

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

# Meeman Matters

Newsletter of the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media

December 2016

## Blame it on Rio

### Students say Olympic trip a career boost



PHOTO ROXANE COCHE

**UofM journalism student Catrell Maclin and Kendra Douglas of UNC Chapel Hill interview Australian archer Taylor Worth this past summer while covering the Olympics in Brazil.**

**BY KEVIN EDWARDS**

When 14 University of Memphis journalism students flew off to cover the Brazil Olympics this past summer, they were all a bit unsure of what to expect.

After all, none spoke Portuguese. Some had never left the boundaries of the United States. Some were questioning how such an experience would ever translate into something useful.

But after six weeks in South America, all the students returned confident that the once-in-a-lifetime experience was a huge boost to their careers in journalism.

One of them was Chip Williams, a journalism student from Huntingdon, Ten-

nessee, who went on the trip to “to gain valuable experience working alongside some of the best sports journalists in the world. And I wanted to experience a new culture and get outside my comfort zone.”

Williams covered basketball. He got the chance to interview U.S. men’s team player Kevin Durant, and he got to report on some of the best basketball players in the world.

The UofM students joined students from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill to work with the Olympic News Service, which provided new reports on the games to news organizations around the globe.

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# Fulfilling fall leads to a promising new year

We have had a full and fulfilling fall semester at the newly branded Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. At the first of the semester, we celebrated the triumphant return of faculty leader Roxane Coche and 14 of our students from their work on the news team of the Rio Olympics. In October we enjoyed a fabulous alumni awards banquet. In November Joe Hayden and 60 of our news students participated in Electionland, working with 12 other universities along with ProPublica and others to monitor voting on Election Day.



**ARANT**

We just concluded two faculty searches, one for the advertising position vacated by the unexpected death of alumnus Ron Spielberger, whose gracious presence and institutional memory we sorely miss, and a second search, when dear friend and alumnus Darrin Devault left his online public relations coordinator position for an administrative post at UT-Knoxville.

As we return in the New Year from our holiday break, the journalism faculty will receive assignments for our reaccreditation self-study review. We will spend the next year and a half preparing for a site-team visit from Accrediting Council for Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

It seems as if we just finished our reaccreditation review, but that was 2012 when Penn State Dean Marie Hardin led a team of five reviewers to kick the tires and look under the hood of our journalism, public relations and advertising programs to see if we were still upholding the ACEJMC standards of professional media education. The 2012 site team gave a positive re-

view of all aspects of our programs.

In 2013 we also had a second site-team review, this time by the Public Relations Society of America, which sent a two-person team for our program's recertification. UofM PR faculty members Dan Latimore and Rick Fischer as leaders in the educators group of PRSA helped develop standards for public relations curriculum, and for decades we have had a PRSA-certified public relations major.

Why do we go through all this effort for program accreditation and certification? I was reminded recently when doing a reference call with the faculty adviser for one of our job candidates. My colleague told her doctoral student that she could be confident in the quality of our program because we were ACEJMC-accredited and our curriculum and department had met the national standards for a quality professional media program.

Likewise our students can be assured that the professional education they receive at the University of Memphis will prepare them for professional media practice. To meet the standards of accreditation review and to prepare our students for the current media environment, we are constantly assessing, updating and improving our curriculum. In addition to our existing majors in journalism, public relations and advertising, we will add creative mass media. Creative mass media allows our students to specialize in the visual side of media presentation. Be assured, this new major will undergo the same rigorous accreditation as the existing areas of media studies.

Thank you for your generous support for our programs and helping us provide a quality education for media practice.

Happy New Year!

**David Arant is Department of Journalism and Strategic Media chair.**

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### NPR executive coming to UofM in February

National Public Radio executive Keith Woods is the featured speaker at the 2017 Norm Brewer First Amendment lecture, an annual event dedicated to highlighting issues of free speech and free press.

Woods has been vice president in diversity in news and operations at National Public Radio since 2010.

The lecture is set for 6 p.m. Feb. 28 at the University Center Theater. The annual lecture started in 2011 and it is named for the late WREG commentator Norm Brewer who died in 2010 after decades reporting and commenting in Memphis.

### Hrach's 'Riot Report' book released in Sept.

Journalism faculty member Tom Hrach released his first book, "The Riot Report and the News: How the Kerner Commission Changed Media Coverage of Black America" this past September.

