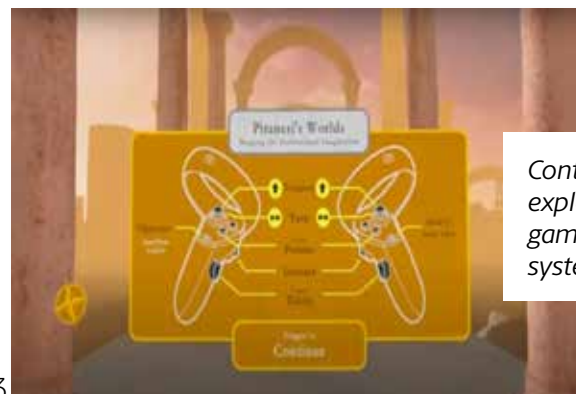
"The future jobs with VR are developing," Porter said. "When we can then translate what we're doing and help students develop prototypes for virtual and augmented reality experiences, that would be the goal."



Inside the VR museum displaying Piranesi's artwork. Each work had a narrated, interactive script for players to learn more info from.



VR re-creation of Piranesi's Pantheon. Each letter represents an annotation left by Piranesi, close to the same spots that they would have been found in his artwork.



Controls used to navigate the VR game exploring 18th-century Rome. Currently, the game is playable on the Oculus family of systems.

no
name,
no fame.



America's Deadly Small Talk

SJMC Public Relations Class Advocates Anonymity for Mass Shooters in the Media

Did you hear about that shooting last night?

The question is pretty familiar. It's nearly ingrained in small talk in America today. The perpetrators of mass shootings are often included in those discussions. When asked how they would prevent targeted violence and terrorism, it occurred to a group of nine students that this pattern in their conversations needed to change. The students in professor Ernest Grigg's Public Relations Campaigns class believe that by decreasing the regularity of mentioning shooters in these conversations, mass shootings will become less regular. The team devised a plan to avoid sensationalizing mass shootings through mitigating the media contagion and copycat effects of mass shootings. The plan laid out how to navigate keeping the public informed while removing the name and the fame attached to these all-too-regular news stories. In fall 2022, the campaign titled "no name, no fame." was created.

The University of South Carolina offers a variety of public relations campaigns courses, including one with an option to take it for two semesters. JOUR 531 involves entering the national Invent2Prevent Competition. For the last six years this course has produced teams placing among the

top three in this competition. The McCain Institute, EdVenture Partners and Credence Management Solutions financially support the teams in this program run by the Department of Homeland Security.

The teams enrolled are tasked with creating and implementing their own dynamic products, tools or initiatives to address acts of targeted violence, hate or terrorism in their communities. The competition provides high school and university students with an opportunity to create and implement something impactful.

Attempting to reduce mass shooter notoriety is how the team of Mafe Balthazar, Jillian Brown, Elise Buchanan, Gracie Gipson, Nora Klas, Ciara Laney, Olivia Leon, Anna Mlodzinski and Ariel Pearson chose to address the competition's proposal. The team devised a plan to alter the way these crimes are discussed and worked to do so in tandem with South Carolina journalists and professors in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

"It was such an open concept to combat domestic terrorism," team member Elise Buchanan said while explaining how the campaign came to be.

"We went into research and noticed during our research process that we'd ask each other, 'Did you hear about that shooting last night?' or 'Did you hear about this shooting or that shooting?' and it was just so prominent. We realized there had to be some way to combat this."

The team decided to ask journalists, media outlets and press organizations to limit sharing any identifying details of mass shooters. Research on copycat and immediate contagion effects reveals the danger of highly focusing on the perpetrator of this type of crime. They used several tactics to limit the potential for copycat inspiration.

They started the process by just having conversations with journalism professors and journalists in the state to bring attention to the issue. The team knew they were going to need to find a middle ground as they could not blatantly request that journalists alter their practices completely.

