

Auburn Reporter

A Magazine by the Department of Communication and Journalism at Auburn University

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Chris Walker A Snapshot of Auburn Photojournalism Professor



Since coming to Auburn University in fall 2007, Chris Walker is doing what he loves: teaching and interacting with students as a photojournalism professor.

"I have always wanted to be a college teacher," Walker said. "I enjoy people and I wanted to be around folks who could share what I knew with."

According to his students, it's easy to see that Walker enjoys teaching.

"Chris Walker is a great professor," Public relations major Katelyn Snyder said. "He is very knowledgeable and was always willing to make time to help when I needed it."

According to Walker, many of the professors in the Communication and Journalism Department at Auburn know a lot about the subject they teach.

"I look at our department and I see people who actually understand the business because they were out there doing it," Walker said. "Our kids leave our department with employable skills and that is immensely important to me." Walker believes that it is very important for students to be taught by professors who possess real world experience in their field.

"That was a big reason in me coming here," Walker said. "These people are workers and I wanted to be on a faculty with people who understood

what work was."

Walker was born in Michigan and attended a community college where he originally thought he would work in wildlife but changed his major to communication and journalism.

In 2002, Walker received a Master of Fine Arts from the Department of Cinema and Photography at Southern Illinois State University.

Walker has worked for many publications including The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune and The Associated Press.

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In 1995, through the Ernst Haas Awards, Walker was named one

of the world's top 100 emerging photographers. On the list that year included photographers from 13 countries.

Walker worked for five years at The Blade newspaper in Toledo, Ohio as a general assignment manager and was awarded a prestigious award for one of his stories. In 2000, Walker along with two other co-workers was awarded a finalist of the Pulitzer Awards for an investigative reporting piece that exposed the

United States Government and Brush Wellman Corporation for allowing defense contract workers to work in a knowingly hazardous environment. Brush Wellman Corporation was being bought off by the Government to allow plants to keep producing Beryllium bi-products even though they knew it was fatal. Beryllium dust has killed many of the company's workers. Walker interviewed many of these workers for his story.

"The two people I worked with on this, I know are gone," Walker said. "The third I suspect is gone so it's a devastating thing."

Walker is currently working on two long term projects, one which he started in 1989. He hopes to finish his series of portraits at county fairs within 25 years.

By COURTNEY TERRY

Journalism Major *Chasing* Job, \$50,000

Chamber of Commerce Video Contest

Despite having completed prestigious internships with NBC and MTV, creating and producing the Emmy Award-winning show, "NBC Interns," assisting in the production of ABC's "Washington Business Tonight," and having a feature segment air during an Auburn basketball game on ESPN, Carrie Williams' success has flown under the radar of the students and alum of Auburn University. However, all that may be about to change.

Carrie's production of a video for the US Chamber of Commerce's "Free Enterprise Video Contest," is receiving recognition and collecting views unlike any of the other finalists. On June 2, the video with the most views will be awarded a \$50,000 prize, and at the moment the senior in broadcast journalism seems in prime position.

"Winning would be great for the University, for the department and for Eagle Eye News," Carrie says. "I'm not in it for the money. I want my work to be recognized and the pride of a job well done."

The contest, which is being hosted by YouTube, challenged people to produce short, feature-story videos exemplifying people who are creating businesses despite the current economic slump. Carrie's piece features several different companies established by students at Auburn University.

Carrie hopes the recognition from her success in

the contest will raise awareness for Auburn University's television station, Eagle Eye News, as well as help her land a job after she graduates in May. In recent years, Auburn's journalism department has placed a number of female graduates at high profile

Winning would be great for the University, for the department and for Eagle Eye News.

positions around the country: Libby Amos, Fox 10 News Mobile, Melissa Johnson, NBCWSFA 12 News, and Lindsey McCormick, ESPN. Carrie's arsenal of production skills and her willingness to work hard put her in great position to follow in their footsteps.

When Carrie isn't promoting her video or hunting for a job, she remains hard at work as the station man-

ager for Eagle Eye News. As the station manager, Carrie functions as the liaison between the station and the university, handles the station's budget, reports for the station, coordinates promotions and manages the station's reporters.

"All of us on staff are literally at the station around the clock doing whatever we can to deliver the highest quality production possible," Carrie says. "Because the station is so small we all have to wear a lot of hats."

It has been this challenge that has molded Carrie into a well-rounded television producer eager to make the transition from the classroom to the newsroom. Carrie Williams is what you might call a one-woman production company.

To view Carrie's "Free Enterprise Contest" video, please search YouTube for "Auburn University students are free." For more information on Carrie, visit www.CarrieLeighWilliams.com.



By Jason Hermansdorfer



Ric Smith: The *Voice* of the Jordan-

Whether you know him as a professor, the internship guy or the voice of the stadium, Ric Smith is someone that has made a lasting impact on the lives of many students, faculty and community members.

Smith has been a dedicated faculty member here at Auburn University in the department of Journalism & Communication since the fall of 1992. Before joining the Auburn family,

Smith earned his B.A. at the University of South Carolina. He then earned his Master of Communication and Master of Edu-

cation degrees here at Auburn.

