

THE CHICAGO EGYPTIAN

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December 2011

A publication of the Southern Illinois University Foundation • www.siuof.org

Issue 14

Big Shoulders Bolsters Creative Family Environment



Pictured from left to right are: Matt Mueller, Editor (B.S. 1996, Mass Communication and Media Arts); Karen Kurland, Scheduling Department (B.A. 1995, Mass Communication and Media Arts); Dave Burkett, Vice President, Post Production/Partner/ Editor (B.S. 1986, Mass Communication and Media Arts); and Brad Fox, Vice President/Partner (B.S. 1979, Radio-Television).

The most recent of seven SIU Carbondale graduates to join [Big Shoulders Digital Video Productions](#) has served in pertinent roles for programs ranging from “Walker, Texas Ranger” to “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and “The Jenny Jones Show.” However, it may be surprising to discover which work environment she relishes the most.

Karen Kurland, a 1995 mass communication

and media arts alumna, joined the Big Shoulders scheduling department in September after a six-year stint with “The Oprah Winfrey Show.” And it has quickly become her favorite.

“All of my jobs were a blessing in disguise. The glitz and glamour is wonderful,” she says. “But we truly have a pleasant group of creative people. We are like family here and

Big Shoulders has made me a happy person.”

Lee Hart, an audio engineer at Big Shoulders, concurs. The 1992 mass communications graduate takes extra satisfaction in knowing that SIU Carbondale graduates contribute to the company’s success.

“The running theme at Big Shoulders is that we work for our clients, not for owners or management. Everyone collaborates beautifully and we enjoy the freedom to be creative ... as long as our clients are happy,” he says. “Once we discover that someone attended SIU, we share recollections of professors and experiences at the campus television station. It’s always nice to share similar college background with fellow SIU graduates.”

Big Shoulders is one of the country’s leading providers of video services to national television networks, programs, agencies, and corporations. In 16 years of existence, it has become Chicago’s largest independent production facility. Big Shoulders is located on the 37th floor of the iconic John Hancock Building, in the space formerly occupied by WLUP, a popular rock and roll radio station in the city.

The seven graduates at Big Shoulders aren’t

necessarily linked through their class years, eras or experiences at SIU Carbondale. But they are all thriving as a result of the culture this company has developed, according to Brad Fox, vice president and partner. The 1979 radio-television graduate says Big Shoulders offers creative challenges daily.

“We have a variety of assignments and diverse clients. When you are that diverse, everybody is working on unique projects,” he says. “Every day is a unique and fun experience.”

The uniqueness can include anything from videotaping celebrities like President Barack Obama or Chicago Bulls star Derrick Rose, a company CEO, or trains and buses as part of a contractual agreement with the Chicago Transit Authority.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Alumni Support Allows Students to Engage in ‘Chicago Ideas Week’

Bill and Gail McGraw took their support of Southern Illinois University Carbondale to a whole new level by opening their home to two honors students.

Thanks to the couple’s generosity, Kimberly Elsenbroek and Ari Weiss were able to take part in “[Chicago Ideas Week](#)” in October. The event brought “the world’s top speakers together with Chicago’s best thinkers to create an ecosystem of innovation, exploration, and intellectual recreation,” according to its website.

After hearing Mayor Rahm Emanuel speak about the event, Bill McGraw, a 1969 journalism graduate, thought SIU Carbondale needed to be involved.

“I knew Chicago-area universities would be represented at the conference. SIU Carbondale has equally impressive students, and they deserved to be there too,” McGraw says. “I told Kristine McGuire, [constituent development officer for the SIU Foundation], ‘Send as many students as you want. We will put them up in our house. We’ll pay for their transportation and any expenses they incur.’”

Elsenbroek and Weiss accepted the invitation and traveled to Chicago to take part in the event.

“I thought it would be a great opportunity

to open my mind to other disciplines, and learn how I can relate what I’m studying to other people with different interests,” Elsenbroek says. “I’ll be graduating soon, so it will be helpful for me to have a wider perspective.”

The event included a variety of speeches and events with special guests like Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, CNN correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta, and actors Joan Cusack and Fran Drescher. Elsenbroek says her favorite speaker was former U.S. President Bill Clinton. The plant biology major says she took full advantage of the opportunity to network with different types of people.

“My favorite part of the event was being able to interact with people from so many different fields. We got to listen to talks, discuss the topics, and share our different viewpoints,” Elsenbroek says. “It really helped me see the complex issues that are out there for me to start solving, and the vast amount of opportunities I have once I graduate.”