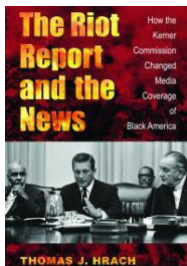
The book is an examination of the 1968 Kerner Commission developed its media criticism, which is considered a milestone in the history of journalism. The book offers a critical look at the report and offers some praise for the late Otto Kerner, governor of Illinois, who was the commission's namesake.

The book was published by the University of Massachusetts Press.

### SPJ chapter represented well in New Orleans

The UofM Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists was well-represented at the 2016 Excellence in Journalism conference in September in New Orleans.

Representing the UofM journalism department were SPJ president Lauren Berry, Lois Charm, Emilee Robinson, JRSM Chair David Arant and SPJ Adviser Tom Hrach.



# 'Eye of the Tiger' awarded to department superstar



PHOTO KRISTIE GOLDSMITH

**Roxane Coche receives the "Eye of the Tiger" award during the Memphis-South Florida football game at the Liberty Bowl on Nov. 12 from Kim Barnett, president of the UofM Alumni National Board.**

The recognition for Department of Journalism and Strategic Media faculty member Roxane Coche continues to pour in for her efforts in taking students to the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

Coche was recognized as the "Eye of the Tiger" at the Nov. 12 UofM football game against South Florida. The "Eye of the Tiger" was presented to her before the game by UofM Alumni National Executive Board of Directors President Kim Barnett.

"I was surprised but happy to receive the Eye of the Tiger award," Coche said. "I joined the UofM fairly recently and am glad I did. It's been a great ride so far, and I look forward to building other unique opportunities for our students, here or abroad."

Coche joined the faculty in the fall of 2015 after completing her doctorate in mass communication at the University of North Carolina. She is a sports journalist and also is faculty adviser to Tiger News.

One of the first things she did when she arrived in Memphis was to start working on a way to get UofM students involved in the Olympics. Her efforts resulted in taking 14 students to Brazil for more than a month to work for the Olympic News Service. The service provided news to media outlets around the world.

The UofM joined North Carolina as the only two schools involved in the Olympic program. The award was in recognition of her efforts.

"The Eye of the Tiger Award is presented by the UofM Alumni Association to individuals or groups who contribute to the welfare and traditions of the University of Memphis and to our community," said Garner Susanna Lesley, a student assistant in the alumni office.

Coche joins other recipients of the award this year this season, which were Firouzeh Sabri, Jasbir Dhalliwal, J. Helen Perkins, Warren Haggard, Gregory Washington and Linda Jarmulowicz.

# Students help the pros get the scoop on Election Day

BY SARAH BLEVINS

University of Memphis journalism students were encouraged to get involved in the 2016 election, not only to exercise their right to vote, but to volunteer to help professional journalists get the inside scoop on problems that happened on Election Day.

Journalism professor Joe Hayden helped to make University of Memphis one of 13 universities in the United States to participate in Electionland, an organization that monitored voting poll problems and issues on Nov. 8.

"This is the first of its kind experiment involving journalism and democracy," Hayden said. "Electionland gives student journalists the opportunity to help professional journalists find stories that would otherwise cost a professional several hours to get."

The 60 students and five faculty members who participated spent the day finding and fact-checking social media posts all day and shared them with professional journalists at such organizations as ProPublica, USA Today and Gannett.

That allowed those news organizations to follow story leads and ultimately turn a social media post into an investigative story.

UofM students who volunteered to be a part of Electionland were in charge of monitoring posts made on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter from individuals who posted or tweeted about issues they had at the polls on Election Day in Tennessee, Kentucky and Oklahoma. Students at other universities around the country covered the other states.

Students used TweetDeck and Facebook Signal to find posts that were related to voting poll problems via hashtags such as #maga, #Im-withher, #VoterIDIssues, #Down-



PHOTO ROBBY BYRD

**Journalism students Jerrica James and Mary Katherine Langley monitor social media on Election Day seeking clues as to how the voting was proceeding in Tennessee, Oklahoma and Kentucky.**



PHOTO ROBBY BYRD

**Meeman Journalism Building Room 212 was turned into Election Day headquarters on Nov. 8.**

Polls, #longlines and #rigged. Once a student found a post he or she deemed newsworthy, such as "I've been in line for two hours and still cannot see the doors of the polling place. #longlines," he or she was responsible for fact checking the information or picture posted.