"Obviously, we're all students coming out of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. We've worked with people in the journalism world. We knew it wouldn't be effective to put hard restrictions of absolutely no naming or sharing information," said Buchanan. "It's very contingent on a case-by-case basis." The team recognizes that there are times it is imperative to share the whole story. They tested what journalists would be receptive through these conversations and created guidelines. Much of this testing was internal at the university.

Buchanan shared that she had conversations with J-school interim director Van Kornegay about the

guidelines and his feelings toward them. He spoke with some professors, and, from there, the guidelines were altered and later sent to journalists. A lot of journalists explained the difficulty of adhering to new guidelines after years of reporting a certain way, so they also planned to reach students. The team created a training program to be used in the classroom to guide the next generation of journalists. They also published an opinion editorial in three South Carolina newspapers and created social media accounts, a website and an online petition. The change.org petition was used as a numerical measurement of public support for the campaign and revealed its popularity, having been signed over 900 times. They advertised through social media and put much of the campaign's budget behind boosting their social media posts.

The group was chosen as one of the competition's three finalists, and five team members presented it to the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C. The efforts to promote the movement landed "no name, no fame." with the second-place award at the Invent2Prevent competition. The campaign ended with this win, but their call to journalistic reporters, news stations, press associations and similar media outlets to change their mass shooting reporting standards has not.

Story by Sarah Fulwider



(l to r) Mafe Balthazar, Elise Buchanan, Gracie Gipson, Nora Klas and Ariel Pearson accepting their award in Washington, D.C.

“You can write about anything if you have basic skills in reporting,” Isabelle Khurshudyan, SJMC ’14, chief of The Washington Post Ukraine bureau, said during last winter’s visit to the USC campus. Her career stretches from writing about college sports at The Daily Gamecock to reporting on the war in Ukraine.

Khurshudyan started in journalism at USC by joining The Daily Gamecock, saying she spent more time writing stories for the student newspaper than she did on any of the work for her classes.

At first, Khurshudyan’s articles were about specific games—a big win for the Gamecocks or a hard loss. These stories took her two hours to write. “The story that published yesterday about Ukraine’s force-quality problem story took about two months to report,” she said. “It was two months of talking to people to make sure the sourcing was buttoned down. I mean, I think I started to do that sort of thing here, and that sort of journalism.”

In school, Khurshudyan decided to take sports reporting a step further, investigating bigger stories. One enterprise story she wrote got everyone’s attention.

“Starred and Barred — Confederate flag prevents USC from hosting NCAA Tournament,” headlined The Daily Gamecock in March 2013.

“I wrote it a significant amount before it was published, and I had Steve Spurrier on record. Spurrier said in my interview they should take it down, and you know that quote was then picked up by other media, and that story got a lot of attention,” Khurshudyan said.

Through internships with ESPN and the Daily Press in Newport News, Virginia, The Daily Gamecock and freelancing articles for The State newspaper, she was able to land a job post-graduation reporting on the Washington Capitals hockey team for The Washington Post.

Khurshudyan knew nothing about hockey going into the job but was determined to learn. She spent extra time watching game highlights and getting co-workers to give her hockey 101 lessons, approaching colleagues and simply saying, “teach me.”

Due to her Ukrainian roots and knowledge of Russia, Khurshudyan convinced her boss to move her to The Washington Post’s Moscow bureau as a foreign correspondent after six years of reporting on the Capitals.

Khurshudyan was in Moscow for two years before the war started, making it impossible to report on Ukraine out of Russia. So she moved to Ukraine to report on the war, writing to appeal to the emotional side of her Western audience.

“You know, I think you have to bring a human element in, but it’s still a war,” she said. “And trying to think, ‘how do we humanize the story? How do we find one family in that apartment building that was hit?’ Then we can talk about the reach of Russian missiles or the reach of this war.”

“That’s part of how you get a Western audience, an American audience, to care is you really relate it down to something they can recognize, right? A husband, a wife, a family, and they connect with that more than maybe some big idea,” Khurshudyan said.

Khurshudyan writes human interest stories and reports on major news from the war relying on hard sources.

