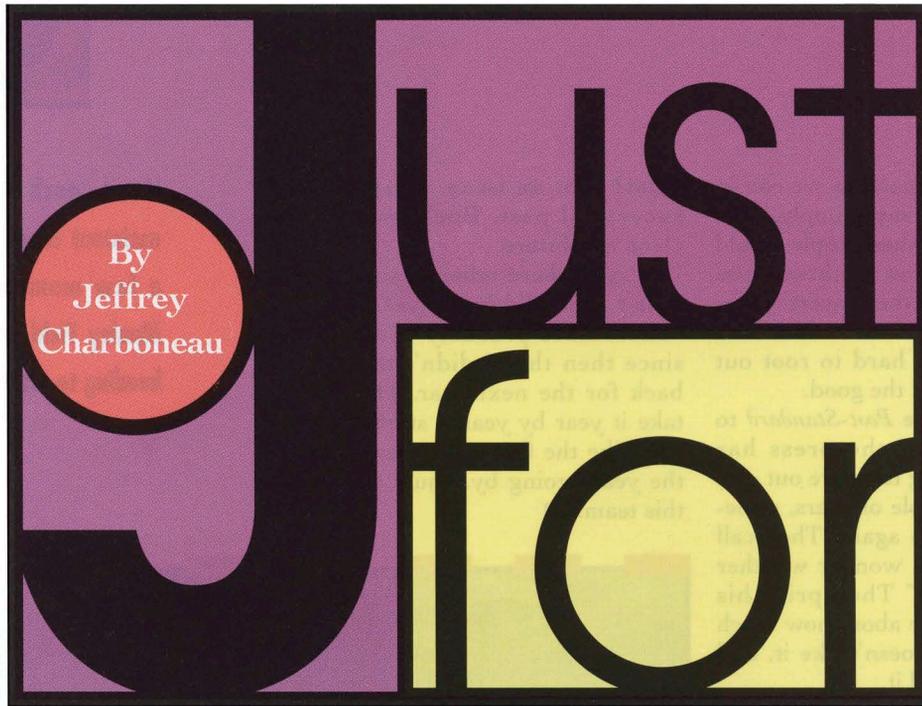


Jim Morin

Robb Armstrong



They embarrass politicians, humble celebrities, and generally create mayhem through satirical interpretations of today's social issues. Sometimes they just try to make us laugh. Who are they? Cartoonists—that special breed of scribe who has mastered the art of expressing ideas through little more than pen-and-ink drawings and a few choice words. **T**here is no question that a good cartoonist is incredibly gifted," says Bob Dacey, department chair for visual communication and head of the illustration program in SU's College of Visual and Performing Arts. "They have that rare ability to identify an event, take a position, create a unique image supported by as few words as possible, and deliver a message that, we hope, teaches us something." **U**nquestionably, cartooning is no simple feat. Above all it requires an innate ability to illustrate on paper just the right facial expression or situation that instantly conveys a precise meaning. "Cartoonists have a special perspective on things, a predilection for communicating a lot by using very little," says Dacey. "That can be refined, but cannot be taught." **A**nother important facet of the cartoonist's craft is the ability to seize a newsworthy event as it occurs and know almost immediately whether humor, irony, or pathos best

Robert Mankoff

Barbara Brandon

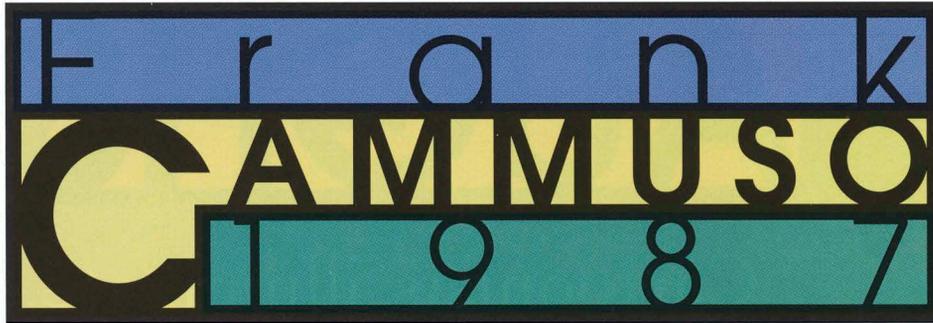
AUGHS

Cartoonists illuminate modern life through their unique mastery of pen and ink.