Intel Techniques Search Tools was used to see if the person who posted about the problem on Facebook also tweeted the same issue

on Twitter. Fact checking added to credibility of the post and eliminated the chances of a hoax.

Once verified, the student shared the social media post along with the user's information and originality to the Check Verification Project online, where professional journalists could use information to start investigating whether a news story could be pulled from the Facebook or Twitter post.

"As a student who understands social media and how to find newsworthy tips, I got experience with data mining and was able to join a cause that saves professional journalists time by pushing them tips and leads to potential stories," Jacob Woloshin, journalism senior, said.

Hayden said the students were able to pass along valuable information, and the most interesting thing was a sign posted by a voter outside a polling place in Chattanooga that read "Make America White Again." Other leads included information on long lines and ballot problems.



# Club honors alumni, faculty

BY KEVIN EDWARDS

The Journalism Alumni Club Outstanding Alumni Awards dinner on Oct. 13 honored three outstanding alumni of the Journalism and Strategic Media department along with one current student and two faculty members.

Recognized were:

**David Arant**, professor and chair of the department, who received the Herbert Lee Williams Award.

"The alumni and I have become good friends, and it was very touching that they reached out to me and expressed their appreciation for what I've done," Arant said. "We really appreciate the support of all our alums. We have a good relationship as we have worked together for nearly eight years. It means a lot to me to be honored in the name of the original chair, Herbert Lee Williams, who basically set this department in motion."

**Jonathan Capriel**, journalism student and Daily Helmsman editor, who received the Emerging Journalist Award.

"It was really touching that people thought I deserved this, and it really meant a lot for me to see them," Capriel said. "I feel a big part of it is the journalism professors and The Daily Helmsman, both of those things I feel like really have put me where I am."

**Elise Mitchell**, a 1992 graduate and CEO of Mitchell Communications Group, who received the Charles E. Thornton Award

"My time here at Memphis was incredibly valuable," Mitchell said. "It was such an important time for me to continue to advance my career by being a student, and getting a master's degree pushed me to continue to always be a learner, which really served me well because then when I went and started a company and built a business, it always told me it's OK to say you don't know. ...You have to do whatever it takes to find out, and being a learning leader is a great thing to be. And the time here



PHOTO RHONDA COSENTINO

**David Arant, Frank Thorsberg, Megan Harris, Jonathan Capriel and Elise Mitchell are recognized at the Journalism Alumni Club Outstanding Alumni Awards on Oct. 13.**



PHOTO RHONDA COSENTINO

**Matt Haught receives the Pennington Award for Outstanding Mentoring.**

at Memphis really helped ingrain that in me."

**Frank Thorsberg**, a 1978 graduate and a data recovery specialist with DriveSavers Data Recovery, who received the Charles E. Thornton Award

"I was very humbled to be chosen for the Charles Thornton Award," Thorsberg said. "I worked with Charlie at the Press Scimitar. I saw what he did, and I can't express how gratified I am to be recognized. I am very, very humbled."

**Megan Harris**, a 2011 graduate and editor at 90.5 WESA, who received the Outstanding Young Alumna Award.

"I cut my teeth at The Daily Helmsman and really became a professional through the Department of Journalism at the University of Memphis," Harris said. "I am really grateful to be a part of both this awards banquet and to wear their seal for the rest of my life. It is wonderful to be a part of this and I am really thankful to have gotten started here. I really want to thank Candy (Justice) and her husband Bob (Willis) for being so patient, so kind, and being a part of all of our upbringing."

**Matt Haught**, assistant professor, who received the D. Mike Pennington Award for Outstanding Mentoring.

"It is truly the best part of my job making sure students grow and advance themselves to be everything that they can be and everything that they want to be," Haught said. "It's the best part of my job to see students learn something, to see them get it, and to see them become the best version of themselves."

# It's 'the new rock 'n' roll'

## Food writing class connects millennial students

BY ADDIE JAMES

Pamela Denney, food editor for Memphis Magazine and UofM journalism instructor, has taken her literary and culinary skills into the classroom.

Her goal is to teach young writers to do everything from describing a bowl of fruit to creating a metaphor for sweet treats like Oreos and Tootsie Roll Pops.

"I think food is the new rock 'n' roll," Denney said. "Food is something that is reconnecting people. I have this theory with millennials that many of them grew up not around a family dinner table. I think being interested in food and cooking is a way of bringing back a focus on family and close friends."

Denney's food writing class was offered for the second time in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media in the fall 2016 semester. The class is evolving each time she teaches it, and it has become so popular with students that it likely will be offered every year.

