



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

Climb Every Mountain

A cancer victim meets the challenge and comes out on top.

Nancy Knoble was determined to make it. A 23,085-foot-tall mountain presented a daunting challenge, but to someone who'd already survived breast cancer and its treatment, this was just one more thing she would handle.

"I had a number of moments when I did a lot of soul searching," says Knoble, "but I just kept repeating my mantra: 'confidence, courage, strength, joy.' That took me to the top."

Knoble, a 1970 graduate of the College for Human Development, was

Knoble's journey actually began in 1993 with her diagnosis of breast cancer. While undergoing radiation treatment, she heard about the mountaineering expedition and determined to be a part of it. "I was not selected at first for the team because I didn't have a lot of high-altitude climbing experience," she says. "Once I finished my cancer treatment, though, I set out to climb Mt. El Bruf, the highest mountain in Europe. After successfully doing that, I was asked to join the team—the last person selected."

In January, 43 people set out for Argentina. They split into two groups; 17 would try for the summit and 26 would trek in and meet them at the base camp for the 36-mile hike down the mountain. The team included experienced guides, physicians, and a film crew. Knoble was part of the summit team.

Several days into their climb, winds gusting up to 150 miles per hour confined the team to their tents for two days. On the day of the summit assault, it was below zero but much less windy. The final climb started at 5 a.m. It took the team 11 1/2 hours to reach the summit, where there were tears and smiles, banners and prayer flags.

"The degree of effort required for that last 1,000 feet—a steep 30-degree chute of boulders, loose rock, and sandy scree—was enormous," Knoble recalls. "They say mountain climbing is 50 percent physical and 50 percent mental. That's absolutely true. There's a terrific mental requirement to making it up a mountain."

Since the climb, Knoble, a resident of Belvedere Tiburon, California, says she finds her life affected in surprising ways. The team traveled to the White House, met Hillary Clinton, talked with members of Congress about breast cancer funding, and met with Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, herself a breast cancer survivor. "It's amazing how this opened doors for all of us to increase awareness about breast cancer and raise funds," Knoble says.

Will she climb again? "If they were starting another team tomorrow, my name would be at the top of the list," she says. —CAROL NORTH SCHMUCKLER

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Nancy Knoble '70 was part of Expedition Inspiration, a team of breast cancer survivors who challenged Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina to raise some \$2.3 million for breast cancer research. On February 4, 1995, they reached their goal.

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Testing, Testing

Jeffrey Asher '63

With adhesive bandages covering his elbows, knees, ankles, and wrists, at first glance you might assume that Jeffrey Asher just had a run-in with an irate porcupine. In reality, Asher's appendages are just fine. The reason for all the bandages? He's testing them as part of his job as director of technical operations for Consumer's Union, the company that works in conjunction with *Consumer Reports* magazine to quality-test products currently on the market.

Asher started working for Consumer's Union after 13 years as an aerospace engineer with General Electric. "I left GE because I wanted to be more entrepreneurial," says the 1963 graduate of what is now the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science. "I got involved in the defense industry but kept looking for something more in line with helping people. That led me to Consumer's Union.

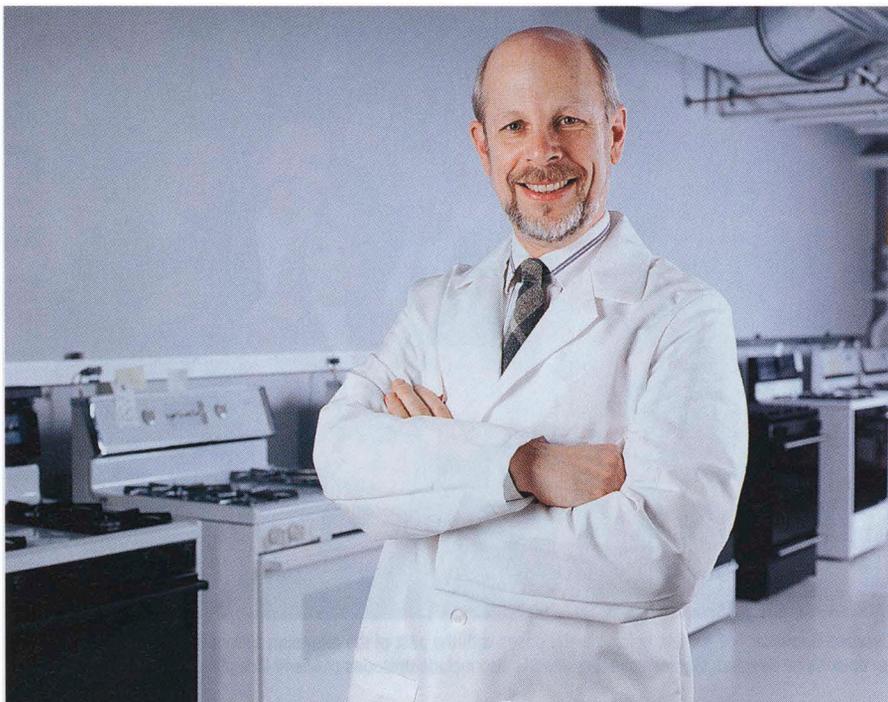
"Now I run the Consumer's Union laboratories," Asher explains. "We have 40 different labs based in Yonkers, New York, where we have our appliance, electronics, chemistry, and recreation departments."

