advancing excellence

We hope you enjoy this edition of Advancing Excellence, the publication of the Office of Advancement at the College of Media. This publication provides an opportunity for us to celebrate our loyal alumni and friends who partner with us in achieving the ambitious goals for the College. Philanthropic support has a significant impact on our students. Gifts to the College help support scholarships, assistantships and awards, and fund summer media camps for high school students, professional internships and industry immersion opportunities.

The need for support from alumni and friends has become more urgent as state funding declines and tuition rates increase. Our partnerships with alumni and industry are critical as Illinois faces the state budget crisis. As we prepare for the University’s public launch of our forthcoming campaign, we will continue to focus on our top priorities for the College: transforming media education, building leadership in media scholarship, delivering exclusive University of Illinois programs, and expanding Illinois Public Media and public engagement.

We are thankful for our family of supporters who share our passion for the College of Media’s mission, our commitment to educational excellence and our common belief in the Illinois experience. The College is so much stronger because of your contributions, and we are grateful for your support. Your continued investment in us has a tremendous impact on our students, faculty and programs.

This year, the University of Illinois welcomed its tenth chancellor, Dr. Robert J. Jones, an accomplished scientist and research university leader from the University of Albany (SUNY). We are pleased to welcome Chancellor Jones to the Illinois family, and we are grateful for your support. Your continued commitment to excellence in media education possible for everyone, regardless of their background or economic status. You can learn more about our new Chancellor and his vision for Illinois by visiting www.oc.illinois.edu.

After serving for six years, Dean Jan Slater stepped down in May to return to the advertising faculty and to take on a new professional opportunity in the College of Business. We are grateful to Dr. Slater for her service and vision, and her efforts toward building a robust strategic plan and advancing the College of Media on campus and across the country. Interim Dean Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko and Interim Executive Associate Dean William Bernhard will lead our College during this transition. We welcome your continued partnership and input as we plan our next steps in the coming months.

Please contact us at media-giving@illinois.edu to learn more about the College of Media and how your support transforms the lives of future generations of students at Illinois.

Message from the interim dean

I have been both honored and humbled to work with the College of Media as Interim Dean in planning for the future. The College’s long tradition of developing and implementing programs that promote both innovation and excellence is outstanding. In today’s rapidly changing world, the programs and services offered by the College matter, perhaps more than ever before. The College is fortunate to have strong faculty with a wealth of research and professional experience. Its students and staff are truly extraordinary and units such as Illinois Public Media and CU-CitizenAccess educate, entertain, inspire and empower the public in our local community, across the state and around the world.

As many of you in media will agree, there has never been a more exciting or more important time to study media. The world of media is constantly changing and the public is eager to adopt new technologies.

In the few months I have been a part of the College of Media I have been impressed with the students, faculty, staff and alumni. My charge is to work in partnership with all stakeholders to determine how our campus can continue to be successful in journalism, advertising, and media and cinema studies. Our primary goal is to understand how best to support these critically important programs.

I am confident that our collective commitment to strong media programs will continue to make significant contributions to the University’s education, research and outreach missions.

I welcome the opportunity to connect with you and encourage your feedback. Please feel free to contact me at 217-333-2350, or curtiss@illinois.edu. Thank you for your continued commitment to excellence in media education, and for your generous support of our talented students, faculty and programs.

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko
Interim Dean

About the Interim Dean

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko earned a bachelor’s degree in Education from the University of London and a Ph.D. degree in Kinesiology from Purdue University. Chodzko-Zajko’s primary research interests are in the area of aging and health. He is the Shahid and Ann Carlson Khan Endowed Professor and Dean of the Graduate College at the University of Illinois. In his role as Dean of the Graduate College, he leads campus efforts in setting policies, defining standards, and enabling excellence in graduate programs, graduate research, and graduate student life.