“People won’t always give up information or go on record. Some stories take longer because of this. Eventually, people step forward,” she said.

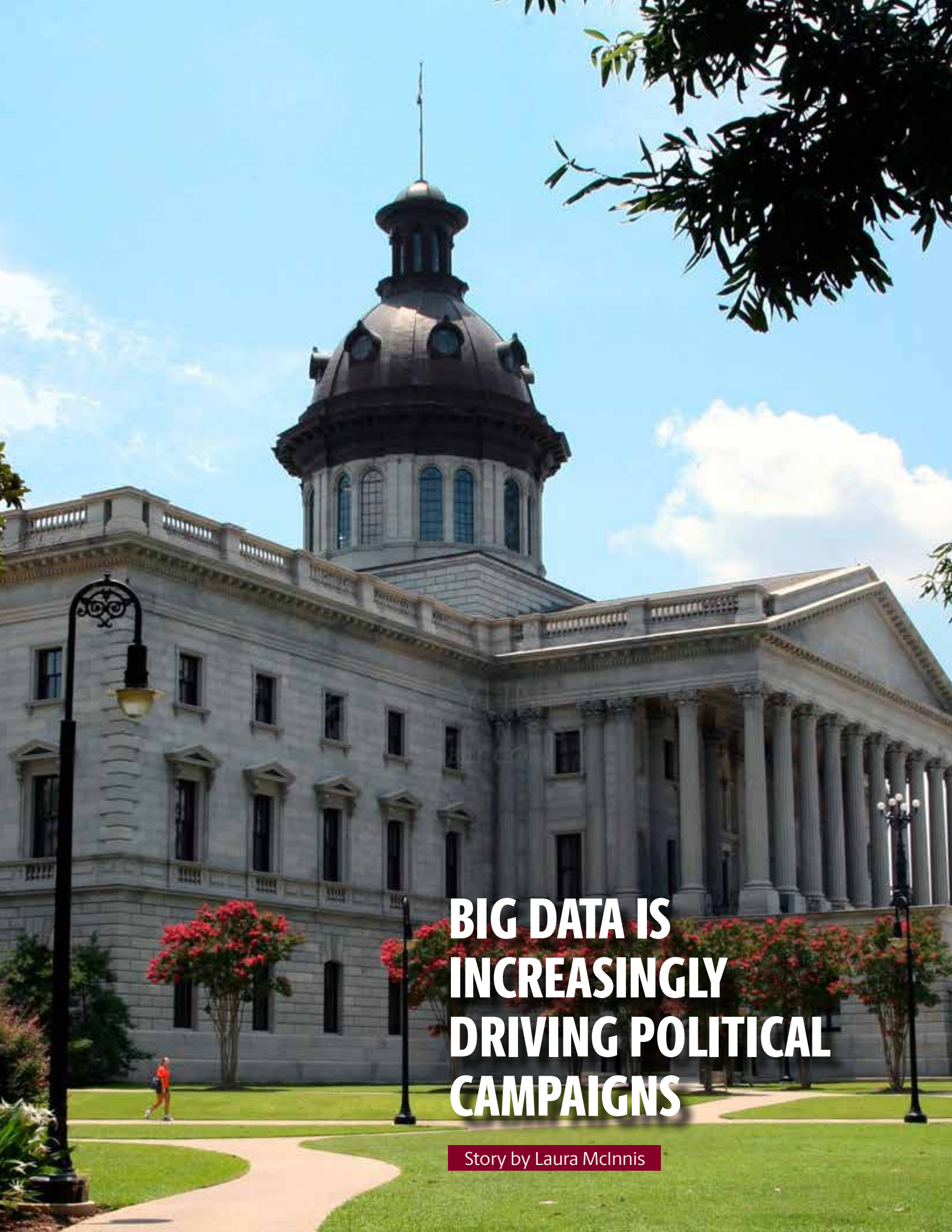
“They want to talk about the fact that people sacrificed their lives, that their friends sacrifice their lives defending something, and they want to share those stories because they see those men or women as heroes,” she said.