UofM senior public relations major Ana Alford gave the class a thumbs up.

"I would recommend food writing to students who are not only dedicated to their journey of journalism, but for the love and interest of a different perspective on restaurants and a variety of ethnic foods, as well as interviewing people for different pieces used in the class," Alford said. "I've enjoyed learning how to write in a new way with a different perspective."

The reason, Denney said, is that food connects people and memories.

"It speaks to so many people," Denney said. "There's this universal appeal to it. Everybody can remember tastes they have from childhood. It's so real."

Food writing is not just Yelp reviews, Denney said. It takes effort, skill and understanding.



PHOTO ADDIE JAMES

**Pamela Denney's food writing class speaks with Pastry Chef Konrad Spitzbart in one of the kitchens at the Peabody Hotel in October. The hotel offers a traditional English afternoon tea featuring sandwiches, sweets and scones.**

**"I think food is the new rock 'n' roll. Food is something that is reconnecting people. I have this theory with millennials that many of them grew up not around the family dinner table. I think being interested in food and cooking is a way of bringing back a focus on family and friends."**

— Pamela Denney, food editor and UofM instructor.

"The most important thing for a food writer to understand is the connection between food and culture," Denney said. "You can't write about food effectively without understanding that."

Denney grasped this concept when she started the food blog at Memphis Magazine 16 years ago.

"When I look back at all the writing I've done throughout my life, it was sort of leading me down that path," Denney said. "I have my own vegetable garden. It's the merging

of a professional and personal life."

Denney said food is the perfect multimedia topic for the journalism program at the UofM because it allows students to do hard and soft reporting.

"You have to use all your senses to report on it," Denney said. "I think it's fun. Sometimes learning can get too bogged down, and I've always been big on experiential learning."

Food writing can also prepare students for life after college.

"When you graduate from school and get a job in journalism, you don't get told what to do," Denney said. "You get told, 'Go do it.' I think the thing with food writing is that it's an entirely new topic, so you have to learn it quickly and learn to adapt."

Nevertheless, Denney said that food is better when a person takes time to appreciate it.

"So much of connecting with people is online, and food is so real," Denney said. "You can hold it and smell it. It's sense driven. Maybe it's romantic, but life's better when it's slowed down."



# Meeman 901 firm remakes itself

BY CODY PRENTISS

Meeman 901 Strategies, the UofM's student-run strategic media firm, decided that in the fall semester the group would re-brand itself.

The members started with a simple question. How do we turn the firm's youth into a positive? The firm's answer was a campaign that focused on the students' assets.

The 11 members of the firm launched a weekly MeeMo newsletter in October and regularly posted blogs about topics concerning journalism, advertising and public relations. A logo was created, which ended up being a cartoon tiger wearing sunglasses and holding a newspaper.

The projects were designed to get traffic to the firm's website and demonstrate Meeman 901 Strategies' strategic media prowess.

In just one semester, the group planned and filmed a firm video to recruit clients, redesigned its website and updated its branding on social media.



"Meeman 901 Strategies provides our clients with the unique opportunity to work with young, fresh minds that are eager to put the skills they have learned in the classroom to work," said Meeman 901 firm director Audrey Chaney. "We pride ourselves on maintaining excellent client relations and putting out quality work at a competitive price."

Meeman 901 Strategies was first formed in the spring 2014 with instructor Darrin Devault to give stu-



PHOTO GARRETT PILGRIM

**From left to right: Garrett Pilgrim, Jordin Howell, Kim Marks, James Huff, Kalyn Treece, Rachel Patterson, Arian Hill, Audrey Chaney, Landry Starks, Erin Ezell and Cody Prentiss.**

dents practical experience. Over its life, it's evolved from a class into a three-credit-hour student practicum. Kim Marks, the firm's current faculty adviser, said the long-term goal is to get paying clients along with paid positions such as those at The Daily Helmsman.

The group met every Monday and Wednesday morning with the mission of making the group a professional strategic media firm.

So far the firm has worked for several clients from on-campus and off-campus. An average day involved a combination of brainstorming potential campaign ideas, writing content and planning out client strategies.

Clients from the fall semester included Innovate Memphis, Pi Beta Phi and the American Heart Association. Several ideas were also planned but not every pitch turned into an ongo-

ing project. Getting new clients for the firm is an ongoing effort.