In his professional life, Chodzko-Zajko remains active in the dissemination of information about healthy aging through his work on several major professional advisory boards. He served on the World Health Organization committee that developed the “WHO Guidelines for Physical Activity among Older Persons.” He was the Principal Investigator for a series of projects charged with developing a national strategy for promoting healthy aging in the USA. The “National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity among Adults Age 50 and Older” serves as a guide for multiple organizations, associations, and agencies, to inform and support their planning work related to increasing physical activity among America’s aging population.
alumni profile: judy hsu

1993, Broadcast Journalism; Anchor, ABC7 Chicago

As the crew prepares for the 11 a.m. newscast at ABC7 Chicago, its lively banter amps up the energy in the studio. The calm and ease with which Judy Hsu and Terrell Brown deliver the news hides just how busy things are behind the scenes.

After 15 years on the morning show in Chicago, Hsu made the move to the 4 p.m. news anchor role in November. It is the first time in 30 years that the female anchor chair has changed hands with the retirement of Linda Yu. “It’s a dream come true,” said Hsu.

Her own story makes fulfillment of that dream even more impressive.

Hsu was 11 years old, and spoke no English, when she immigrated to the United States from Taiwan with her family. Her father, a grand master in tai chi, was invited to teach in Chicago. The family settled in Chinatown, and Hsu set about learning the language — by watching TV.

Hsu links this early exposure to news, and to the stories being shared, with her desire to become a broadcast journalist.

“For me, there was only one choice,” Hsu said.

College was an expectation in her family, and the requirements were few — stay in Illinois and attend the best state school you can get into. The answer was simple: the University of Illinois.

“Finding out if this is really what you want to do,” Hsu said.

Her most vivid memories of campus center on the time she spent working at WPGU. She walked from Gregory Hall to the station and back at all hours of the day, working multiple shifts on-air whenever they would fit in between classes.

The experiences on campus — including an internship with the legendary Walter Jacobson at WBBM TV, the CBS station in Chicago — made her believe that the job she had dreamed about was possible.

Her parents were not as convinced. Hsu made a deal with them. If she didn’t have a broadcasting job within six months of graduation, she would attend law school. She even took the LSAT and made a backup plan to attend Loyola.

She didn’t need that backup. The first job offer in broadcasting came the day after graduation.

She spent a year and a half at WCIA in Champaign, Illinois, before moving to San Diego as a general assignment reporter. She quickly moved up to the weekend anchor desk and then to the 4 p.m. weekday news.

The call from Chicago came in 2001. She was thrilled to return to her hometown to work at a station she had watched while growing up.

Not only has Hsu covered just about every big Chicago story since then, she has also been a part of one. Her youngest child arrived a bit early – on the Eisenhower Expressway en route to the hospital.

Hsu’s reporting has earned her numerous accolades, including Emmy and San Diego Press Club awards. Her success has also allowed her to shine a light on causes she supports.

Hsu remains connected to her first neighborhood in Chicago through the Chinese American Service League, the largest social service agency for Asian Americans in the Midwest, where she chairs the advisory board. She serves as a role model for immigrants and feels it is a responsibility. Those new to the country can see themselves being successful and making a difference through her example.

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Hsu’s advice for young professionals: stay true to yourself, even if that means changing your career path when looking for a job. That lower stress level can make a difference in how you present yourself.

Hsu also feels that having a backup plan can work to your advantage. A “plan B” allows you to not feel as stressed when looking for a job. That lower stress level can make a difference in how you present yourself.

Hsu remembers watching Channel 7 as a child, including Yu on the 4 p.m. news. Yu was a role model.

“Appropriately, my first day of anchoring the 4 p.m. news was Thanksgiving Day. I have so much to be thankful for.”

The new schedule is a major change for Hsu and her family. She will now get to see her kids off to school in the morning.

“They won’t know what do to with me at the breakfast table,” Hsu said.

As a bonus, the schedule change will probably mean even greater community involvement as she will be able to stay up a little later.

“I’m looking forward to meeting even more people who are making a difference in our community,” Hsu said. “I can’t tell you how many story ideas have come from my engagement with community groups. After all, this is what we do: tell stories that matter.”
Joe Pedott is the man behind the Chia Pet, the Clapper, the Ove Glove and so much more. Those unusual products and their earworm jingles have become American icons. At least, that is what the Smithsonian thinks. Pedott’s papers and other materials related to the Chia Pet and the Clapper are part of the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History.

