

O N O U R S H O R T L I S T

News Makers

Two Rhode Island journalists make headlines of their own.

When Mike Stanton heard the commotion across the newsroom, he figured it was just another singing telegram brought in for someone's birthday. Not until he heard the words "we won" did he realize what had happened—he'd received journalism's highest honor, a Pulitzer Prize.

Stanton and Tracy Breton, both graduates of SU and reporters at the *Journal-Bulletin* newspaper in Provi-

ments of the state's chief justice and his court administrator.

In submitting the series of stories to the Pulitzer committee, the newspaper cited "determined opposition from many levels of state government. Even the governor, who has no formal connection to the courts, barred access to court financial records."

Breton and Stanton heard they were finalists for a Pulitzer, but on announcement day they thought the honor had gone elsewhere. "We were told they notify you in advance, and we didn't get notified," says Stanton.

A photographer happened to glance at a computer terminal carrying wire service reports and saw the listing. A spontaneous celebration swept the newsroom. "The publisher appeared, passing out cigars," says Stanton. "Someone sent out for champagne." In the midst of celebration, Western Union delivered a telegram—three hours late— notifying the paper of the award.

Breton joined the *Journal-Bulletin* in 1973 after earning an SU bachelor's degree in political science and newspaper journalism. She has covered court and legal affairs for 18 years, including the highly publicized murder trial of Claus von Bülow. Her reporting has resulted in the indictment, conviction, and imprisonment of three lawyers and the resignation of a superior court judge.

Stanton, who earned his bachelor's degree in political science and newspaper journalism from SU in 1979, joined the paper in 1985 as a sports reporter. After writing several investigative sports articles, he was tapped for an investigative team—which included Breton—to cover the Rhode Island banking crisis. That group won regional acclaim for its reporting.

"I think that any reporter, even at the smallest newspaper, covering a city council or a water board, should be looking for investigative pieces," says Breton. "You don't have to have the title to be a good investigative reporter. Sometimes it's hard to find the time, but there are wonderful stories to be found on any sort of beat."

—RENÉE GEARHART LEVY



Mike Stanton and Tracy Breton celebrate their Pulitzer Prize victory on the roof of the *Journal-Bulletin* building, overlooking the Rhode Island state capitol. The reporters were part of a team that exposed corruption in the state court system.

dence, Rhode Island, are among a six-person team to share the 1994 prize for investigative reporting. Their reporting exposed widespread corruption in the Rhode Island court system and led to the resignations and criminal indict-

True Calling

Ellen Sherman-Zinn '66

Most people content themselves with one career per lifetime. Ellen Sherman-Zinn tackled four to find the one she really wanted.

A 1966 graduate of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Sherman-Zinn worked in textile design, retailing, and fashion marketing. Though successful, she felt incomplete. Eighteen years after graduating she finally succumbed to her first love—painting.

"Like so many women, I was security minded and had a tremendous conflict when I graduated from Syracuse," says Sherman-Zinn. "I had transferred into the College of Visual and Performing Arts and sensed this was exactly where I belonged. But I majored in textile design because I knew I'd have to make a living. In the end, security won out."

An abstract impressionist who paints in oil and acrylics, Sherman-Zinn has received critical acclaim for her paintings, many of which can be found at galleries and exhibitions throughout the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. She and her art have also been featured on the cover of *New Jersey Woman* magazine.

Breaking into the art world wasn't easy, but Sherman-Zinn went about it in the same concentrated fashion she'd approached her other careers. To gain confidence and experience, she pursued a master's degree. As her skills grew, she entered juried exhibitions and slowly built her reputation.

She and her husband, who live in Warren, New Jersey, created a studio to showcase her bold, colorful, and exceptionally large work—her master's thesis was a 16- by 20-foot mural. "My paintings don't reflect any particular theme, but explore color, form, and the subconscious," she says. "I focus on the idea of magnification."

"Every day when I get into the studio, I lose myself in painting, and I know I'm in the right place."

—CAROL NORTH SCHMUCKLER



New Jersey-based painter Ellen Sherman-Zinn has received critical acclaim for her striking, vibrant, often oversized abstract paintings. "When I approach a canvas, I like to think I'm reinventing myself," she has said.

MAMBO MADNESS

➤ *When moviemakers want Latin music for their films, they often call Debra Mercado for advice. By assisting on films such as *The Mambo Kings* and *Carlito's Way*, Mercado helps promote the music she knows best: salsa, mambo, and merengue.*

Mercado is director of publicity for Ralph Mercado Management, a New York City agency specializing in Latino musicians. A 1982 SU graduate with a dual bachelor's degree in psychology and telecommunications management, Mercado promotes the company's many artists and their music.

"When I'm not doing publicity or advertising or videos, then I'm the production manager of the shows," says Mercado, who has staged concerts for entertainers such as Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Oscar D'Leon, and Tony Vega.

—ANDREA C. MARSH



Latin music promoter Debra Mercado works with artists such as comedian Paul Rodriguez (l) and the original mambo king, Tito Puente.

WINGING IT

➤ *Economics degree in hand*, Colin Macintosh took a Wall Street job with an investment bank five years ago. Around the same time, he developed a business plan, found financial backers, and opened Fat Guys Wings. Macintosh operates his eat-in/take-out/delivery emporium out of Oddfellows Rest, a popular bar in Hoboken, New Jersey. "You can find wings almost everywhere," says Macintosh, "but it's hard to find really good ones."

Macintosh, a 1989 graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences, considers himself a wing connoisseur—Sal's Birdland delivered wings to his fraternity house nightly while he was a student. In addition to serving as an inspiration, Sal Naobone of Sal's Birdland was instrumental in bringing Fat Guys to life. Macintosh and his partner, 1988 Newhouse graduate Anthony Karwoski, learned the trade from Naobone. "He showed us how to prepare the wings," says Macintosh.