illustrates that situation. “Often the medium determines the style,” says Murray Tinkelman, an SU professor of illustration and contributing editorial artist for *The New York Times*. “A one-block panel begs for irony, while a strip cartoon may be far more appropriate for humor. In the end, though, it’s the political leanings of the artist that determine how the cartoon goes. Cartoonists are journalists, but in their forum they are almost obligated not to be bipartisan. The best cartoons come when they are being as partisan as they can.” Tinkelman considers cartooning an invaluable journalistic art form. “Cartoonists present our foibles and failures in almost burlesque fashion, but always with that ring of truth,” he says. “The humor, the satire, is what helps us face these failures and not be so quick to turn away.” Syracuse University boasts a growing family of alumni who have made major strides in political, human interest, satirical, and strip cartooning. Many are nationally and internationally syndicated, working from home bases across the country. In the following pages we feature six of SU’s top alumni cartoonists. While the opinions expressed in these cartoons are strictly those of the artists, the entertainment they provide can be enjoyed by everyone.

Frank Cammuso

Brad Anderson

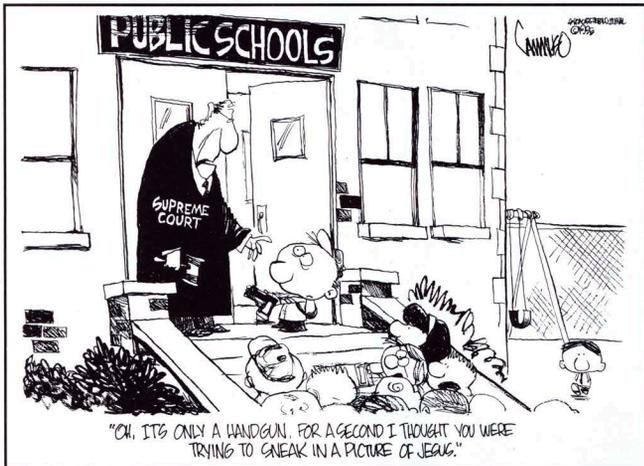
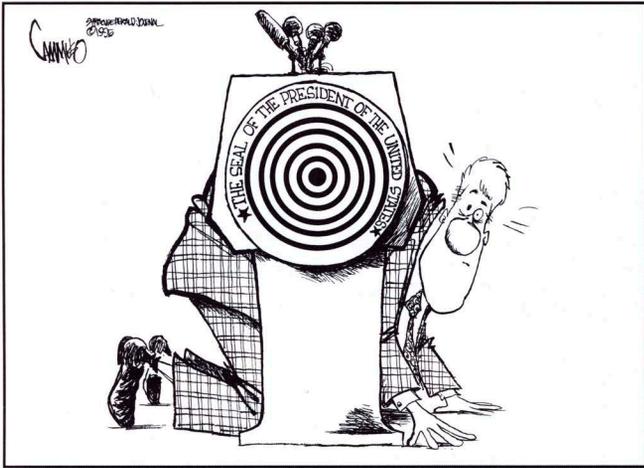


When asked which of his cartoons caused the most controversy, cartoonist Frank Cammuso '87 needs little time for reflection. "I decided to do a cartoon about the abortion issue," he recalls. "I ended up drawing one showing (former New York State governor) Mario Cuomo being dragged from a school bathroom by a ruler-wielding nun because he'd just scrawled 'Pro Choice' on the wall." **T**he resulting controversy had little to do with abortion, however. "The paper was flooded with calls from people who were angry because I'd caricatured a nun," says Cammuso. "I even got a call at home from a nun who was livid at the cartoon and really wanted to tell me off. I guess the big lesson is that no matter how long you're in this business, there are always going to be surprises." **F**ortunately for Cammuso, most of those surprises come from him, courtesy of the political cartoons he's penned for Syracuse *Herald-Journal* readers over the last seven years. Few subjects are beyond his satirical reach, although he says his favorites relate to life in Central New York. "I think local readers appreciate seeing cartoons about things happening close to home," Cammuso says. These subjects include local politics, traffic, the weather...and SU. "The University is so much a part of Syracuse that sooner or later it's bound to become a cartoon subject," he says. Does he feel any guilt about taking pot shots at his alma mater? "Not really," he says. "Things that happen at SU are what I call 'talk issues'; whatever happens on the Hill attracts attention and people talk about it." **C**ammuso says right now the hot talk issue for SU is the development of an athletic identity program, particularly as it relates to the University mascot. "I've done two cartoons on the mascot already," he says. (Cammuso also illustrated the cover for this issue.) "As an artist, I have to admit I'm really hoping for a change. What can you do with an orange? Not much. I'm looking forward to a better character to draw."