Pedott was born in Chicago and had a difficult youth. He survived rheumatic fever at the age of 11 and the death of his mother just two years later. At age 16 he had run away from home after an argument with his father and taken up residence at a YMCA.

The turnaround came with the help of SGA Youth and Family Services, known as Scholarship and Guidance at that time. SGA offered him financial assistance and counseling that kept him in school and working toward a college education. He chose the University of Illinois, in part because of the Navy Pier campus.

Pedott was interested in a career in radio and began working for a local station producing a children’s show — for no pay — while still a student. When he discovered that advertising agents were making 15 percent of what they sold, he changed his focus. He and a friend started their own advertising agency, Pedott & Peters.

Pedott was taking classes from Charles H. Sandage, the man many call the father of advertising education. He recalls that Sandage almost flunked him in one course.

“He expected more out of me because I had been working in advertising,” Pedott said. “I redid the work and passed.”

Pedott also taught a course for Sandage and received college credit for that work.

Pedott and his partner split a few years later, and Pedott went to work for a Chicago advertising agency to learn more about the business. He did very well and gave SGA back every dollar they had given him years before — with interest. The desire to strike out on his own and a visit to San Francisco to stay with a friend prompted Pedott to move west in 1958 and create his own agency. He credits his success with a belief in himself and his work.

“I never ask someone to invest in something I wouldn’t do myself,” Pedott said.

He put his own money on the line when persuading businesses to become clients. They would see how well the advertising worked and couldn’t walk away.

Pedott discovered the Chia Pet at a trade show in Chicago. The product was selling well, but the distributor was losing money. Pedott purchased the rights to the product and revamped the manufacturing. By removing some less-than-ethical middle managers, he had a money-making venture on his hands.

The same process resulted in the successful Clapper. Improving the product’s manufacturing and the technology resulted in another winner.

Through it all, Pedott kept grounded and true to himself.

“Believe in yourself and work hard,” Pedott said. “No one owes you anything. If you fail, that’s good. Failure strengthens you.”

His strong sense of ethics has benefited many. Early in his career he was approached by a friend for a donation in support of constructing a Hillel center at the University of California at Davis. The request: $25. Pedott didn’t have it but promised his next commission check. In those days, they usually amounted to right around that $25 request.

That next check was $25,000.

After a sleepless night, Pedott wrote the check to Hillel and sent it to the national office in Washington, D.C.

“I had to look at myself in the mirror,” Pedott said.

After receiving the check, Hillel called and offered to name the main room after anyone he wished. He chose to name it after his deceased mother.

Some 40 years later, Hillel began fundraising to construct a new $5.3 million house to which Pedott again donated. This time it was $1 million. Along with that donation, he made a simple request.

“If someone comes to the house and is hungry, feed them,” Pedott said. “If they need clothes, clothe them. If they need a place to sleep, give them shelter.”

He has also continued to support SGA through a fund at The Chicago Community Trust. He supports programs that offer educational and scholarship opportunities to underrepresented high school students interested in furthering their education.

“Joe has been a tremendous supporter of SGA Youth & Family Services for many years,” said Susana Marotta, president and CEO of SGA. “As a former client, he understands firsthand the impact of having someone there to support you just when you need it to help you achieve success. And he has paid it forward ever since by supporting hundreds of young people who have faced huge barriers and helping them realize their full potential by attending college or starting a career.

“It’s exciting to see the lives of so many people who have been transformed for the better thanks to Joe’s continued investment in our services. Joe genuinely cares, and his generosity of spirit inspires us all at SGA each and every day.”

Pedott is moved by the stories of those students on the South Side of Chicago. They are being affected by gangs and find it difficult to break away from those bonds. Students are making progress and going to college.

“They have to have three things,” Pedott said. “The aptitude, the desire and the strength to do it.”

After a rough start and some well-timed assistance, Pedott has led something of a charmed life. He has traveled the world and created many friendships in the process. He has met fascinating people — including President Barack Obama and Joan Rivers — and has the pictures lining his office walls to prove it. And he has shared his good fortune with others asking little in return, including paying for his nieces and nephews to attend college.

