ON OUR SHORT list

ELLIOTT PORTNOY '86

The KEEN Edge

During his first year as a graduate student at Oxford University, Elliott Portnoy was asked to provide tennis lessons to a small group of disabled children. He was more than a little apprehensive. Tennis is a difficult sport for even the fully able to master.

Not one to avoid a challenge—or a little time on the tennis courts—Portnoy gave it a try. "I started tossing tennis balls to a terrific little girl with Downs Syndrome and within minutes I was hooked," he says. "The entire group of children and their parents were wonderful."

Portnoy soon had invited a group of the parents to his flat, to listen to the following proposal: scrap the tennis lessons in favor of a program that would involve mentally and physically handicapped children and young adults in a variety of different sports, coached by Oxford students like himself. By the end of the evening KEEN was born.

Today, KEEN—Kids Enjoy Exercise Now—provides athletic and recreational activities six days a week for more than 200 children and young adults from Oxford and surrounding towns. The hallmark of the program is one-on-one attention. Every "athlete" has his or her own coach, and often two coaches, depending on the severity of the athlete's disability. More than 360 Oxford University students have volunteered for the program.

The overall aim of the program is to provide a setting where *every* child is able to experience the excitement of sports and recreation. Who enjoys KEEN the most? "It seems to be a toss-up," says Portnoy. "We say it's the athletes, but the coaches beg to differ."

Portnoy registered KEEN as a charity. The organization holds fund-raisers to cover its costs, and keeps all activities free of charge. When Portnoy leaves Oxford in August, after completing a Ph.D. in politics, a committee of students from the United Kingdom will take the reins. "We now have an office and an organizational structure that will help make KEEN a permanent fixture here in Oxford," he says. Efforts are also underway to get the organization launched at other universities throughout the U.K.

Portnoy, an avid runner and tennis player, graduated from SU in 1986 and attended Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar (SU's first). His dissertation focuses on the role that rural state congressional delegations play in Congress. A native of West Virginia, he selected two congressional delegations from his home state to study.

Portnoy enters Harvard University Law School this fall, where he plans to specialize in disability legal issues. He also has plans to bring KEEN to the U.S. "The first step is to make others aware of what can be done, and to find a small number of dynamic students who would be willing to do much of the initial legwork," says Portnoy.

"I firmly believe that there is great potential to expand KEEN to the U.S. If I have my way, you will perhaps be reporting on a new craze sweeping SU students and students at other universities—helping handicapped students in the community."

—*Renée Gearhart Levy*

While at Oxford, Elliott Portnoy created a program to bring sports into the lives of disabled children.

MARY WEBER '88

Brass Act

Mary Weber's audition for the principal trumpet chair in the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra was "blind." She played behind a screen, with just one minute to catch the attention of the committee by displaying good sound, articulation, and interpretation. None of her judges knew whether the auditioner was a man or woman.

That audition proved successful, and today Weber is one of only two women in the country holding principal trumpet chairs with a major orchestra.

"The blind audition is standard today," Weber says. "Its purpose is to combat prejudice of any kind. In fact, sometimes the floor is carpeted so the committee can't even hear

footsteps and get information that way."

The blind audition is particularly important to Weber, who knows that in playing a brass instrument she has invaded a territory traditionally reserved for men. "Partly that's because band directors in public schools tell girls they shouldn't play brass, because it's not ladylike," she explains. "If they're discouraged as youngsters, they'll probably never get over it. Segregation based on 'feminine' or 'masculine' is wrong.

"Fortunately, my parents encouraged me to do whatever I wanted. I've always loved the trumpet. It's a leader. It just comes at you and sings."

In her role as principal trumpet in the 75-member orchestra (16 of whom are women), Weber plays all first trumpet parts, assigns parts to the other trumpet players, and works with them on interpretation throughout the 34-week season.

Before auditioning for the New Orleans Symphony, Weber studied with the only other woman leading a trumpet section, Susan Slaughter. Weber was then assistant principal trumpet in the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. At this time Weber was also studying for the master's degree in music she received from SU in 1988.