Political Cartoons

satire

Controversy



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE SARTORI

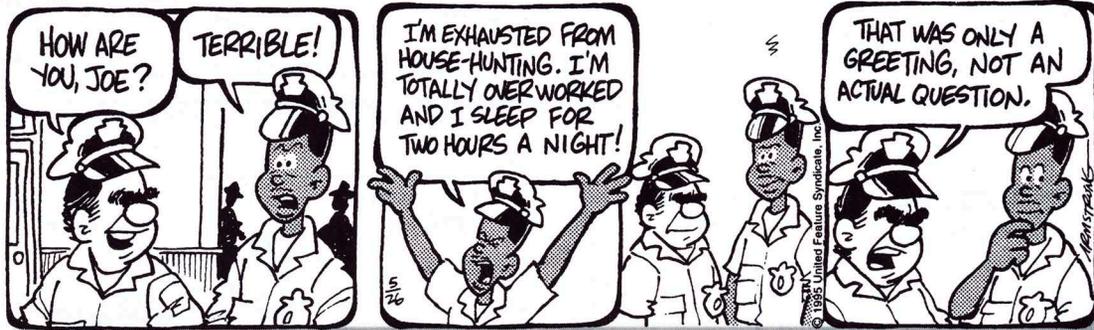


"No matter how long you're in this business, there are always going to be surprises."

-Frank Cammuso

Jump Start

encouragement



“The strip really struck something with students, and their reactions built my confidence.”

-Robb Armstrong

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH MULLIGAN

The Daily Orange



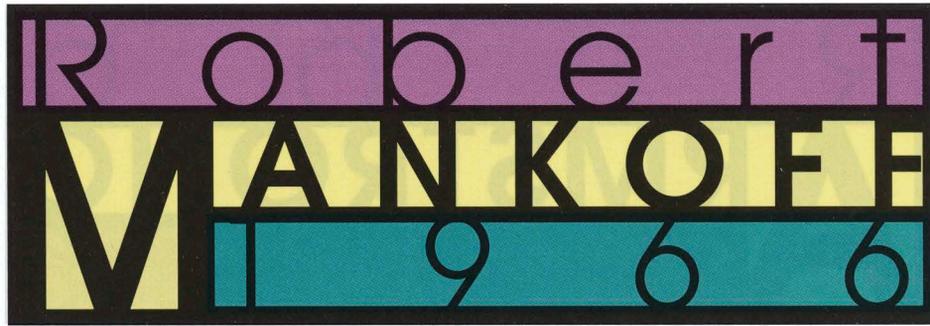
Most cartoonists choose their career paths because they are humorists at heart. For Robb Armstrong, however, it was personal tragedy that served as the catalyst for his eventual success in the medium. “I’d have to say it was my Mom, more than anyone else, who encouraged me to keep drawing when I was growing up,” says Armstrong. “Thanks to her I kept at it, and eventually entered the advertising design program at SU.” A month after he began his studies, however, Armstrong’s mother died, leaving the young artist feeling lost and alone. “It was a terrible period in my life,” Armstrong says. “I managed to keep going with my classes and everything, but personally I was having a real tough time.” **T**o help him cope, Armstrong turned to cartooning. He developed a strip titled “Hector,” about a young student dealing with the ups and downs of college life, and pitched the strip to *The Daily Orange*. The student newspaper published it for the next four years. “Hector was a kind of serious guy who was always critiquing the world,” says Armstrong. “The strip really struck something with students, and their reactions built my confidence. It was just the positive experience I needed to get past my Mom’s death and move on with my life.” **A**rmstrong graduated from SU in 1985 and took “Hector” with him. He had visions of syndicating the strip, but had difficulty finding any takers. “For the next five years I kept working on the strip,” says Armstrong. “Eventually it evolved into a strip about a young working couple and their everyday life experiences, and it was picked up by United Features Syndicate.” **J**ump Start,” the final evolution of Armstrong’s *Daily Orange* cartoon strip, is now published in 170 newspapers throughout the United States. “If there’s one thing to be learned from my experiences, I’d have to say it’s to never give up,” he says. “I struggled through five straight years of rejection, but I kept telling myself I had the talent to do it, and in the end, I did. There’s no greater pleasure than to succeed at something after repeated failure and in the end be able to say, ‘I knew it.’”

