

# Advances

Volume 8, Number 1 Winter 2007 News from the IU School of Liberal Arts

## Communicating Without Boundaries

"Can you hear me now?" "Know what I'm saying?" "You talking to me?" "That's a big 10-4!"

We live in a world where communication is faster than light, where we can be connected simultaneously with people all over the globe, via voice, video, internet, cable, or satellite. Never before in human history has our species been able to communicate in so many media, with so

many cultures, while remaining in one place.

The way we, as humans, manage relationships, exchange information, learn and teach is changing with such rapidity that "Can you hear me now?" has become iconic for society's need to know that we are connecting—clearly, thoroughly and with complete understanding.

The earliest definitions of a liberal education

include the need for skilled written and oral communication. Language and cultural education are at the heart of this. All the rest flows from the communication skills that form a key foundation for how we learn to listen, speak, write and relate. As those skills develop, so too does our interest in how people communicate in different settings, like health and medicine or in

interpersonal and organizational communications. How can we help people of one language make their needs understood to speakers of another language? The School of Liberal Arts answers these questions and more.

This issue of *Advances* tells stories of four alumni whose education led them to careers where their communication skills contribute to their communities.

## For Your Health

By Josh Flynn



Barbara Silva, BA, 1983, Communication & Theatre

Choosing a workout plan or new regimen to fight flu season are personal choices. A little help from a friend, however, can make these decisions much easier.

If only we all had a

friend like **Barbara Silva**, whose job as health reporter for NBC affiliate WJAR TV in Rhode Island is to reach out to others about living healthier lifestyles.

Focusing on health for more than 11 years, Silva is the only television health reporter in her market. Reporting wasn't always in the cards for her, though. Initially Silva set out to be an actress, but things changed when she learned more about

broadcast journalism while in college. "As I got more into the telecommunications classes, it became apparent this was the career path for me," Silva says.

As a newscaster, Silva says there is no typical day on the job. "I am responsible for putting together at

least two stories a day and working with my producer to set up stories," she says. "We work autonomously from the rest of the newsroom—we like it that way." There is a constant stream of ideas relayed to them by experts and viewers. On occasion, she also fills in as anchor. "It's a welcome break from being out in the field. But, honestly, I prefer being out on the street, meeting people and putting together interesting health-related stories."

Silva credits two internships she held at IUPUI with preparing her and solidifying her decision to go into broadcast journalism. One was at an AM radio station. The other was at WISH-TV. "It was the internship at WISH-TV that got me started on the path. I was an 'on air' intern—they paid me, I think, 50 dollars a day for reporting. But to me it was huge! It was that internship and what I'd learned at

IUPUI that got me started. I am eternally grateful for that!" But every job has taught her something, from learning customer service skills at McDonalds to strengthening her writing skills at local newspapers and magazines.

In her spare time Silva likes to spend time with her children—she coaches her ten-year-old's cheer team—and tries to get out in the community, hosting health-related events.

Of Silva's many accomplishments as a health reporter, she says the awards from community organizations are the most meaningful. "The heart association, the cancer society, March of Dimes, local agencies providing mental health care services," she says, listing off a few of the many to honor her. "It means I'm making a difference!"

Silva is indeed a good friend to have, both on the job and off.

# Message from the Dean

Dear Friend,

Recently, I returned from a wonderful trip to Kenya. Along with Associate Dean **Dave Ford**, I had the opportunity to visit the facilities of the AMPATH program (academic model for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS) of the School of Medicine and to witness the signing of the first international strategic partnership for IUPUI. While watching IUPUI Chancellor **Charles Bantz**, Moi University Chancellor **Bethwel Ogot**, and **Michael Ranneberger**, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, sign the agreement, I could only think of the many opportunities that were being made available to our students and faculty. As a complement to the campus level agreement, it was my pleasure to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, countersigned by Chancellor Bantz, Vice Chancellor **Richard Mibey**, and **Peter Ndege**, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, of Moi University. The School of Arts and Social Sciences, like Liberal Arts, is the home of the social sciences and the humanities at Moi University.