At 84, Pedott is starting to think about retirement. He would like to travel with his significant other, Carol. After five open-heart surgeries, he would like to start an exercise program, even though his energy and pace are a match for someone half his age. He still works 10-hour days.

And, he would like to spend more time on his foundations, especially in Chicago.

“These kids will be our future leaders,” Pedott said.

alumni profile: joseph pedott

1955, B.S. Journalism, major in advertising; owner, Joseph Pedott Advertising & Marketing; Joseph Enterprises, Inc.

Take one step inside the unassuming San Francisco offices of Joseph Enterprises, Inc. and you know what is going on. There are Chia Pets everywhere.

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an investment in excellence

The goals established in the College’s strategic plan, Building Opportunities for Excellence, include a strong emphasis on recruiting and retaining the best students and faculty and providing them with the resources necessary to be successful in an ever-changing global marketplace. To reach these goals, we must increasingly rely on support from our alumni and friends. Significant decreases in state support combined with rising tuition costs make private contributions even more critical. The following gift opportunities represent the current needs of the College of Media.

Endowed Professors and Practice
Endowed professorships give the College an important advantage in recruiting and retaining the most talented faculty members in the field.
Endowed Professors of Practice
Professors of Practice are industry professionals who join the classroom for short- and long-term teaching periods. Support of teaching innovation through recruitment of Professors of Practice will better prepare our students to meet the demands of an ever-changing, competitive media environment.

Endowed Scholarships and Internships
Endowed scholarships and internships allow the College of Media to attract the most talented students from around the country and around the world, and provide them with essential, real-world experiences to prepare them for successful careers. Many employers consider internships a vital part of a student’s education. Many internship opportunities are unpaid and, therefore, out of reach for many of our students needing financial support.
Endowed Chairs
An endowed chair represents the highest honor the university can provide to distinguished faculty members, and attract and retain exceptional scholars. Funding for endowed chairs provides partial salary support and assistance to faculty making innovative advances in their scholarly work. Funding for endowed chairs ensures excellence in research, teaching and innovation and contributes greatly to the College’s future growth and success.

Endowed Funds for Innovation and Research
These funds will support cutting-edge courses, curricula, faculty research, industry collaborations and student activities that will foster greater discovery and transform the delivery of content. These funds will also facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships with industry, and will allow the College to further distinguish itself as the leader in innovation and research in the emerging media landscape.

Digital Media Laboratory
The Digital Media Laboratory is designed to foster collaboration of high-end cross-disciplinary academic research. This research would include media and software industry development, production and online distribution of news and information, audience analysis, and social media content and measurement. This “collaboratory” will be designed to connect scholars, professionals and students who are committed to addressing societal demands, identifying and meeting challenges, and asserting international leadership in our evolving digital age.

The College of Media Leadership Council
Launched in 2013, the College of Media Leadership Council provides leadership in fundraising, advocacy and stewardship for the College of Media, and assists in achieving the ambitious goals set forth within the College’s strategic plan. The College is thrilled to partner with this talented and dynamic group of industry professionals in achieving the College’s immediate and long-term goals. The council is assisting the College in a number of initiatives that will allow us to fully optimize our commitment to students, faculty and research missions of the College. The College of Media is pleased to recognize the following alumni for their gifts of time, talent and resources through their service on the Leadership Council:
Dawn Gareiss Barrera ’85 B.S. JOURN
President, DMG Marketing Communications

Jane Phillips Donaldson ’67 M.S. JOURN
Partner/Co-Founder, Phillips Oppenheim

William D. Forsyth III ’86 B.S. FIN
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James E. Schlueter ’80 B.S. JOURN
Director, Technology Communications

Boeing Commercial Airplane Group

Jeanne Mariani Sullivan ’70 B.S. ADV
General Partner, Co-Founder
StarVest Partners, LP

First Brett Lerner Memorial Scholarship Awarded
Meet Walker Post, a junior majoring in journalism. Post was a natural fit to be awarded the Lerner Scholarship. He came to the University with a passion for journalism and has continued to develop himself as a professional, committed to studying both editorial and news broadcast.
When Walker learned he had been awarded the scholarship, he felt a bit overwhelmed. “It was a huge honor. I didn’t know Brett personally, but someone in our fraternity passed away over the summer. I could really empathize with everyone who was affected by Lerner’s passing. I learned the last couple of months that people really stick together and get through hard times together.”