Weber finds men much more accepting of talented women musicians than they were 10 years ago and hopes to see more women in principal chairs. "The blind audition process, if run fairly, will accomplish this."

She points out that any musician who aspires to hold a principal chair has heavy responsibilities.

"I do have to play better," she says. "At one point, I had to sit down, evaluate my capabilities, and decide whether I wanted to put in the time and effort necessary to achieve the proper musical understanding and technical capability. If that's your ambition, you better realize what you're getting into.

"Nothing can be handed to you," she adds. "But with blind auditions, nothing can stop you, either." —*Carol North Schmuckler*

COMSTOCK STUDIO

Mary Weber, one of two principal trumpeters who are women

JOHN MACKEY '63

Beneath Your Burger

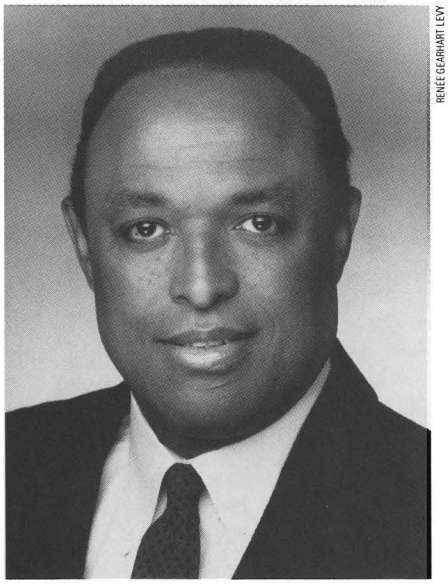
According to a recent survey, half of all American adults eat at a fast-food restaurant at least once a week. Another study suggests that a family of four will log seven fast-food visits by at least one family member during a two-week period. That's a lot of French fries. And from John Mackey's perspective, a lot of tray liners too.

Mackey's company, Barmack Inc., prints paper placemat tray liners for the fast-food giants. Although confidentiality agreements prevent him from listing them, he says "we print for all the majors and you know who they are."

Barmack's achievement is even more impressive when you consider that the Haverhill, Massachusetts, firm is just a year old and sprouting new divisions left and right. Custom Line Promotions prints advertising specialties, such as tee shirts, key chains, and hats. Blair-Kohler Fulfillment coordinates point-of-purchase advertising and national promotions for companies like Digital Equipment Corporation, Alamo Rent-a-Car, and Prime Computer.

"Take a fast-food company," says Mackey. "When you go there with your children to have a birthday party, they have special birthday party kits. It might have a balloon, a toy, and a noisemaker, or something like that. All those pieces are sent to our warehouse where somebody puts together the kits and sends thousands to the different locations."

RENÉE GEARHART LEVY



Tray-liner mogul John Mackey

Fortune 500 companies don't go knocking on doors giving their accounts away, so Mackey, along with partner John Barry, has criss-crossed the nation—logging some 100,000 frequent flier miles—knocking on theirs. It's been a fruitful effort. The company, established in May 1989 and operational by last September, has already expanded. It opened a second plant in Hollywood, Florida, and will open locations in Chicago and Los Angeles within the next year.