Several Liberal Arts faculty are already collaborating with counterparts at Moi University. **Peg Williams** (Anthropology) has linked her section of A104, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, with a Religious Studies class at Moi. **Carrie Foote-Ardah** (Sociology) and **Jeanette Dickerson-Putman** (Anthropology) have joined colleagues in the School of Arts and Social Science in forming an IU-Moi Social Science Research Network. IUPUI social scientists will join their Moi counterparts in a research conference at Moi University in March—the IU-MU International Symposium on Social Science Perspectives to HIV and AIDS.

Some of our students have also experienced Kenya and Moi University. Last year, **Haley Billington**, with support from the Dean's Fellows International Scholarship, spent her second summer in Kenya conducting research on AIDS prevention. To make this type of experience possible for additional students, I'm pleased to report that we will offer two \$5,000 scholarships for study abroad at Moi University. These "Moi University Scholarships" will be administered through our African American & African Diaspora Studies Program. Director **Monroe Little**, Associate Dean **Rick Ward**, and **Amy Jones**, Assistant to Dean Ward, are working on implementing these additions to our overall support for students.

Partnerships like the Liberal Arts-Moi project are made successful by our ability to "communicate without boundaries." As you will read, this is a skill at which our alumni working in the communication and information technologies are adept. Also included in this issue is a memorial tribute to **Louise Reiberg**, a dear friend of the school and the widow of English chair **Rufus Reiberg**. Her passion for a life well-lived is a reminder of the many possibilities we have to embrace a lifetime of learning.

Best wishes,



Robert W. White  
Dean



After the official signing ceremony, Dean White (left) shakes hands with Dean Peter Ndege. Vice Chancellor Richard Mibey (left back) and Chancellor Charles Bantz look on.



Haley Billington with Henry, a Kenyan who she worked with on both her trips to Africa. Henry is an AMPATH client who takes agricultural classes; they are pictured on his farm.

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for more information.

# Mass Communication



Hiking in the Andes: Shawn Harmon, at left, with wife Anne and daughter Kelly hiding behind her hood. (Daughter Erin is not pictured.)

What do the Town of Angelfire, New Mexico, the State of New York, Carter Blood Care, the Green Party, and the National Rifle Association have in common?

Give up? They've all purchased mailing lists from e-Merges.com, a company founded and run by Liberal Arts alumnus, **Shawn Harmon** (BA, Economics, 1984). e-Merges compiles public voter records, boat owner registrations, hunting license lists, pilot and aircraft ownership data and concealed weapon permit data from over 4,000 towns, counties, states, and the federal government. After gathering the information, Shawn reorganizes the data into a single common format, presenting clients with lists custom built to meet their needs.

e-Merges.com customers use the mailing lists for purposes as diverse as preparing jury selection wheels, promoting blood drives, building memberships, and gathering support

and dissent for proposed government legislation.

"Today, direct mail is sometimes called 'junk mail,'" Shawn says, "but it is not junk mail if the recipient finds it relevant to their life interests. e-Merges' lists ensure that people get mail that is relevant to their interests."

He adds that direct mail spans the centuries back to Ben Franklin who used catalog mailings to sell the Franklin Stove in the American colonies. Direct mail, he says, continues to be a money multiplier for the U.S. economy and an important way of getting information to the public.

Shawn reports that e-Merges' biggest challenge comes in navigating laws governing the use of data, which vary from state to state and list to list.

This challenge, however, cannot compare to the hurdles that Shawn faced on the way to founding e-Merges.

After completing his second BA at IUPUI—the first was in Political

Science from IU Bloomington—Shawn began a long stretch of sales jobs in Indiana with companies like RCA, Panasonic, and Pitney Bowes.

He admits to a proclivity for sharing his opinion often and bluntly. This, he recalls, resulted in the loss of 12 jobs in 12 years.

"I am not making this up."

It was a tough time which culminated in the revelation that he really wanted a job related to his degrees.

Shawn left Indiana and moved to Washington D.C. with his wife, **Anne**, and two small daughters. He got, and kept for five years, a job on Capital Hill selling registered voter lists and campaign software to politicians.

"But, I got canned there, too."

Struck by the entrepreneurial "bug" from early on, Shawn delivered papers as a kid and remembers his first business plan as a failed endeavor having to do with reselling IUPUI hotel rooms. This business-minded drive was the source of his next

revelation: it was time to stop working for others and to try working for himself.