McGraw also attended the event, and shared in the students’ excitement.

“It was engaging and thought-provoking. These young people from SIU had a tremendous opportunity to learn,” McGraw says. “We had a discussion over dinner

and the entire conversation was about the event. It was an exciting experience for them.”

Weiss, a political science major, says he learned a great deal from the event, but he also learned an important lesson from his host.

“Mr. McGraw helped me see how important it is to have pride in my University,” Weiss says. “I know I can do great things with my degree from SIU. He helped me realize that.”

That is the type of impact McGraw was hoping to have on these students. And he hopes other alumni will take heed, and follow in his footsteps.

“Alumni need to give back. Education is the only way to get ahead in this world, and without private support, many students wouldn’t have the opportunity to attend college,” McGraw says. “SIU gave me a platform on which to build. That platform engaged me while I attended the University, and it continues to engage me to this day.”



A SALUKI YOU SHOULD KNOW

James Rousonelos: A Renaissance Painting Technique



“I transferred from Western Illinois University to SIU and Patrick Betaudier was one of my first professors. Patrick was the biggest influence and force in my artistic career,” he says.

A professional artist since 1975, Rousonelos is an online instructor and owns JSR Art Studio in DeKalb. He specializes primarily in oil paintings, drawings and prints that in his words: “depict the human condition in our society.” Rousonelos has exhibited his work all over the country, concentrating primarily in the Chicago area, where he created, marketed, and sold his work. And he estimates that he sold approximately 3,000 pieces of his work, which includes various forms of drawings, prints, and photography.

Rousonelos has created portraits on commission for private individuals and organizations. His work is in private and corporate collections, and he has completed artwork for such companies

as McDonald’s headquarters in Oak Brook; Wolfe-Lipson Metals, Inc. in Evanston; Colby’s of Northbrook; Marshall Field’s in Skokie at the Old Orchard Mall, which is now Macy’s.

Graduates of Southern Illinois University Carbondale often speak fondly of their former professors. In the process of forging a special bond with his mentor, [James Rousonelos](#) acquired a painting technique that makes his work stand out among the rest.

A 1975 SIU Carbondale liberal arts graduate, Rousonelos followed the advice of his brother, Dean, to attend the University. Dean, a 1974 SIU Carbondale graduate, informed his younger sibling of advancement in the art department.

Rousonelos says he kept in touch with Betaudier periodically since graduating from SIU Carbondale in 1975. The SIU alumnus reunited with his mentor in 2000 during a specialized artist technique workshop in Joliet, and at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, while working on his master’s of fine arts

degree. Betaudier was a part-time, visiting professor in DeKalb, and his understudy continued to work closely with him.

In the process, Rousonelos became acquainted with “technique mixte,” a painting technique originated by Flemish artists in the 15th century. The procedure begins as an artist creates a finished charcoal pencil drawing, and gradually adds color through several layers of oil glaze. The layers are tinted, and Rousonelos uses earth tones initially, adding other colors with additional layers.

The artist works from background to foreground repeatedly to create a three-dimensional illusion.

“Patrick is one of a few painters who resurrected this technique. The results are just incredible,” Rousonelos says. “It’s like painting with gold because it’s so rich and can’t be replicated with any other technique. The finished product has this luminosity and a mysterious feel. But that’s the result of the time put into many layers of paint.”

Technique mixte is time consuming, which is one reason why many artists stray away from this process. Rousonelos estimates that possibly 40 painters nationwide utilize the technique.

“It is very time intensive. The drying time is slow and it literally adds up to 35-40 layers of paint in thin glazes,” he says. “It’s disappointing to people like myself who learned the technique with Patrick, and discover that other painters let go of it. It’s an invaluable technique.”



L.A. Theresa Espiritu

Rousonelos also considers his relationship with Betaudier to be invaluable. Betaudier, a visiting professor at SIU Carbondale for four years, was a driving force in establishing a workshop in a southwest suburb outside of Paris. During his junior year at SIU Carbondale, Rousonelos was one of only 18 artists accepted into the program. He subsequently studied for two semesters (1973-74) in Paris. The 18 students lived together in a French chateau on 10 acres of beautifully-landscaped land, courtesy of a French Countess. The SIU Division of Continuing Education helped to fund and organize this SIU extension program.

He still relishes the rare opportunity to study in Europe during his undergraduate college years.