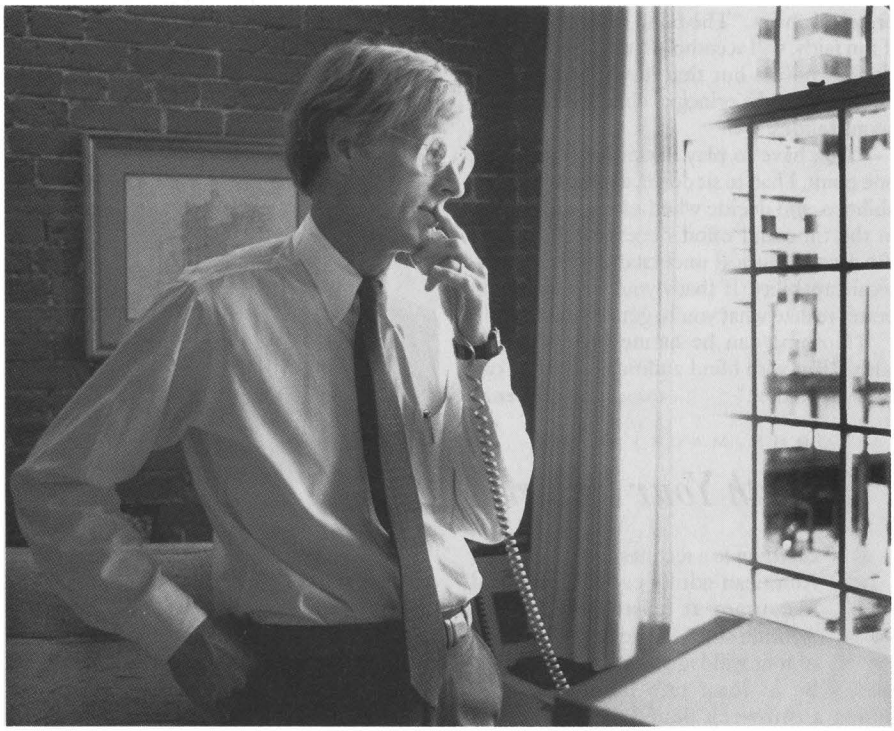
Mackey concedes he has a competitive edge because of his status as a former NFL player. He played for the Baltimore Colts for 10 years after graduating from SU in 1963 and was named the greatest tight end for the first 50 years of the NFL. In his honor, the Mackey award is presented annually to NFL players chosen best in their position.

"It didn't hurt that they considered me for the [football] Hall of Fame this year," he says, "because a lot of people just wanted to talk about that. But once you get inside the door you've got to perform. It might be a door opener but they'll remember you if you can't do what you're supposed to once you're there.... We have to be good at what we do to do business and everybody in the plant believes that."

Running a new company might be enough responsibility for some, but Mackey's got another project he's equally excited about: his upcoming autobiography, written as an imagined conversation with SU football great Ernie Davis. "Ernie was my roommate at Syracuse and this book is about me, supposedly Mr. Reality, talking to Mr. Innocent—Ernie, who died with all his dreams intact—about how it really was playing in the NFL," says Mackey. "We'd dream about all the different things we were going to do that Ernie really never had the opportunity to do. So it's me telling him about those things." Mackey plans to donate any proceeds from book to leukemia research.

—*Renée Gearhart Levy*

ON OUR SHORT list



Richard Gordon is Hartford, Connecticut's, most successful and conscientious developer.

RICHARD GORDON G '75

Mr. Hartford

There's one important thing that sets Richard Gordon of Hartford, Connecticut, apart from most real estate developers. Others concentrate only on profit when considering the bottom line; Gordon has other concerns, as well.

"One of the things the individual has to evaluate is how he can better the place where he lives and builds," Gordon says. "The developer's goal of making money can be reconciled with the good of the community. When you make money, that's when you can benefit other people. Success gives you the opportunity to give something back to the community, whether it be in scholarships or buildings."

Gordon's record through the years bears that out. He's committed more than $100 million to Hartford's renaissance, and there isn't a project in which he's involved that doesn't reflect his sensitivity to the community's needs.

When Gordon graduated from SU's College of Law in 1965, he worked in New York City before joining a Hartford law office. He married, set up his own firm, and did legal work for several real estate entrepreneurs.

Then he answered a newspaper ad offering land near an interstate, owned by a local architectural firm that had decided to sell. Gordon convinced the architects instead to become his partners in developing the property. The result was a very successful office building, and Gordon was on his way.

Gordon always had a firm vision of just what Hartford could be. Some of his projects include the $155-million Connecticut River Plaza; a $100-million office and research park; the $2.5-million Enfield Medical Center; and the $150-million Northeast Plaza. He's also renovated the Old State House in the center of downtown. He and his 50 employees work in an impressively restored Heublein warehouse—brick walls, polished hardwood floors, tin ceiling, and all.