“How do I write a story? I think about it as a kind of a complex, some of it is talking to sources and hearing about things and just the daily conversations I have where an idea will spark,” Khurshudyan said.



FROM PLAYING FIELD TO THE BATTLEFIELD

Story by Anna Lee Litchford



BIG DATA IS INCREASINGLY DRIVING POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Story by Laura McInnis



CIC assistant professor Jacob Long studies big data and over-reliance in political campaigns.

Most people tune into political campaigns interested in who is winning and what that candidate is going to do while they are in office, but CIC assistant professor Jacob Long is focused on what was able to create that successful campaign and the methods used to bring that candidate to the top.

In addition to teaching duties, Long researches the impact big data makes in campaign methods during recent elections. “The nice thing about certain aspects of politics is that we have really high-quality data that just so happen to be big that can be helpful to answer our questions,” says Long. The research can be used to determine which doors should be knocked on and how to approach specific subsets of people during campaigning.

As applied to political campaigning, Long focused on how big data benefits candidates’ overall results. Voter registration lists provide accurate information on a large population, providing valuable insights about voter subsets needing candidate focus

BIG DATA IS BIG ENOUGH THAT YOU NEED MORE THAN THE USUAL METHODS TO ANALYZE IT.

for a specific campaign. “You may start with a list of all the voters, and then you are trying to get additional information and kind of connect it back to that original thing,” says Long.

National campaigns rely more on big data when campaigning than local city or state elections. By using big data, candidates can be more precise in how they use their time. It allows them to better judge which houses to contact and how to expend resources

Compared to elections in the past, campaigning methods have changed along with society, Long said. Door-to-door campaigning is still used, but email and text have increasingly grown. Only using big data to assess a probable election result can backfire on a candidate. “Many people believe that one of the things that got Hillary Clinton to lose was an over-reliance on big data,” Long says. When focusing on who to specifically target for campaigning, finding swing voters in the middle can sway election results, Long says.

“If you imagine that every person in America is a line in an Excel spreadsheet, for each person, they basically try to come up with

a percentage chance that they’ll vote for your candidate,” said Long. When campaigning, candidates don’t benefit from spending outreach time on voters that have already made up their minds.

Using big data in campaigns is on the rise with each new election. As an outsider looking in on these campaigns, gaining access to big data is getting more difficult. “Campaigns don’t happen that often, and so it’s harder to, you know, say, ‘We use big data on this campaign and we won,’” Long says. Traditional campaigning still remains tried and true: using polling and surveys to determine which residents to reach out to and predicting election results. External factors like the condition of the economy can contribute to the success or failure of a candidate’s campaign, too. In recent election polls, the returned results were very accurate, which is encouraging to the candidates, Long says. “I do not expect polling to drop off just yet.”

ALUMNI *Notes*

1990s

Jeff Wilson, APR '92, will receive the Excellence in Public Relations Award from the Richmond, Virginia, chapter of the Public Relations Society of America in June 2023.

Cindy Davies, MLIS '96, assumed the role of vice president for academic affairs and workforce development at Western Piedmont Community College after 25 years of service in two of South Carolina's technical colleges.



2000s

Jared Kelowitz, '02, started as director of marketing and business development at The Capital Corporation. TCC is a middle-market investment bank that specializes in helping business owners sell their businesses. He is in charge of marketing TCC and assisting in optimizing the brand presence of its clients.

David Smoak, '02, was recognized with two gold awards in the New York Photography Awards. He also received two Official Selections in the International Photography

Awards for his work with Kubota and radio station The JOY FM.

Mary-Kathryn Craft, '06, was named director of communications for the South Carolina Association of Counties. She also serves as president-elect on the Board of Directors for the International Association of Business Communicators/SC Chapter for 2023.

2010s

Patrick Sutton, '10, was elevated to vice president of communications for Ava Labs, a team pioneering Avalanche, the fastest blockchain technology in the world.