everyday life experiences

Hector

Cartoon Bank

comedy

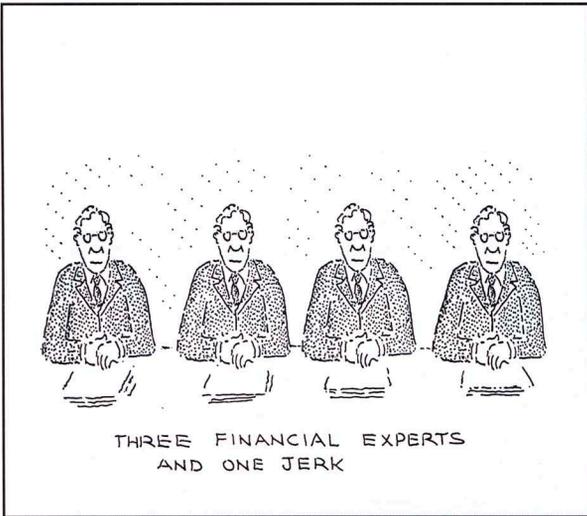


After graduating from SU's College of Arts and Sciences in 1966, Robert Mankoff entered the doctoral program of City University of New York to pursue a degree in experimental psychology. Just short of completing his dissertation, however, he "hit the wall," as he puts it, unable to go a step further in his scholastic career. **T**hat was the year I turned 30," says Mankoff. "I realized that if I was going to do any dream-chasing, it had to be then." **M**ankoff had, in fact, two dreams. "I was going to do stand-up comedy or I was going to be a cartoonist," he says. Having dabbled in cartooning in the past, he chose that path first, and spent the next four months creating hundreds of original cartoons. He took to the streets, peddling his work to magazines throughout New York City. Within three years he had become a regular contributor to *The New Yorker*, a position he still holds today. **I** had some success with other magazines, but *The New Yorker* was my ideal," Mankoff says. "I kept submitting to them until they finally realized I wasn't going to go away, so they bought one of my cartoons. Then they bought another and another, and eventually contracted for my work." **T**hese days, Mankoff is as much an entrepreneur as he is a cartoonist. In 1992, he established the Cartoon Bank, a computerized database of unpublished cartoons penned by himself and other cartoonists. "For years, I submitted up to 20 cartoons a week to *The New Yorker*, and the editors chose maybe one or two of them," Mankoff explains. "That left 18 cartoons that went unused each time." **H**e developed the Cartoon Bank as an outlet for this remaining material. Customers include news bureaus, business newsletters, and other organizations that pay a fee for cartoons selected from more than 200 categories. "We can provide wit on almost any given subject," Mankoff says. **I**n the three years the Cartoon Bank has been in business, sales have grown steadily. Mankoff insists, however, that profit is not the ultimate motive. "The fact is, I love the cartoons," he says. "I want people to see the work, and I want it to be preserved."

entrepreneur

The New Yorker

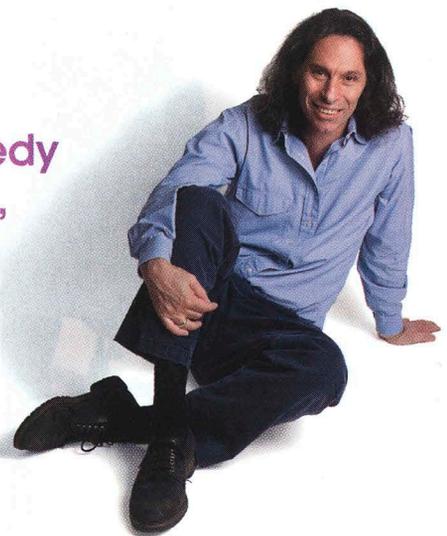
© 1995 ROBERT MANKOFF FROM THE CARTOON BANK™, INC.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA SABO

"I was going to do stand-up comedy
or I was going to be a cartoonist."

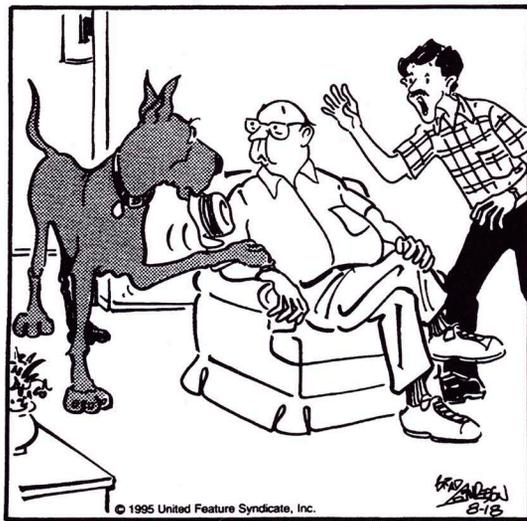
-Robert Mankoff



Marmaduke



"Don't pat me on the head in front of my friends."