Asher recommends products for testing, then oversees and sometimes participates in the testing process within the appropriate department. His next project will be setting up procedures for testing various brands of beer.

"In the 1970s, we stopped testing alcoholic products because of the fear of encouraging abuse," Asher explains. "But today, many people realize that alcohol is acceptable in moderation. We had three meetings just to decide what kinds of beer to focus on. In the end we decided to test 70 beers, primarily microbrews, because that's what our readers are interested in."

Asher says the beer will be tested by a panel of individuals hired to taste and critique each sample. "It's the same with any product we test," he says. "We're looking to provide consumers with accurate information based on sound testing procedures so they can make informed decisions about the products they buy."

—KRISTEN JORDAN



As director of technical operations for Consumer's Union, Jeffrey Asher '63 recommends and sometimes participates in the quality testing of products on the market. The results are published in *Consumer Reports* magazine.

LEGAL LAUGHS

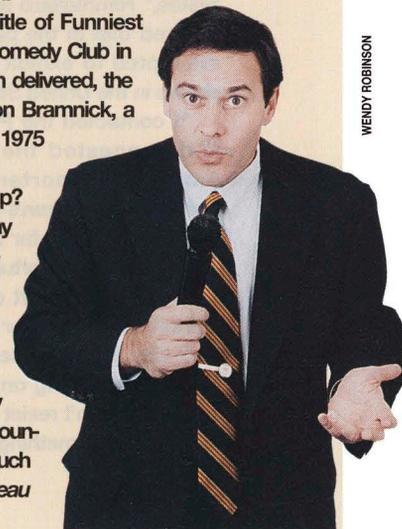
➤ **Question:** *How can you tell when lawyers are lying?*
Answer: *Their lips move.*

When it comes to being the brunt of jokes, the legal profession has long been a popular target. But earlier this year, a group of New Jersey lawyers took to the stand-up comedy stage to prove they were just as capable of dishing out the one-liners as being the foil for them.

The charity event, a competition for the title of Funniest Lawyer in New Jersey, took place at Rascals Comedy Club in West Orange. After the last punch line had been delivered, the funniest-lawyer crown was bestowed upon Jon Bramnick, a personal injury practitioner from Plainfield and 1975 graduate of SU's College of Arts and Sciences.

How did Bramnick get caught up in stand-up? "My wife thinks I think I'm pretty funny, so for my 38th birthday she entered me in a comedy competition," he says. "I came in second, and I've been doing stand-up ever since."

Bramnick credits part of his comedic success to the fact he has never experienced stage fright. "Listen, for eight years I was the only Republican on an otherwise all-Democratic city council," he says. "After that experience, there isn't much left that can scare me." —Jeffrey Charboneau



WENDY ROBINSON



Leonard Garner Jr. '74 (center, holding slate) poses with the cast of the television sitcom *Wings* at the conclusion of an episode he directed. Garner's directing credits also include episodes of *Miami Vice*, *Cheers*, and *Sister, Sister*.

Lights, Camera, Garner

Leonard Garner Jr. '74

In 1974, Leonard Garner Jr. headed for Hollywood to pursue every SU drama major's dream: a successful career in the entertainment industry. Acting, directing, and producing were all viable options for the aspiring thespian. "I was always interested in the stage and in movies, so moving to California seemed like the natural thing to do," he says.

In the two decades that followed, Garner nurtured a multifaceted show-business career as an actor, production manager, stage manager, assistant director, and director on dozens of high profile projects. To date, his television credits alone include *Wings*; *Miami Vice*; *Cheers*; *Sister, Sister*; *Living Single*; and *The Parent 'Hood*.

Garner admits, however, that his ultimate goal has yet to be reached—producing his own films and television programs. As a first step toward achieving that goal, he formed LRG Productions to ensure that the kinds of projects he wants to see happen, will.