We invite you to consider how you can make an impact on students and faculty in the College of Media. If you have interest in establishing an endowed fund for opportunities such as these, or you would like to explore other opportunities, please contact the College of Media Office of Advancement at 217.244.5466, or email us at media-giving@illinois.edu.

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When Roger Ebert hosted the first Ebertfest in 1999, Stephen Feder was a freshman at Illinois. Fourteen years later, Feder returned to Ebertfest as executive producer of his own film, “Kumare,” one of the last movies Ebert reviewed and selected for the festival.

“Having had that experience was a reminder that the world was open to thinking bigger than I had initially thought I could think,” Feder said. “Meeting him, talking to him about movies, being in the presence of someone who had been so widely influential in a particular field was inspiring. That’s why coming back with ‘Kumare’ was so special.”

In April of 2016, Feder returned to Ebertfest again as executive producer of the Richard Linklater-directed film “Everybody Wants Some!!”

“It’s a special movie to bring back to college because it’s a college movie,” Feder said. “It’s everyone’s story. You know these guys.”

Feder came to Illinois as a student not knowing what he wanted to do. While he had an interest in media, he did not know where his pursuit in education would ultimately land him professionally. Staying in-state for college seemed like a practical, smart move.

“Beyond a doubt it was the greatest decision I ever made,” Feder said. “My experience here made me who I am.”

“Beyond a doubt it was the greatest decision I ever made,” Feder said. “My experience here made me who I am.”

Feder’s end goal is a rather simple one. He wants to be the guy who people are rooting for.

“Every opportunity leads to something,” Feder said. “You don’t know where it’s going to come from, or who it’s going to come from. As long as you work hard and people want to be around you, and you show them you will do them proud no matter what, they will fight for you and they will want to help you and support you. That came from my work ethic that grew from here at the university.”

Feder added to his credits by helping out Cohen with prep on “The Dictator” and working on his own film “Kumaré” with director Vikram Gandhi.

The connections he built led to a meeting with Megan Ellison, who was starting up her company Annapurna Pictures. He was lucky enough to be one of the first few people hired at the company. That has given him the opportunity to work with filmmakers like Linklater and Wong Kar-Wai and led to him producing the film “Everybody Wants Some!!”

“Your education is preparing you for your first job,” Feder said. “When you’re looking for your first job, check your ego and pride at the door. You need help.”

He used every network he had — family, friends, parents’ friends, people he had worked with — anyone who could offer advice and help get a foot in the door.

“If you’re going to sit behind a computer and search for a job, it’s highly unlikely you are going to get anywhere,” Feder said. “People want to work with people they can trust. It is so hard to tell solely based on a piece of paper — a personal introduction from someone that the potential employer knows and respects can go such a long way. You can’t be afraid to ask for help.”

With the help of a contact, Feder was able to get work with “TheJennySpringerShow.” The show was huge at the time but also had high turnover, and working there was challenging. He jumped in and worked as hard as he could. His job was to find great guests — people who were willing to share their stories on national television in an explosive and wild manner. It was a creative job and a training ground for getting people to do the things you needed them to do, which is, essentially, what a producer does.

Along the way he developed a network of people who introduced him to other possibilities in Chicago, options he didn’t know about. He had to build his network all over again by working every connection and meeting to get to the next person. Those meetings and connections eventually led to Sacha Baron Cohen and his film “Bruno.”

“That was the game-changer,” Feder said. “Now I got my chance to work in movies.”

“Every opportunity leads to something,” Feder said. “You don’t know where it’s going to come from, or who it’s going to come from. As long as you work hard and people want to be around you, and you show them you will do them proud no matter what, they will fight for you and they will want to help you and support you. That came from my work ethic that grew from here at the university.”

Feder added to his credits by helping out Cohen with prep on “The Dictator” and working on his own film “Kumare” with director Vikram Gandhi.