"Marmaduke, I'll decide when Fred is too boring."



"His status is about midway between pet and head of the house."



"You know, the vet may not be that thrilled to see you, either."



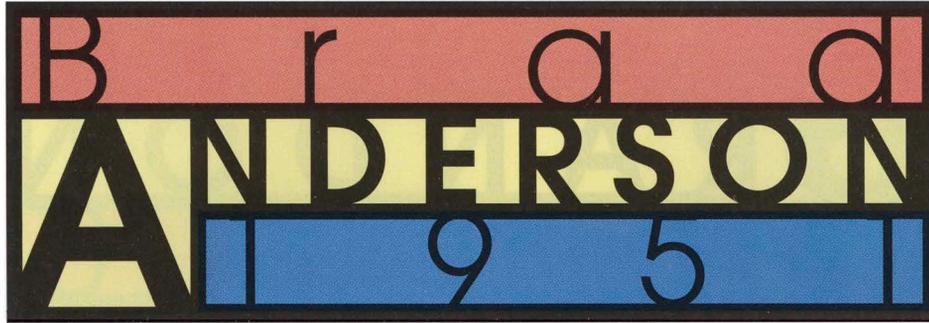
"I'm glad I can make a living at the thing I enjoy doing the most—drawing cartoons."

—Brad Anderson

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS LAFERGIE

The Syracusean

Collier's



In 1947, thanks to the GI Bill, World War II Navy veteran Brad Anderson entered the industrial design program of Syracuse University's School of Fine Arts. After enrolling, however, Anderson realized that his real talent lay in illustration, particularly cartooning, which led him to change his major to advertising and illustration and eventually become art director of the student magazine, *The Syracusean*. "I'd been cartooning much of my life, but I knew I still had a lot to learn," says Anderson. "My years at SU really helped me refine my skills and choose the direction I would eventually follow." That direction led Anderson to a successful career as a free-lance cartoonist for such magazines as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*. "It was really lucrative at first," says Anderson. "Then, with the arrival of television, magazines began to fold right and left as they lost advertisers. I had to do something fast if I wanted to stay a professional cartoonist, so I began pitching ideas for newspaper syndication to everyone I could think of. But no matter what I tried, my cartoons kept getting rejected." All that changed in 1954, when Anderson convinced a syndicate in Chicago to carry a new panel cartoon about a lovable pooch that was constantly getting into trouble. That dog was a Great Dane named Marmaduke. Four decades later, Marmaduke is still going strong, appearing in more than 600 newspapers published in 20 countries. Marmaduke is a canine with a conscience. He and Anderson, who now lives in Texas, lend a helpful hand to charities such as the American Cancer Society, whose "Paws for a Cause" dog walkathon is a major fund-raiser, and the American Association of Blood Banks, for which Marmaduke has appeared in several public service announcements to help promote blood drives. After so many years creating the world's most famous Great Dane, Anderson, 71, says he is still enthusiastic about his job. "I'm glad I can make a living at the thing I enjoy doing the most—drawing cartoons," he says.