The current effort is for the Santa Clause Fundraiser and Bachelor Auction, an event that will benefit the Hope House charity in Memphis. The firm's plan is to spotlight each bachelor and tweet one until the day of the event. Campaigns like these give students an opportunity to work in a professional environment and have their work seen by a wider audience.

Design student Jordin Howell created a Snapchat filter for the event after the firm had a brainstorming session. She said balancing the firm with class work can be difficult, but said the effort is worth it.

"Sure, it doesn't seem like enough time in the day sometimes, but I get it all done," Howell said. "That's just life."

Meeman 901 Strategies is currently recruiting for the spring.

## Advertising senior Lee named to AAF's Most Promising student list

Brittany Lee, a senior advertising major from Memphis, has been named to the American Advertising Federation's 2017 class of Most Promising Multicultural Students.

The honor makes Lee one of the top 50 advertising students in the country and includes a weeklong trip to New York in February to network with advertising professionals. She is the sixth student from UofM to be named to the award list.



LEE

# Students get once-in-a-lifetime experience covering 2016 Olympics

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Roxane Coche, assistant professor in department, came up with the idea for the trip.

"In 2008, in Beijing, (the Olympic News Service) created programs to get students from English-speaking countries to come and cover the Olympics because they needed English speakers," Coche said. "And so I just sent a bunch of emails with that idea. At some point, one of those emails went through to the right person, and so we started negotiating."

The service wanted 40 students, but Coche said she just would not have the ability to get that many Memphis students.

"So I called my former dissertation adviser (at UNC Chapel Hill) and said, 'Hey, do you want to go to Rio?' And that's how we ended up with two universities doing it," Coche said.

Cody Prentiss, a UofM graduate student from Cordova, covered judo and wrestling for the three-week event.

"I'd go run after athletes after they were done fighting each other. Sometimes they would be a little bit bloody," Prentiss said.

Prentiss said his motivation to go on the trip to Rio de Janeiro was "partly because I wanted to leave Memphis for a while," and that he wanted, "the experience of covering the Olympics, something that size, and then actually covering a sports event because I hadn't done that before."

Prentiss agreed it would be a boost to his future career, wherever his journalism degree takes him.

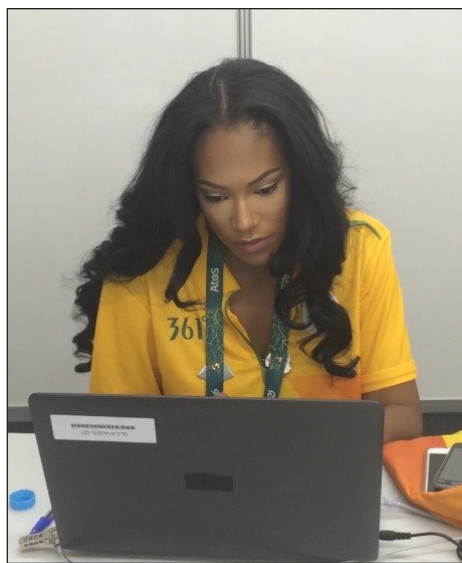
"I figured it was a good set of skills to learn and be useful to know, and also to be able to tell people I did it," Prentiss said.

Rebecca Butcher, a journalism student from Memphis, covered table tennis and the race walk. She



COURTESY PHOTO

**UofM journalism student Chip Williams interviews NBA superstar Kevin Durant, who played for the Gold Medal USA team, during a break in the men's Olympic basketball tournament this past summer in Brazil.**



COURTESY PHOTO

**UofM journalism student Sydney Neely works on an article as a reporter for the Olympic News Service this past summer in Brazil.**

has aspirations to be a broadcaster.

"Anything out of my comfort zone, anything that isn't local and even international, I'm all about,"

Butcher said. "I never saw myself as a sports journalist at all, more so just general news or politics, but it is really exciting."

The students stayed in Rio de Janeiro from July 29 to Aug. 22. The Olympic Games opened on Aug. 5 and closed on Aug. 21.

Coche said the students did a great job representing the department and the UofM.

"I heard only good things about them," Coche said. "They had fun, but they also worked a lot - very long hours - and were able to rise up to the occasion."

As far as future opportunities go, Coche said she is not giving up for the next Olympic games in 2018. Whatever the future holds, the students who went this past summer said the trip was a career-changing event.

"I believe, and certainly hope, that we laid down the foundation for groups to take unconventional study abroad trips in the future," Williams said.