The connections he built led to a meeting with Megan Ellison, who was starting up her company Annapurna Pictures. He was lucky enough to be one of the first few people hired at the company. That has given him the opportunity to work with filmmakers like Linklater and Wong Kar-Wai and led to him producing the film “Everybody Wants Some!!”

In reflecting on his time at Illinois, Feder noted two classes that were especially important and helped to shape the way he thinks today: Media Ethics with Dr. Clifford Christians, and Media and the Law with Steven Helle.

“If high school teaches you the basics,” Feder said, “then college teaches you how to think about those basics.”

Feder encourages students to look at their classes from a different perspective, to think about the course they are taking and ask themselves, “How does this apply to my life?” Find a way to take the theoretical and make it practical. For example, in Media Ethics, Feder began to understand that he had to stand behind everything he produced. Those creative efforts will either build or destroy your reputation.

Feder’s end goal is a rather simple one. He wants to be the guy who people are rooting for.

“I think that comes with a Midwestern mentality,” Feder said. “It’s built here. Work hard in the right way, be a part of the team, know your role on the team. If you need to lead, then lead, and lead by example. That’s all I want to do.

“If people at the end of the day say Stephen Feder was a great guy and I was glad to have known him, that’s a legacy I would love.”
alumni profile: glenn adilman

1981, Advertising; Executive Vice President of U.S. Comedy Development, Sony Pictures Television, Inc.

Many of us have a moment in our lives we can point to as a turning point. An event, person or opportunity that changes everything. For Glenn Adilman, that moment came in the form of a job with CBS Productions.

“I knew when I was there to double down,” Adilman said, “that this is the moment in my life that if I worked hard and played my cards right that I was building a career for myself.”

Adilman began preparing for his career in entertainment at a young age by watching a lot of television.

“My dad used to come down and just be annoyed that we were watching another episode of ‘M.A.S.H.’ or ‘Lucy,’” Adilman said.

He was always drawn to creative outlets, from drawing to storytelling to the arts and entertainment.

Adilman came to Illinois to study advertising because it was one of the few academic programs in the country at that time. He was also attracted to the Big Ten. And, Illinois was very affordable for an in-state student.

At Illinois, Adilman was a part of the Illini Union Board. He booked the Ramones to play on campus.

“I didn’t know what I was doing,” Adilman said. “But it sold out, made money and was a thrilling experience.”

Adilman loved being at Illinois and did well, earning a spot on the Bronze Tablet. The creative advertising classes and the group projects were fun and challenging, he said. It was exactly what he wanted to be doing and knew he wanted to work in advertising as an account person.

After graduation, Adilman went to Columbia for his MBA. He chose a program in New York City as a balance to his education in the Midwest. It was a chance to gain a broader perspective on the world.

His goal after graduation was to work at Leo Burnett in Chicago. His summer internship with the agency led to a full-time position. During his time with Leo Burnett he worked on the Kellogg’s and McDonald’s accounts.

“It was a blue-chip experience,” Adilman said.

But, even though he enjoyed the work, Adilman began to get bored. He was yearning to move into the entertainment industry. So, he applied to the University of Southern California’s Peter Stark Producing Program. The program provided him with a way to gain entry into the industry with no specific producing experience. Once again, an internship led to a permanent position.

Adilman joined CBS Productions as a manager, a low-level executive job.

“I read scripts and did coverage and sold myself based entirely on my educational background and my work in advertising,” Adilman said. “The job is part management, part strategy and part creative: working with writers and creative people and ultimately shaping words and pictures.”

During his career, Adilman has worked at CBS, ABC and Sony Pictures Television on such projects as “The Goldbergs,” “Happy Endings” and “Alcatraz.” He is particularly proud of the shows that became iconic in some way, shows like “Community” that had rabid audiences and became a part of pop culture.

Adilman considers his current job his dream job.

“I love my bosses. I love the culture of this company,” Adilman said.

“The reason I love what I do — and it’s just like advertising and it goes back to my education — it’s serious project and people management,” Adilman said. “It’s serious strategic thinking in terms of attacking a marketplace, being in sales and finding opportunities. And yet it’s totally creative at the same time!”