Paws for a Cause

Detroit Free Press



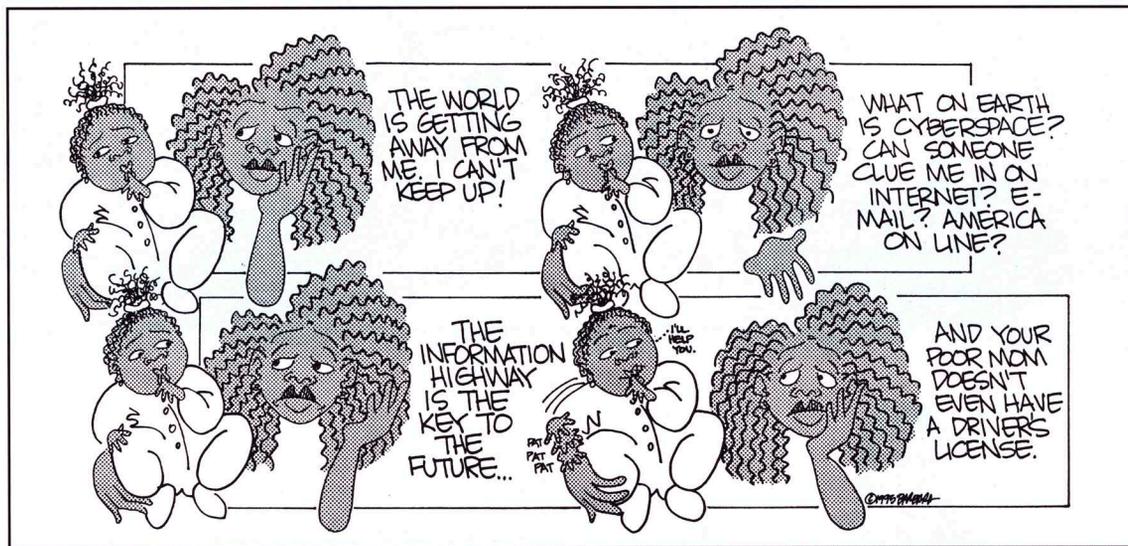
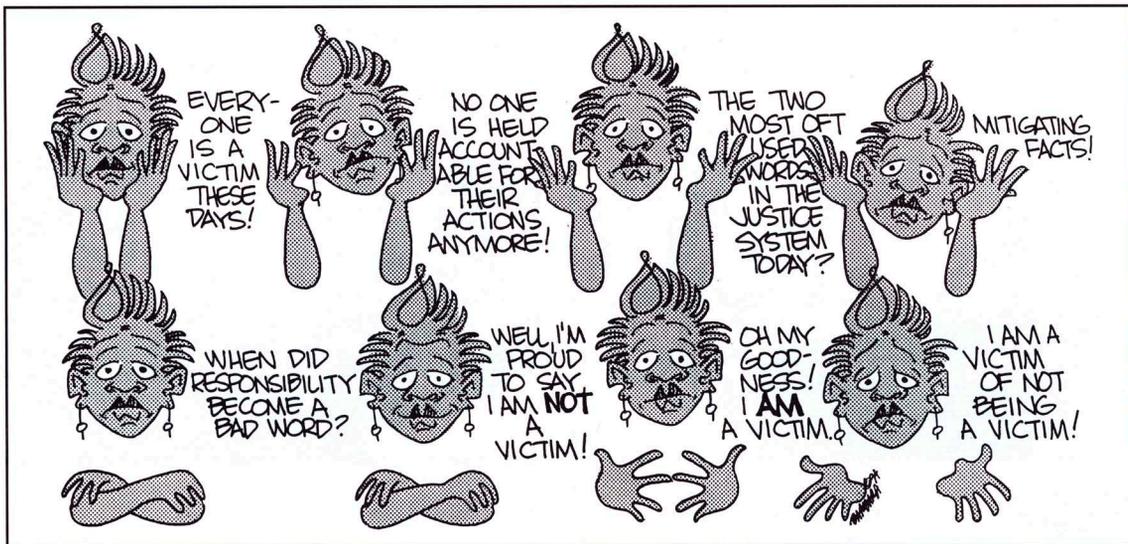
Barbara Brandon knows where she's coming from. As the country's only African American female cartoonist to be nationally syndicated, she blazes the trail for a greater awareness of the mindset of African American women and men in her weekly cartoon panel, "Where I'm Coming From," which first appeared in the lifestyle pages of the *Detroit Free Press* in 1989. **T**he strip reflects the experiences we have as black folks in America, particularly from a woman's point of view," says Brandon, who graduated from SU in 1980. "I'm trying to record our social history. We haven't seen black women speak out and try to show a different way of looking at a heavy topic." **T**he women who speak out in "Where I'm Coming From" are fictional characters based on Brandon and her friends. There are about a dozen women in all, ranging from the issues-conscious Lakesia to the self-absorbed, man-obsessed Nicole. A trademark feature of Brandon's characters is their depiction as "talking heads." "I don't draw bodies," Brandon explains. "You'll see heads, because that's where my characters' minds are. Women are always thought of in terms of their bodies." **B**randon didn't plan to make cartooning her career. She happened into the business while interviewing at a start-up magazine for African American women. "I told the editor I would work anywhere—editorial, art, it didn't matter," she says. "The editor liked my artwork and thought I had a sense of humor, so she suggested I create a comic strip for the publication." **T**he publication folded before Brandon's first cartoon saw the printed page. But the seed had been planted, and for the next four years she searched for another publisher. In 1989 the *Detroit Free Press* agreed to try out "Where I'm Coming From." It was an immediate hit. **B**randon sees her strips more as social commentaries than humor columns. "I'm not trying to get people to double over in laughter," she says. "I just want them to say, 'I can relate to that. I understand what she's talking about.'"