He readily admits that developers often have agendas different from those of city planners. "Housing may be important to a city, but developers might not want to build housing because it's not profitable. I don't include myself in that category. The last thing I need is to get into a hassle with everybody. It takes too much time and trouble. Why not deal with things that are needed and with people who are willing to accept what you're doing?"

Gordon's latest venture has the ring of fun about it. He and a partner bought the Hartford Whalers, a National Hockey League team, for $31 million. The team is enormously popular and plays to 93-percent capacity.

"You can accomplish lots of things in life, but when you own a sports franchise, everybody comes up to you and tells you what you ought to be doing. If the team isn't doing well," he laughs, "they tell you you're a jerk."

—*Carol North Schmuckler*

JAY '65 & TED KAKAS '65

The Fur Bros.

Brothers Jay and Ted Kakas represent the fifth generation in the oldest family-owned fur business in the world. As vice presidents of E.F. Kakas & Sons in Boston (their father is still active), they preside over a business that's been in existence for 131 years.

Both brothers majored in arts and sciences because, Jay explains, they knew they'd be in business soon enough and wanted a diversified education. When they graduated in 1965, they went to work.

Today the business is a privately held company with a customer base of 19,000 accounts. Sales are in excess of $6 million yearly and E.F. Kakas & Sons employs anywhere from 35 to 60 people, depending on the season.

"People want functional fashion," Jay says. "They're not interested in things that can only be worn occasionally. Instead, they buy coats that go to the office or the opera. The average age of our customer is 31, and that person leads a more casual lifestyle."

What's hot today? "Mink is still the biggest seller," says Jay, "but we're also selling more unsheared beaver and raccoon. Next would come coyote and fox and then others such as nutria. We do a lot with fur-lined and fur-trimmed storm coats and leathers are more popular."

In the fall, he predicts, most women will continue to wear their coats long and Kakas will continue to sell them that way. "Shoulders will be slightly less broad and armholes less deep. You'll see more storm coats and much more leather. Jade green will be popular in leather and in shearlings."

Like most fur retailers, Kakas continually combats what he feels is a distorted view fostered by animal activists. Those who don't wear furs are entitled to their beliefs, he says, but shouldn't try to inflict them on others. "We are the ultimate conservationists," he adds. "We perpetuate the products we take, either through farming or by proper trapping facilities. We always replenish and always guard endangered species."

Both Jay and Ted model for their own ads, as do their wives. "We're not good, but we're reasonable," Jay laughs. "The real reason is that we want to emphasize the unbroken chain of family involvement. We also pose in historic areas and tell about them in the ads."

For Jay, the fun of retailing is crystal clear. "I'm allowed to make the finest product in the world. Everybody else may cut corners, but we're fussy about things like facing in coats, undersleeves and undercollars, and types of pocket linings. When I lose the enthusiasm for making something that's a masterpiece, that's when I'll step aside. It's wonderful to be the best at what you do."

—*Carol North Schmuckler*

MIYA HISAKA G'82

D.C. Dance!

How do you set up an independent dance company? It's easy. You just do exactly the same things you would to set up U.S. Steel—except on a smaller budget!"

That's how Miya Hisaka describes what it took to establish the DC Contemporary Dance Theater in 1984, a venture that has succeeded beyond all expectations. Today DC Contemporary Dance Theater is acclaimed as one of Washington's most electrifying companies, with a high-energy performance style of everything from lyrical dance to modern, jazz, and African-Caribbean.