Seven years ago, with this in mind, the support of his family, and \$30,000 drawn on credit cards, e-Merges.com was born.

"These days, I love my boss and my boss loves me," Shawn laughs.

Shawn chalks up much of his ability to succeed in business to the advent of the internet which, he says, provides an avenue for entrepreneurs who do not fit the mold.

Neither Shawn, "the guy who couldn't play well with others," nor e.Merges.com, the idea that combined existing, publicly-available resources, new technology, and customization, fit the old

**"You don't have to be the cookie cutter to make it in America anymore."**

mold of success.

It's evidence, Shawn says, "that you don't have to be the cookie cutter to make it America anymore."

Shawn's broad range of customers and life story demonstrate what it does take to make it in America—determination, personal vision, and one really great idea.

*Advances* is a publication of the IU School of Liberal Arts Office of Development & External Affairs.

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# Putting History to Work



Kevin Drawbaugh, MA, History, 1992

A trip to the IUPUI Natatorium with his wife, an avid swimmer, back in 1987 was an eye-opener for alumnus **Kevin Drawbaugh** (MA, History 1992).

Having just moved to the city to work for *The Indianapolis News* as a business reporter, Kevin and **Margaret** were getting to know their new city and settling into a Lockerbie apartment. One day Margaret, who was teaching at an IPS school, convinced Kevin to go for a swim with her, and he was amazed to discover IUPUI—a full blown university campus, practically in their front yard.

"I thought, I should really take advantage of this!" recalled Kevin, who now works as a reporter for Reuters, the international news service, in Washington, D.C.

His interest in history led him to the School of Liberal Arts and the new

master's degree program in American History, where he came under the tutelage of some extraordinary professors. "**Peter Sehlinger** was my thesis chairman. He really guided me through the five years it took me to finish the degree. He

and **Sabine Jessner** became close friends. We still get together from time to time."

In an article Kevin wrote for *The News* in 1994, he said, "IUPUI opened up so many new horizons for me. I learned to speak Spanish. I traveled in Mexico and gained new insights into the history of my country and others. More than anything, though, I learned the joy of pursuing knowledge for its own sake."

Kevin's path as a business and economics reporter came naturally. As a youth, he was always involved in writing for newspapers. His first job after graduation from American University with

a BA in economics in 1982 was at a small newspaper in Virginia. From there he moved on to another paper in Maryland, then to *The News*.

Reuters hired him in 1994 in the New York City bureau, where he spent a year before transferring to Chicago. From there, he went to Reuters headquarters in London, where one of several opportunities included a "writing sabbatical" and publishing a book, *Brands in the Balance: Meeting the Challenges to Commercial Identity*. Afterward, he became a corporate trainer and traveled throughout Europe, running business journalism training courses for Reuters reporters in Madrid, Milan, Frankfurt and other cities with large bureaus.

He noted that his history degree has helped him professionally.

"History reveals a lot. Things that seem 'new' sometimes really aren't if you look at them in historical context. Plus, knowing that context gives me more perspective on events and helps me understand their origins. It's made me a better journalist, and the work I did on the degree definitely improved both my research skills and my writing."

For the last few years, Kevin's work focused on finance and regulatory issues, a topic he came to just as the Enron scandal broke and has followed since then. Recently, he began a new assignment for Reuters, still covering business issues, but now as a congressional correspondent on Capital Hill.

The Drawbaughs have two sons, ages 9 and 12 and reside in Falls Church, Virginia.

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# Disaster Recovery



Colleen Smith, BA, English, 1979

Damage from the high winds that hit downtown Indianapolis last spring was extensive, especially to the high rise offices in Indianapolis' Regions Bank Building (formerly the INB Building). Offices on several floors were virtually gutted as windows collapsed and contents were sucked out. It was tax time and the attorneys, accountants and financial advisors whose offices were emptied by nature's wrath found themselves facing catastrophe. No phones, no computers, no faxes (no files). In industries dependent on communicating with the customer, these companies were left without any way to do business.

That's when alumna, **Colleen Smith** (English, 1979) is at her best. As Vice President of

Customer Support Services, it is her job to muster the technological resources of e-Gix, a telecommunications firm that serves customers across the country, to fix clients' voice and communications problems whenever and wherever they occur, no matter the cause.