nationally syndicated

social history

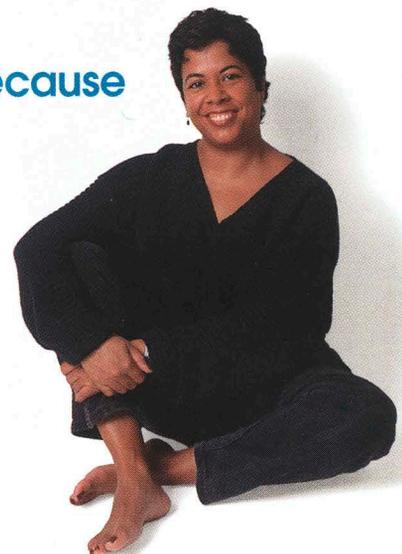
Where I'm

Coming From



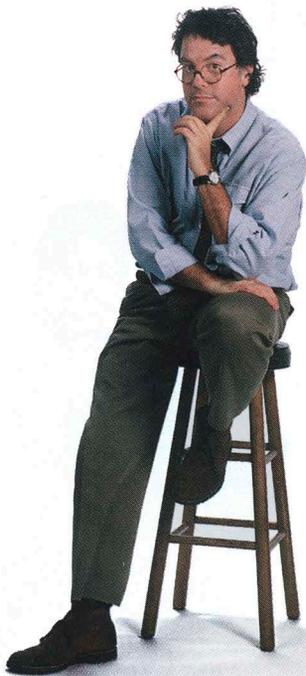
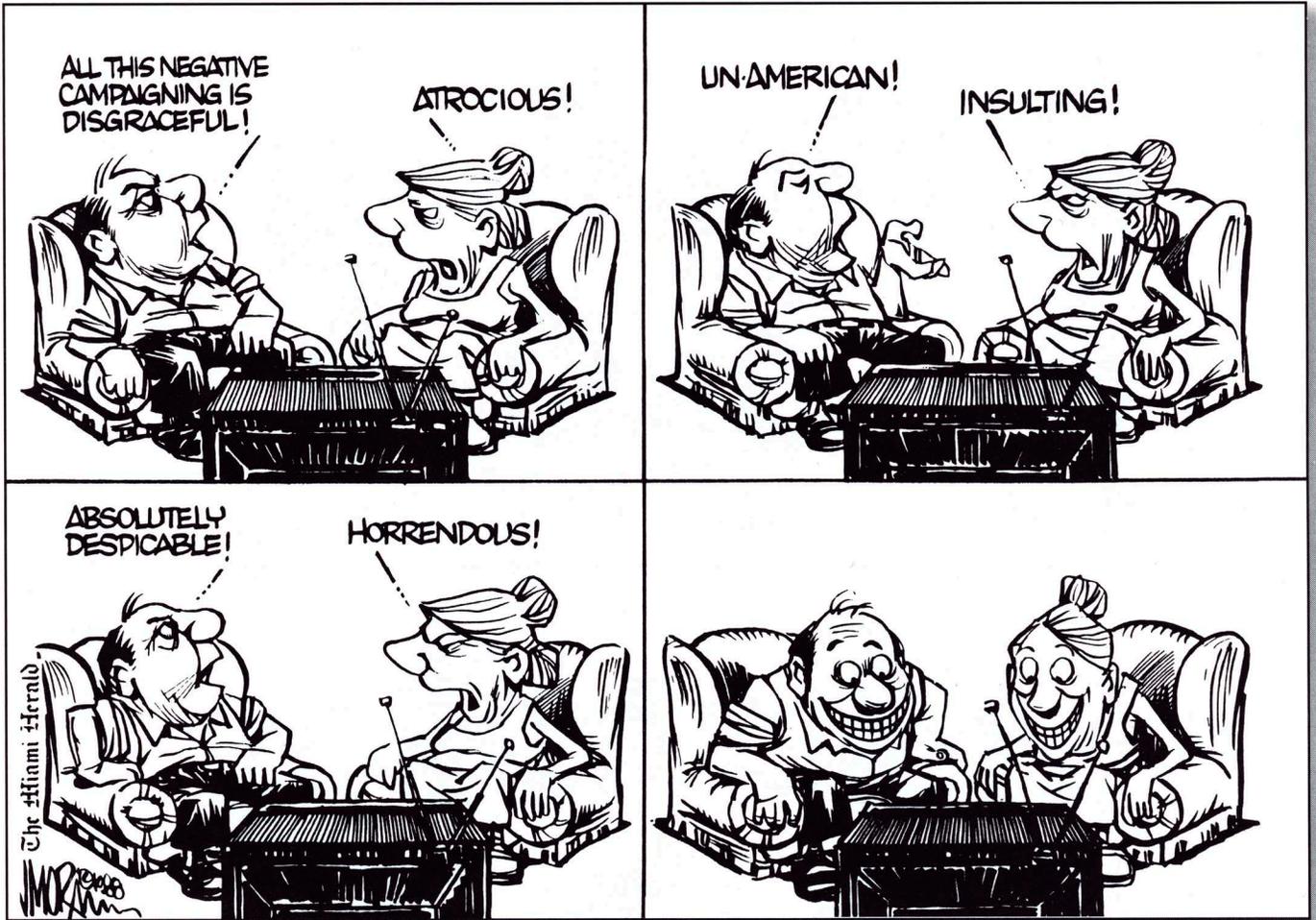
“I don’t draw bodies. You’ll see heads, because that’s where my characters’ minds are.”