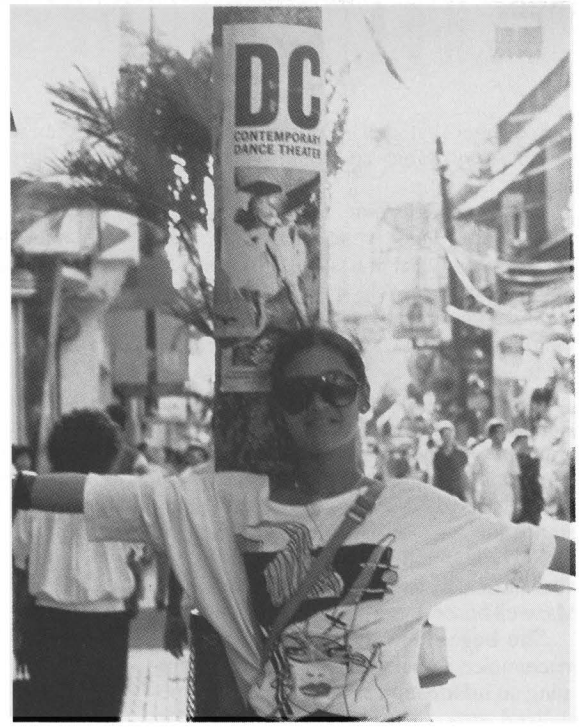
Hisaka had a background in both dance and design before receiving her master of public administration degree from SU. Just as she graduated in 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts was looking for an arts fellow to work on a book about dance spaces in Washington. It required exactly her combination of skills: administration, dance, and design.

While researching the NEA's book, Hisaka also investigated the city's performing arts groups. When she realized that although the city hosted many visiting companies, it lacked its own repertory dance company, the idea for DC Contemporary Dance Theater was born. She then assembled a 10-member company that reflects the cultural and racial diversity of the region.

"That first year, I found dancers, assembled a 21-member board, and raised $250,000," Hisaka recalls. "It was a struggle. At first no one got paid and we performed wherever there was space. But soon we were winning competitions and gaining recognition. Two years later, we made our Kennedy Center debut."

In its four-year existence, DC Contemporary Dance Theater has given more than 50 performances regionally and made three international tours. In 1986, it won the Mayor's Arts Award for Outstanding Emerging Artists. The group is planning in 1991 to become the first visiting multicultural company to perform in Moscow.

DC Contemporary Dance Theater is actually a four-pronged enterprise. Its guest choreographers program acquires and presents, in a 34-week season, a variety of outstanding contemporary choreography. The professional group provides training and development for company members. Through a community outreach program, the company trains young people and offers a summer youth employment program. A school program provides training to the public in ballet, modern, jazz, African, and aerobic movement.



Miya Hisaka founded DC Contemporary Dance in Washington.

Administering such a complex operation is not an easy task, Hisaka confides. "You need all the skills any MBA would need, plus you must know the state of the art and be able to deal with the demands of theatrical performance. If you can set up a nonprofit dance company, you can do anything!"

—*Carol North Schmuckler*

CLAIRE BONVIE

Ted (left) and Jay Kakas (shown with wives Robin and Barbara) run a fur business that's 131 years old.

FRAN HURWITZ G'68

Heating Things Up

It's been projected that within the next 15 to 20 years aircraft will increase their fuel efficiency as the result of technology that will allow aircraft engines to be operated at a higher temperature.

Such will be the tangible result of research conducted by Fran Mazie Hurwitz at NASA's Lewis Research Center in Cleveland. Hurwitz is head of polymer-derived ceramics research at Lewis, a program she's developed over the past six years.

According to Hurwitz, polymer-derived ceramics are high molecular weight compounds that are "polymerized," or united, through processing at a low temperature. When later heated to 800 or 900 degrees centigrade the polymers convert to a ceramic material that can withstand very high temperatures.

Hurwitz says the practical applications for the material are in components for aircraft and aerospace engines: a ceramic-based engine can be operated at higher temperatures than conventional engines. By increasing the operating temperature the fuel efficiency is also increased. "The only ceramics that have been used in engines up to now are in automotive engines," says Hurwitz. "Nissan has a

turbocharger that's ceramic and some of the American companies are looking at doing the same."