When the storm hit Indianapolis, her team of crack professionals worked with those affected and managed, within days, to get their businesses back on line with customers and clients. She says, "It was a team effort that restored services and allowed these businesses to regain access to their networks, emails, and voicemail. The team involved not only our employees but also our partners and distributors. It was a tactical and

strategic mobilization that resulted in quick results and appreciative customers".

Whenever someone asks what kind of job an English major can do, they should take a page from Colleen's book. An aspiring TV journalist and daughter of a judge, she took her father's advice to heart—study what you love, get good grades, and everything else will fall in place. She loved English and writing. Poetry and literature enriched her soul. As an undergraduate, her poetry was published in *genesis*, Liberal Arts' student literary magazine, and was inspired by such great teachers as Mary Louise Rea, who demanded the best writing and encouraged her creativity.

Her first job out of college wasn't in a typical "writing" field, but her communication skills set her on a fascinating trajectory in the telecommunications industry. She could talk to people. Her special talent for understanding complex issues and translating those issues into solutions that fulfilled people's communications needs took her from the first call center she worked in (Before Cable) to her work today,

managing a team of support people whose job is to assist small and mid-size businesses in their communications processes. As she describes it, e-Gix is able to provide a kind of "one stop shop" for business communication needs. Her job is to ensure that customers fully understand the offerings, capabilities and use of eGIX services, as well as to be available when there are problems with clients' technology.

"I have to understand

Whenever someone asks what kind of job an English major can do, they should take a page from Colleen's book.

how the technology works in order to be helpful. Often, I need to act as the translator between the tech staff and the clients. My Liberal Arts background, and many years in this industry, have given me the skills

to do that," says Smith.

So when the accountants and attorneys lost the means to communicate in the aftermath of last spring's storm, Colleen and her team were there, understanding the needs, finding the solutions and fixing the problems. That's what a degree in English can do.

Want more news? E-mail [LibArts@iupui.edu](mailto:LibArts@iupui.edu) to subscribe to the Alumni E-mail Newsletter!!

## Louise Reiberg (1917-2006)

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by Amanda VanDreumel



**Louise Reiberg** was not a person to go unnoticed. From poetry and book readings to taking painting classes at the Art Center, she was very active in the Indianapolis community and always sure to stand out in a crowd. Some might say she stood out due to the brightly colored silk scarves that habitually adorned her shoulders, but the people close to her will tell you that it was her

vivacity and enthusiasm that made Louise Reiberg one of a kind.

Louise graduated from Michigan's Alma College in 1939. After a few years of teaching; she married her husband, **Rufus Reiberg** with whom she had three children, **Robert**, **Judith**, and **Dorothy**. The young family eventually moved from Michigan to Indianapolis, where Rufus became the chair of the Department of English in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI.

As a mother, Louise was nurturing as well as devoted to helping her children develop fantastic imaginations. She made storybooks for her children, illustrating them herself. Her dedication to her children reached out into their extra-curricular activities, she was involved in the Cub Scouts with her son, Robert, as well as the

Girl Scouts as troupe leader for Judith and Dorothy. Robert recalls that growing up, Louise made dinner every night so that the family could sit together and share their days with each other.

As the children grew older, Louise created a group for the faculty wives in the English Department. She created a drawing club while she attended classes at the Indianapolis Art Center. Louise enjoyed painting with oils, sculpting and using clay. In addition to visual arts, Louise enjoyed attending book and poetry readings.

She shared this interest in literary performance with her husband Rufus who founded a series at IUPUI that, upon his retirement, became the Rufus Reiberg Creative Reading Series. Over the years, Louise attended as many of the

series events as she was able while also supporting the series financially.

This past summer, the annual events became the Rufus and Louise Reiberg Reading Series. At the first performance of the academic year, English Professor and Series Director, **Karen Kovacic** planned to announce the series' new name with Louise sitting in her regular seat in the front row. Unfortunately, Louise passed away just days before. Instead, Louise was remembered at the reading with a special tribute.

Louise leaves behind a legacy of love and acceptance, generosity and grace. Her passion for the arts will always be remembered with the reading series, and the oil paintings and the sculptures that she worked on in life