-Barbara Brandon



PHOTOGRAPH BY NIKIA SABO

Miami Herald



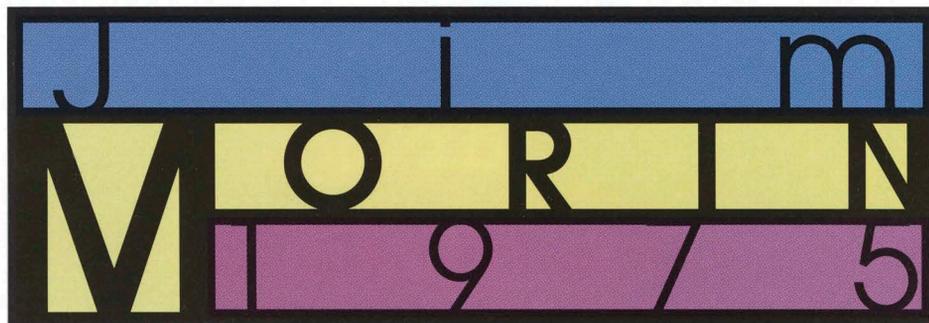
“Where else can you get mad about an event, go to work, express your opinion to millions, and get paid for it?”

–Jim Morin

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAMON DE JESUS

illustration

study abroad



For his first three years as an SU undergraduate, Jim Morin lived a double life. “My major was illustration, but I also wanted to pursue a career in fine art as a serious painter,” he says. “For three years I kept going back and forth, thinking of myself as a painter who also did illustration, and then as an illustrator who could paint. It was driving me nuts.” **M**orin’s dilemma began to resolve itself during his junior year, which he spent in London through SU’s Division of International Programs Abroad. “While I was in London, Watergate happened,” Morin recalls. “Everyone kept asking me what I thought of the scandal, and I found myself confronted for the first time with how I felt about being an American. I had always been interested in politics, and I really think that experience set in motion what I would eventually pursue as a career.” **N**ot long after he returned, a *Daily Orange* editor invited Morin to do a political cartoon for the paper. Initially he created two cartoons a week, then three, then four. “The timing was perfect,” says Morin. “By graduation I was doing cartoons for the *D.O.* for every issue. I knew then that this was what I wanted to do professionally.” **A**fter graduating, Morin sent out his *Daily Orange* cartoon portfolio to 400 newspapers, hoping to land a job. Eventually he did, with a small paper in Texas. “At first the job looked great, but after I arrived, new management took over and started cost cutting. And of course, the staff cartoonist position was one of the first to go.” From Texas, he moved to a paper in Virginia, and a year-and-a-half later, to the *Miami Herald* in Florida. “That was in 1978, three years after graduating from SU,” he says. “I’ve been here ever since.” **A**fter more than two decades as a political cartoonist, Morin remains enthusiastic about his job. “What I like about it is that if I read about something and it really gets me worked up, I always have a forum to react,” he says. “I mean, where else can you get mad about an event, go to work, express your opinion to millions, and get paid for it?”

The Daily Orange

painter