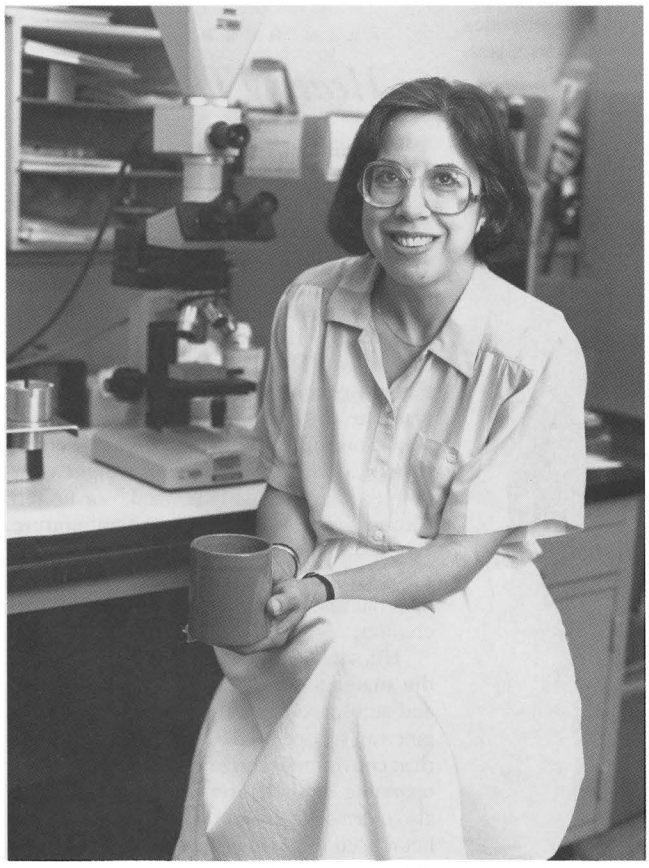
The largest customer for the technology at present, though, is the military. "Usually any new material starts out in a military aircraft and then works its way over to commercial application," says Hurwitz. "We have a lot of interaction with the Defense Department."

Hurwitz did not set out to be a research scientist. Although she majored in chemistry as an undergraduate, she came to SU to study information studies, earning her master's in 1968. She worked briefly in Syracuse as a reference librarian for Bristol Laboratories and for SU before moving to Cleveland with her husband Leon (he's a 1968 graduate of the Maxwell School).

She began taking graduate courses in macromolecular science with the idea of pursuing an information studies career in a specialized area. But when she finished her second master's there were no such jobs available so she just kept going, earning her Ph.D. in 1979. She went to work at NASA shortly afterward.

Hurwitz is part of a five-member team in a branch organization of about 30 people. It's an interdisciplinary team, so she's working with physicists, ceramists, and chemical engineers. "Everybody works independently and then we get together to discuss the findings," she says. "I'm the group leader and I'm spending less and less time in the lab myself." Two years ago Hurwitz was named a role model for women interested in pursuing careers in science by the Ohio Academy of Science.

Hurwitz likes the autonomy that NASA offers. "There's a lot of opportunity to interact with people from industry, from universities, with students," she says. "There's a lot of freedom to define a project area within a very broad framework—'come up with new materials for high temperature applications'—and the way you do that is very much up to you." —*Renée Gearhart Levy*



According to Fran Mazie Hurwitz, the future is polymers.

MARION BEHR '61, G'62

Home and Office

For 15 years, I thought I was the only person in New Jersey running a successful business from my home. Then participating in a panel discussion opened my eyes and changed my life."

That's when free-lance artist Marion Rosenfeld Behr began researching the homebased business phenomenon that she'd been involved in since receiving her 1961 and 1962 SU art degrees, marrying, and starting her family.

She originated a national survey to reach the "invisible work force," the people (mostly women) working at home. "The response was incredible. People not only filled out the questionnaire, they sent long letters describing their experiences," Behr says. "I found that though women loved the freedom and flexibility of working at home, they had three big problems."

She continues, "First, homebased women were very isolated. They needed a way to exchange ideas, pool information, and network. Next, they needed more business expertise. Finally, they felt they weren't being taken seriously."