"Entertainment is changing; everything is in a great state of flux," say the College of Visual and Performing Arts graduate. "More and more, media are becoming writer/producer driven. I want to be a part of that change and have already lined up a few projects that I plan to produce during the next few years."

As an African American in the entertainment industry, Garner says he feels a special obligation to undertake projects that deliver a positive message. "Entertainment is a powerful medium that can be used to change and enlighten," he says. "I have to be very careful about the projects I undertake. I want to make an impact, the right impact, where and when I can."

—JENNIFER BARTOK

FASHION PLATE

➤ *After following* the children's apparel market for four years as editor-in-chief of *Kids Fashions* magazine, 1985 S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications graduate Holly Himmelfarb recently led a successful trade mission to Portugal's northern textile region as a consultant to the Portuguese Trade Commission.

"I had attended apparel fairs around the world and visited Portugal several times on business, and noticed that very few Portuguese brands had representation in the United States," Himmelfarb says. She investigated further and discovered that in the past, Portuguese manufacturers had attempted to exhibit and sell their fashions at trade shows in the United States, with little success.

"I contacted the Portuguese Trade Commission and suggested they try to bring experienced American importers to Portugal to tour key Portuguese children's-wear factories," says Himmelfarb. "They did, and so far two American representatives have decided to bring Portuguese lines into their showrooms."

What was it that drew Himmelfarb, now director of marketing for a major children's apparel company in New York City, to get so deeply involved in international trade? "I'd been reporting on the apparel industry for years," she says. "I couldn't resist this opportunity to get in the thick of it and make something happen."

—Jeffrey Charboneau



SHONINA VELESKA

Go-Getter

Jason Rhoades '95

When it comes to single-word definitions, perhaps the one that best fits Jason Rhoades is "overachiever." Within the last two years, Rhoades completed a dual degree in finance and marketing through SU's School of Management, worked part time with the NYNEX Corporation, and managed to campaign for—and win—public office. He also just celebrated his 20th birthday.

Initially, Rhoades says he planned to complete his University education in four years. That was before career ambitions got in the way. "While I was working at NYNEX, an opening came up for someone who could offer new ideas and efficient management skills," Rhoades recalls. "It was just what I wanted, so I decided to go for it." The fact that going for it meant he would have to carry as many as 30 credit hours in one semester never phased him. "It was a matter of priorities," he says. "I had a mind-set that nobody was going to push me to get the job or education I wanted; I had to push myself. And I did."

His single-mindedness paid off. Two weeks after graduation, Rhoades, who already was the youngest person in the history of NYNEX to be accepted into

the company's Leadership Development Program, was offered a full-time position as manager of installation and maintenance with the corporation.

"Jason has an excellent head on his shoulders, excellent people skills, and is disciplined and determined," says Barry Vaughn, director of market development at NYNEX. "He makes it his business to learn and to be the best he can be. We like to have that in our organization."

Earlier this year, Rhoades' ambition pulled him in another direction—public service. As a candidate of the Independent Citizens Party, the then-19-year-old campaigned and was elected to one of four trustee seats on the board of the Village of East Syracuse, defeating an eight-year incumbent. He is now liaison to the East Syracuse fire department and parks and recreation department. "Since taking office I've helped map out the village's \$3.4 million budget and been a part of the largest tax cuts in its history," Rhoades says.

Not surprisingly, Rhoades continues to set major goals. Next on the list—attending graduate school, along with becoming the youngest vice president of NYNEX, which he says should happen in about five or six years. "I like to get ahead," he says. "There are so many talented people out there; I'm just trying to make myself better than the next guy." —*HOLLY CHARRON*

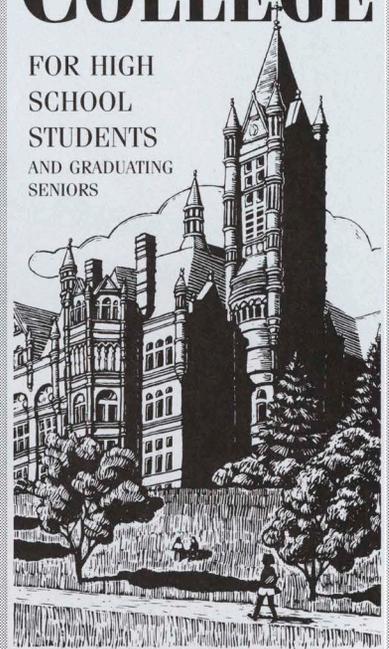


EMILE WAMSTEKER

Jason Rhoades '95 (left) and his fellow Village of East Syracuse trustees respond to residents' questions during a recent board meeting. Rhoades, who works for NYNEX, was 19 when he campaigned for, and won, his trustee seat.

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