He credits Illinois with helping him learn how to communicate with people and to speak with confidence.

One of the projects he’s especially excited about now is a reboot of “One Day at a Time” that he is working on with the legendary Norman Lear. The show is being redeveloped for a Latino audience with the grandmother played by Rita Moreno. It will be on Netflix in January.

During his 28 years in Los Angeles, Adilman has seen technology change the industry. The addition of streaming networks to cable and traditional networks is providing more opportunities, but also more challenges.

“You have to find the right business models and the right creative,” Adilman said. “It’s not business as usual. On the other hand, it’s exciting and invigorating. It has opened up new avenues of creative expression and of sales.”

Adilman’s advice for students is straightforward: Be willing to do the work. The industry is very competitive and it is hard to gain entry. But, once you do, you have to have a great attitude, pay your dues and work hard.

“You gotta want it, you gotta be super passionate,” Adilman said. “It will not be an easy road. It’s hard. You have to know what you want, you have to know how to sell yourself, you have to be indefatigable, pound the pavement, network, have every meeting or call result in another meeting or call.”

Adilman never lets up on his own work. He is always reading new writers, tracking deals and going after people he wants to work with.

“That’s the day-to-day stock in trade,” Adilman said, “building your roster, finding and attracting writers and ideas, and developing shows.”
Advancing Excellence: Gifts in Support of the Media Center (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016)

The following list represents contributions to the University of Illinois College of Media (WILL) from generous alumni and friends during the 2016 fiscal year. We are grateful for your support of our talented students and faculty and your commitment to the goals of the College.

Members of the President’s Council are marked with (+). The Chancellor’s Circle honors donors who provide cumulative support of $5,000 or more between July 1 and June 30. 

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Join us!

The College of Media has a NEW class giving program called Alumni Decades.

Alumni Decades website: media.illinois.edu/giving/decades

Join your fellow alumni in supporting your love of Illinois! See where your class decade ranks, consider a gift and know that you are among many who will always have Illinois and its students in their heart.

“I own my career has involved newspapers, wire services, book editing, an internet startup and marketing consulting firms. I’m still using the skills learned from Professors Reid, Helle, Landay and others, and happily donating to the College of Media’s Annual Fund to provide today’s students with the same valuable experiences that I had.”

Kate Coughlin Denny, Class of 1990
Roger Ebert's Film Festival

Though the festival is a fully juried competition, the focus of the festival is on the filmmaker and the art of the filmmaking process. The films are screened in the 1,500-seat Virginia Theatre, a restored movie palace built in the 1920s. A portion of the festival’s income goes toward on-going renovations at the theater. The festival brings together the films’ producers, writers, actors and directors to help showcase their work. A filmmaker or scholar introduces each film, and each screening is followed by a substantive on-stage Q&A & discussion among filmmakers, critics and the audience. In addition to the screenings, the festival hosts a number of academic panel discussions featuring filmmaker guests, scholars and students. Roger Ebert’s Film Festival is a special event of the College of Media at the University of Illinois.

Roger Ebert’s Film Festival donors

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Champaign County Alliance for the Promotion of Acceptance, Inclusion, & Respect
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Power n Soul Pro
V. Picasso
DishPassionate Cuisine

* The News-Gazette has made a one-time donation of $50,000 toward the remodeling of the Virginia Theatre’s projection booth.

by the numbers

$31,486

cost of attendance for Fall 2016 - Spring 2017
(full-time advertising student, Illinois resident, Tuition: $12,816 + Housing, books, misc.: $15,008 + fees: $3,662)

109

number of College of Media students who received scholarship aid for 2016-17

562

number of student scholarship applicants

17%

received support

163

donors gave more than

$346,000

to scholarship funds in FY 2016

$359,760

in scholarship awards provided by the income from endowments and current-use funds

$8,129

unmet need = cost of attendance - expected family contribution - total aid received

Scholarship funds for the College of Media continue to be a priority. Gifts toward college-wide scholarships provide the most flexibility in recruiting an ever-growing, diverse student population.

Please note, the word “scholarship” used in this context represents aid that includes internship assistance and graduate student awards.

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE 2016