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SIU Carbondale Grads are National Rugby Champions



The U.S. Women's Rugby National Championship team, including (from left to right): Brie McNally, Claire Ray, Dawn McKenzie, Sarah Walsh, Nova Riemer, Sara Corcoran, Lani Larson, Jacki Gloss.

Two SIU Carbondale graduates who competed on the University's rugby team are national champions

Dawn McKenzie, a senior account manager at Marketing Werks in Chicago who received a bachelor's in fine arts in communication design degree from the University in 2003, was a member of the [U.S. Women's Rugby National Championship team](#) that captured the top prize in November. McKenzie is #6 blindside flanker and team co-captain/club president while playing for North Shore.

Fellow SIU Carbondale graduate Nova Riemer, a 2004 biological sciences alumna, joined McKenzie on the national squad and the two are teammates for North Shore. Riemer's position is #4 lock, and she is the vice president of team fundraising. McKenzie and Riemer are former SIU Carbondale rugby players.

McKenzie was also joined by Marketing Werks co-worker Lani Larson on the team. It is estimated that more than 25,000 women play rugby in the United States.

Marketing Werks is a \$100-million, independent experiential marketing agency in Chicago. In September, Marketing Werks was the site of a reception for SIU communications alumni living in Chicago ([Chicago Egyptian, September 2011](#)). Marketing Werks was founded by SIU Carbondale graduates Julie (Moller) Guida '79 and Scott Moller '85.



Nova Riemer

James Rousonelos

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"A Memorial Portrait" (In memory of James Rousonelos' father, Stanley)

"This SIU artist workshop was initiated by Patrick. I can't speak highly enough about Patrick in terms of his teaching abilities and the knowledge you could acquire from him. It was like being trained by a master in the old traditional sense; much like the Renaissance period when apprentices were mentored by a master painter. Consequently, Patrick maintained a connection with people who followed him wherever he went."

And for Rousonelos, who says he started drawing at the age of 4, inspiration from Betaudier's techniques continue to be a driving influence. Betaudier passed away in 2009 in France.

"My parents both said that one should do what makes them happy in life. They recognized my natural talent. When I was 4, I told them I wanted to be an artist. Even then I was creating facial portraits at that age. That is the truth of the matter."

Two of James Rousonelos' portraits are featured alongside this story. To see more of his work, log on to: www.JSRArtStudio.com.

Holabird & Root Withstands the Test of Time

When a firm thrives for more than a century, it is a rare accomplishment during the best of times. But prospering in this fashion in the midst of our nation's current economic challenges is nothing less than extraordinary.

Holabird & Root, an architecture firm founded in 1880, is making this claim. In its 131st year of existence, Holabird & Root is believed to be one of the longest continuous architecture firms in the United States. SIU Carbondale graduate Jim Miller, a principal with the firm since 2007, attributes Holabird & Root's success to its flexibility.

"This firm has always adjusted to industry trends and reacted to the personalities of our staff and leadership," Miller says. "Previously, we were one of the largest healthcare design teams in the Chicago area. However, that is no longer the case due to the direction of the economy as well as the personality of the partners who took over the firm."

One of four partners at Holabird & Root, Miller comes from a family of architects. His grandfather and father are architects, and Miller decided to pursue a degree in architecture at SIU Carbondale, focusing primarily on interior design.

"My three partners and I have varying personalities and skills. We all bring something unique from a design and technical standpoint," he says. "Holabird & Root adjusts to the market and finds a niche for

ourselves to hopefully become a significant player."

Miller is one of two SIU Carbondale graduates at the firm. Renee Prusacki, a 2002 graduate and Du Quoin native, was attracted to the University after attending SIU professor Jon Davey's kid architecture program. She worked closely with the campus architect while attaining her degree. Prusacki subsequently earned a master's degree in architecture at Washington University in St. Louis, studied abroad, and returned to Carbondale where she worked at White and Borgognoni Architects for more than a year. With a desire to move to Chicago, Prusacki left Carbondale to join Holabird & Root in 2006.

"There are strong connections between SIU Carbondale and Holabird & Root. That's how I made my way here," Prusacki says. "I'm proud to be a part of a firm with a reputation for listening to clients. This results in establishing strong relationships with clients and a finished product that makes them happy."

Miller says the firm maintains core markets in higher education, urban master planning and corporate living environments. He estimates that the firm has more than 16,000 commissions. Holabird & Root has provided services for the Tribune Tower, the Board of Trade Building, and Solider Field, in addition to having a longstanding relationship with the Chicago History Museum.