"We use his Sassy Sauce, and even have the permission to use his logo."

—Wendy Simard



Juan Suarez Botas and Joanne Howard met as students in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Howard helped Suarez Botas film his struggle with AIDS in *One Foot on a Banana Peel, Another Foot in the Grave*. He died in 1992.

For Posterity

Joanne Howard '81

Endless hours spent in a medical clinic left AIDS patient and graphic artist Juan Suarez Botas physically weakened and creatively starved. Enter Joanne Howard, a close friend who helped him videotape the events and emotions surrounding the last months of his life.

"He was witnessing an awful lot," says Howard. "The clinic became a kind of group therapy situation with all the patients in the same boat, sharing everything."

The project culminated in the documentary *One Foot on a Banana Peel, Another Foot in the Grave*. It was created with the assistance of Howard and her husband, noted filmmaker Jonathan Demme, whose relationship with Suarez Botas helped inspire *Philadelphia*, Demme's movie about one man's struggle with AIDS. "My husband was delighted to be able to help somebody who was making a real story, a real movie instead of the fictitious version," says Howard.

Howard and Suarez Botas met as transfer students in SU's College of Visual and Performing Arts and graduated together in 1981. Suarez Botas died in 1992, after which a young filmmaker in Demme's company completed the documentary, which is being shown at film festivals in the United States and abroad. The film has received critical acclaim and Howard hopes a television network will soon carry it.

"I was helping my friend who really needed some help and was able to do so because I have connections in the film world," says Howard. "I was really a facilitator and encourager."

"It's a very powerful film, very intimate and very funny. And it's a real love story about people fighting together. It's heroic. The film gives such a face to AIDS and homosexuality. Many people have ideas about who these gay men are and what they represent. I think it just falls away when you see the film and get to know the people."

—ANDREA C. MARSH

O N O U R S H O R T L I S T

Green Thumb

Stuart Moldaw '49

Stuart Moldaw likes to help things grow—people, companies, even countries. He recently completed a stint as a presidentially-appointed delegate to the United Nations, where he provided financial and technological advice to the fledgling democracies of the former Soviet Union.

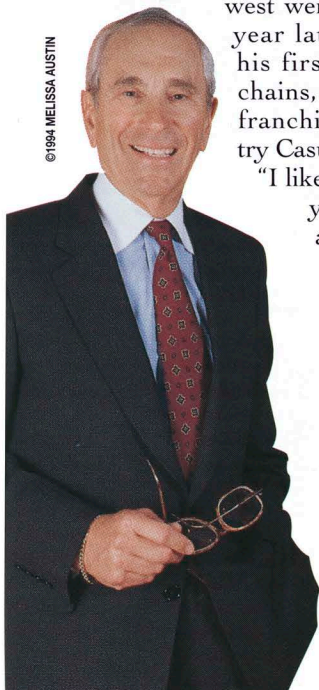
"They all want to be free-enterprise societies, but culturally they're not brought up to do that," says Moldaw, a 1949 graduate of the School of Management.

Free enterprise is a subject Moldaw is well acquainted with. He and his firm, U.S. Venture Partners of Menlo Park, California, have spawned more than a dozen businesses, including off-price apparel chain Ross Stores, children's clothing retailer Gymboree, Avia athletic shoes, and computer-maker Sun Microsystems. Besides nurturing corporate offspring, Moldaw campaigned for presidential candidates George McGovern, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, and Bill Clinton.

Moldaw's business roots began at Syracuse, where he waited tables and worked as the campus Fuller Brush representative. Six years after graduating, he moved to San Francisco to run Lerner Shops' northwest operations. When the clothing company tried to transfer him back east in 1957, he quit—business opportunities in the west were too enticing. A year later, he launched his first of many retail chains, a women's-wear franchise named Country Casuals.

"I like retailing because you know immediately if your strategy is right or wrong by the way the cash register rings," he says. "The customer gives you a vote every day."

—JAMIE BECKETT



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The cast of *Saturday Morning Live*, a popular Chicago play, provides a trip down memory lane for twentysomethings who grew up watching large doses of television. The play was conceived and written by 1990 graduate David Gips.

Seventies Reruns

David Gips '90

The seventies are back in style in Chicago, where characters of bygone Saturday-morning television shows are dealing with some thoroughly modern problems. Fat Albert's in therapy, trying to cope with his weight problem. Holly from *Land of the Lost* yearns to be the fierce Grumpy's sex slave. And Captain Caveman has been slapped with a harassment suit by the Teen Angels.

Welcome to the world of *Saturday Morning Live*, a contemporary trip down memory lane for twentysomethings who spent their childhood Saturdays glued to morning TV. The play has been entertaining packed houses in Chicago for more than a year and providing entertainment long after the last act is over.

"People wind up going out afterward and challenging their friends to remember particular episodes of a

show or all the words to 'Conjunction Junction,'" says creator, writer, and director David Gips. "It's the blend of nostalgia and modern jokes that has made the play a success."

Gips developed a taste for comedy-writing during a San Diego radio stint as Dodger Dave, a morning-show personality listeners would dare to do stunts. "Once I wore a diaper and passed out donuts at the airport," says Gips, who received a dual bachelor's degree from the Newhouse School and the School of Management in 1990.

He kicked around the idea for *Saturday Morning Live* for a couple of years before moving to Chicago to study with the Second City comedy troupe, where he met a woman who, he says, is "the spitting image of *Scooby Doo's* Velma." The play soon began to take shape.

With enough financial backing, Gips hopes to bring the show to New York City, where new audiences can kick back with their childhood memories.

—JUDY SUTTON