Mary Pusteria, '11, relocated back to South Carolina and is continuing her work in digital marketing remotely for Clever Devices, a provider of technology solutions for the public transportation industry.

Jason Broughton, '14, was elected to the International Library Federation as a member of the Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section Standing Committee.



Thomas Bell, '15, was recently promoted to deputy director of public information for Horry County.



Jennifer Faulkner, '15, has joined the development team at the South Carolina Honors College as the assistant director of alumni relations and stewardship after working in nonprofit communications for seven years.

Ariyana Gore, JD '18, was appointed as an assistant United States attorney for the District of South Carolina.

2020s

Nicholas Papadimas, '20, started as an assignment editor at WBTV in Charlotte.

Branden Birmingham, Ph.D., '21, became an assistant professor at the State University of New York, Fredonia.

Meredith Hooper, '22, started at the USC College of Education in the S.C. School Improvement Council Office as the communication coordinator.

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MODERN MEDIA

Alumnus' Donations Fund J-school Media Advertising Sales and Technology Course

USC alumnus John Byrne, president of Columbia-based Byrne Media, makes donations to the J-school to specifically fund its media sales course -- JOUR 499, Media Selling and Technology. Fall 2023 is his third year as a course benefactor.

"Sales is the key factor in a media company's success," Byrne said while explaining why he supports the school's media sales course. "And sales is the best way to earn money in a media career."



Byrne Media started in 2006 and now has 12 media properties. In South Carolina, the company operates a television station in Hilton Head and radio stations in Greenville/Spartanburg, Myrtle Beach and Hilton Head. The company also owns television and radio stations in Madison, Wisconsin, and a radio station in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.

"If you are not running a local media company hyper-locally, then you're in big trouble in sales," Byrne said. "Today, if you work at a news station, you are selling

media for the local news, sports, websites and social media assets -- all sponsorable platforms that can generate more revenue for your client."

Byrne Media has struggled when hiring new college graduates as sales representatives for its media companies. Byrne said, "We don't have time to train them for six months without them producing revenue. They need to be productive quickly." That's why Byrne supports media sales training as a J-school college-level class using donations from his family foundation, he said.

"Students must understand that they cannot go out into the world today and make \$30,000 and survive," Byrne said. "They must be money motivated. The more they sell, the more they make. The world of media sales is great business."

"I had the opportunity to speak to Dean Reichert at a university baseball game," Byrne said. "We discussed the importance of knowing how to sell media. Today, with social media exploding and all the areas media touches, you have never had such a great opportunity to sell media."

"Many of our industry partners are looking for talent in media sales," CIC Dean Tom Reichert said. "And we're excited to work with John to raise awareness among students about these opportunities. His financial support helped us get our efforts off the ground."

"If you can afford to give back to the institution that helped you get to where you are today, you should," Byrne said about his decision to donate to the



TV personality Bill Dance and John Byrne at the ICAST Show in Orlando

J-school. "The university has a tremendous amount of momentum and I want to be part of that."

The J-school's JOUR 499 Media Sales and Technology course taught 31 students in the Spring 2023 semester, with a similar number enrolled for the upcoming fall class. Students learn the benefits for advertisers delivered by each type of media, the capabilities of customer relations management software, and the nine steps of effective selling -- from prospecting to closing and servicing the clients. Students read advertiser case studies, write sales proposals, and role-play sales presentations.

The class receives visits by local media and ad agency executives explaining what they look for in effective media sales representatives. In the spring semester,

at least four of the students were hired in media sales before the semester ended.

"We aim to introduce students to what real selling is all about," Byrne said. "That means face-to-face, old-school selling. Not emails. Not text. Reach out to prospects on the phone. Set up a face-to-face meeting and provide client-needs analysis. Let the client talk, and by the end of the meeting, there is an avenue to say we'll come back in four days with a plan to grow your business."

Byrnes lives in Charlotte with his family and loves USC baseball, he said.

Story by Danielle McNaughton

“If you can afford to give back to the institution that helped you get to where you are today, you should.”



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