Its current endeavors include a 17-story, multi-purpose building project with East-West University in the South Loop, and coordinating efforts with the Chicago Housing Authority to update, refurbish, and enhance residential units on the city's south side. Holabird & Root has also had the opportunity to update buildings on Michigan Avenue; it has been working on the Monroe Building for more than three years.

"We pride ourselves in returning to buildings that exist in a timeless fashion. Our firm proceeds to create designs that aren't necessarily trendy, but contemporary and longlasting," Miller says. "Our quest is to be good listeners and create solutions."

And the firm continues to expand its staff and client base. Holabird & Root is in the process of opening an office in Brazil and has established partnerships with firms around the world.

"Holabird & Root is one of very few firms in this position," he says. "Our culture has transitioned from being a tiny, Midwest-focused firm to branching out internationally. You need to be flexible and focus on adapting in the economy. We firmly believe that by looking beyond our borders and engaging in a specific region at the appropriate time, Holabird & Root will be successful. We have been very fortunate."

For more information about Holabird & Root, log on to: <http://www.holabird.com/>



Holabird & Root has provided services for the Monroe (top) and Kenmore Buildings in Chicago.

Big Shoulders

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Pictured from left to right are: Lee Hart, Sound Engineer (B.A. 1992, M.A. 1994, Mass Communication and Media Arts); Greg Glomb, Director of Photography (B.S. 1978, Mass Communication and Media Arts); and Paul Incpreo, Director of Photography/Partner (B.S. 1986, Mass Communication and Media Arts).

Fox also credits the Big Shoulders president Frank Hanes for developing a client-friendly model.

“Unlike other companies, we don’t have a producer on staff. Many of our clients are producers. But we are a resource,” he says. “Big Shoulders maintains an extensive database and can always find a producer whose skills fit a particular project. We have flexibility to customize the crew to serve the needs of our clients. We have more production staff than anyone in Chicago.”

And Big Shoulders offers ample opportunity for aspiring communication professionals to learn in this creative environment. The company offers an active internship program that recruits students from several Midwestern colleges and universities, including SIU Carbondale.

“We typically have SIU students here every summer semester. Additionally, students have completed externships here during the week of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Breaks,” Fox says. “Our students could potentially be on five different jobs during a given week. We are always interested in mentoring young people and providing them with a week of intense experience. Big Shoulders is an outstanding place to receive creative, hands-on experience.”

Frank Carta Knows the Importance of Giving

Alumni support is important to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and no one understands this more than Frank Carta.

The 1967 chemistry graduate has been a consistent supporter of his alma mater for more than 20 years, and all it took was one phone call from the SIU Foundation’s telefunder callers to convince him.

“I’ve been donating from that first phone call,” Carta says. “I owe it to the University. I had quite an experience while at SIU Carbondale, and I’m just paying back.”

The Foundation employs 70 to 75 student callers who solicit support for the annual fund. These students are interviewed and the selection process is competitive. Only students who demonstrate commitment to fundraising and upholding the highest standards of integrity are given the opportunity to work for the Foundation. The program helps raise money for scholarships, academic departments and facility upgrades at the University.

“The Annual Giving Program is the best way for the SIU Foundation to keep in touch with alumni and friends,” says Nanditha Balasubramanian, director of annual giving. “We hope you take the phone call and communicate with our student callers. They enjoy hearing each person’s SIU story.”

Just as most alums, Carta has fond memories of his time at SIU Carbondale, including a Homecoming in which his group’s parade skit won honorable mention.

“We were playing the Wildcats, so we had guys dressed as cats, and guys dressed as dogs,” Carta says. “The dogs put the cats in jail cells. We had a lot of fun with it.”



Student callers at the SIU Foundation

Memories like these keep Carta connected to the University. With gifts to both the General Fund and the College of Science, Carta hopes his contributions will help current students reap the benefits of a degree from SIU Carbondale.

“My degree opened so many doors for me,” Carta says. “It helped me get a job at Corn Products, where I worked for 34 years. Now that I’m retired, I’m very comfortable, and I owe that to my education.”

Balasubramanian says donors like Carta and his wife, Susanne, are vital to the future of the University.

“Donors like Frank and Susanne Carta are great examples of individuals who believe in giving back every year and have consistently demonstrated their commitment to SIU Carbondale,” Balasubramanian says. “Your support truly does make a difference in the lives of our students and is much appreciated.”

For more information on the Annual Giving program, contact Balasubramanian at (618) 453-4929 or nanditb@foundation.siu.edu.