Smith has had the opportunity to work with four different Olympic games—Atlanta, Sydney, Salt Lake City and Athens.



“Once you’re in, you do a good job and you have the opportunity to continue,” says Smith regarding how he got the chance

How did he get such an amazing opportunity?

Auburn fell within the circle for the Atlanta games to look for recruits, said Smith.

“Once you’re in, you do a good job and you have the opportunity to continue,” says Smith regarding how he got the chance

to work with the other three Olympic games.

Smith is also passionate about his position as “the internship guy” or more formally known as the Director of Experiential Learning.

All PR, Communication and RTV/F major are required to complete an internship in order to graduate. Smith oversees every single one.

Smith says that the Summer semester is always the busiest with about 100 individual internships, followed by Spring then Fall.

“Announcing is the next big thing for me.”

“What’s great for me is to see students have these amazing internships,” says Smith.

He has seen students go to NYC, LA and even abroad for these internships.

During the fall when Smith isn’t working in his office, teaching or abroad with the Olympics, you can find him in the football stadium. Well, maybe you won’t be able to actually find him, but you will surely be able to hear him.

Smith has been the voice of the stadium since the start of the 2006 football season.

“Announcing is the next big thing for me,” says Smith. “It’s hard work but the people are terrific.”

Smith began announcing years ago by getting involved with the campus radio station, Weagle. He also announced for Auburn baseball for 5 years before he hit the announcing jackpot. He was offered the position of football announcer in the spring of 2006 and announced the A-Day game.

By Jason Hermansdorfer
“[Football announcing] is a lifelong dream,” says Smith smiling. “A once in a lifetime opportunity. And here I am!”



Dr. Waters at work in her new office

A Fresh Perspective

Newest Faculty Member Brings Fervor, Impact & Challenges to the Public Relations Students

“Dr. Waters is a wonderful professor and person,” says senior Meg Beasley. “She desires to see her students succeed and works with each of us personally to encourage our individual skills and aspirations. She is a very busy lady yet I have never seen her without a smile on her face.” Public relations students have been praising the newest faculty addition to the Communication and Journalism Department, Dr. Susan Waters. As her second semester comes to an end at Auburn University, she has presented challenges and brought joy and fervor to the department.

Dr. Waters was born in Philadelphia and raised in Cleveland. Like many of her friends from the suburbs of Cleveland, Waters had childhood aspirations of becoming a high-end fashion designer. She later traded in those dreams and found herself teaching adjunct at Missouri Southern State University. With knowledge of advertising and public relations experiences from working in downtown Cleveland, she recognized her love for teaching and received a master's degree from Pittsburg State University in Kansas. With steadfast determination, she ventured to the University of Kansas, embarking on obtaining a doctoral degree. Perceiving media as a “fascinating” subject, she began studying age-related issues

in TV commercials and other forms of media for her dissertation. She left the home of the Jayhawks (ABD) to teach public relations, advertising and communication courses at Pittsburg State University for two years and then moved to Missouri State University for five years while finishing her Ph.D.

Establishing, organizing and advising the new chapter of the Missouri State Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), she welcomed in about 40 to 50 students into the society. They visited different agencies, had speakers and went on field trips. Each year Waters challenged the students to plan one large PRSSA Day event, which proved to be successful and a good learning experience. While at Missouri State, Waters found a love for research and decided to explore the possibility of working at a larger research institution.

With her passion for research growing deeper, Waters sought out an institution where she could explore her research more thoroughly. She saw a job oppor-

tunity at Auburn University and pursued it. At the time, Dr. Debra Worthington was the chair of search committee.

“We both had gone to the University of Kansas,” says Waters, “so that gave us some common ground and helped move the conversation forward to learn more about Auburn as I was going through the process of interviewing. Debra was very helpful, knowledgeable and warm, a good indication of how the faculty would be at Auburn.” Along with being amazed at the beauty of Auburn University in the spring, Waters was also thrilled that “the public relations students are tops in the communication field here.” Because of this, she feels she can teach concepts at a fast pace in order to move forward more quickly than she has at other universities. Waters is proficient in Adobe Creative Suite and incorporates the programs into her assignments. This year she taught Public Relations Writing, Public Relations Campaigns, Social Media and Gender Communication courses. “Dr. Waters has been an amazing professor,” says public relations student Samantha Mays. “She always wants her students to do their best and is willing to help you any way she can. I have learned so much from her and am extremely thankful for all of her wisdom and support.”

By implementing service-learning into the coursework where students go out into the field and work with clients, she has encouraged and changed the perceptions of Auburn University's public relations students.

“Dr. Waters makes learning fun and attending class a pleasure,” says senior Nicole LaMontagne. “She is always upbeat and smiling, but better yet she is

She desires to see her students succeed and works with each of us personally to encourage our individual skills and aspirations.

truly invested in teaching her students the details about succeeding in the communication industry.”

Waters' 2010 noncompetitive grant that she received from Auburn this year for summer will help fund hours of research on aging and service-learning to write manuscripts for publication. Through assessing the collaboration of the work of the university, students, professors, community partners and their partnerships, she will teach others how to evaluate these relationships in her publications. Waters anticipates doing research in other fields