To Behr, this clearly pointed to the need for an organization that would let homebased people speak to each other and to the public.

Marion Behr, champion of cottage industry

So she formed the National Alliance of Homebased Businesswomen in 1980, the first such professional organization.

At the same time, she and a friend published *Women Working Home: The Homebased Business Guide and Directory*, a step-by-step manual for setting up and maintaining a successful home business, now in its second edition. Behr has become a national lecturer and writer on the subject. President Reagan appointed her to the White House Conference on Small Business in 1986, and she has lobbied extensively for homebased businesses.

Today Behr estimates that 13 million people are involved in homebased businesses, as either primary or secondary sources of income. "It's not just jams, jellies, and jewelry," Behr says. "We list 200 occupations and their orientation has changed from products to services. Some of the newer businesses are advertising, accounting, and electronics."

The composition of the homebased population has also changed. "While still predominantly female, there are many more men today. There are several reasons for this. First, homebased businesspeople are no longer second-class citizens. With computers, they can do business all over the country. Second, men are increasingly concerned with the quality of life, as women have always been. Men, too, want the flexibility of being with their families. And finally, more people have the entrepreneurial spirit—they like being their own bosses.

"When you have your own homebased business," she says, "the possibilities for growth are endless." —*Carol North Schmuckler*

WALTER SABO '74 & ED HERSH '75

Media Types

When two old college buddies end up on fast tracks in similar fields, they tend to use each other to relieve stress. And when they're in jobs where millions overhear their every mistake, stress is a daily occurrence.

Walter Sabo and Ed Hersh find themselves in just that position. Sabo heads a consulting firm responsible for the 13 RKO-owned radio stations around the country, while Hersh is a senior producer in charge of futures and planning for ABC's *World News Tonight.* Sabo advises his clients about on-air programming and marketing and also serves as consultant to corporate management, and Hersh spends his days figuring out what pieces should be covered tomorrow and next week to tie in with breaking news stories.

Both of them have careers that depend on knowing and anticipating popular trends. That creates a real bond, and they frequently share information. They're also, according to Sabo, never afraid to tell the other when he's full of it.

"We're both in jobs where at the end of the day, everything we've made is meaningless and must be recreated the next day," Sabo says. "We have to generate a product 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It doesn't matter if Ed's pulled together a brilliant story tonight, because tomorrow he must do another one. And if the last break on my station was hysterically funny, it doesn't matter because it's gone."

When they met at SU, Sabo was a selected studies major in English and advertising. His goal was radio, and he started at WOR-FM in New York after his 1974 graduation. In a meteoric rise, he became director of the ABC-FM radio network at 23, and then executive vice president of the NBC-owned FM stations—the youngest vice president in NBC's history.

Sabo revitalized those stations in three years, going from number 20 in popularity to number one in New York, for instance. Then he returned to ABC as vice president of their six radio networks, a job he held until setting up his own firm.

Hersh was also a selected studies major, studying newspaper and urban geography. After graduating in 1975, he wrote for the *Albany* (N.Y.) *Knickerbocker News* before studying television. He became a TV news producer in Philadelphia and Chicago before returning to New York to ABC-TV.

"News has changed," says the recently married Hersh. "Technology has given us better access but also puts huge amounts of pressure on us because deadlines are shorter. During the last Texas hurricane, at 6:10 p.m., I was talking by cellular phone to a crew that was just driving to a location to get a picture for the newscast. By 6:30, they had it and we put it on."

Today the two men rely on each other to point out the ridiculous in their different but similar lives. A significant factor in their firm friendship is a penchant for practical jokes.

"Humor is certainly a way of relieving stress," Sabo says. "Hey, for us the worst case is that our mistakes can lead to people being hurt or even slandered. The best case? When we're wrong, we merely look like idiots."

—*Carol North Schmuckler*

Walter Sabo (left) and Ed Hersh, lifelong friends and fast-rising media executives.