The Newhouse Network II

Perry Russom

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone

Part of the Other Film and Media Studies Commons, and the Visual Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Russom, Perry, "The Newhouse Network II" (2013). Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects. 93.
https://surface.syr.edu/honors_capstone/93

This Honors Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.
The Newhouse Network II

Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

Perry Russom
Candidate for Bachelor of Arts Degree and Renée Crown University Honors May 2013

Honors Capstone Project in broadcast journalism

Capstone Project Advisor:  _______________________
Frank Currier, Professor of Practice

Capstone Project Reader:  _______________________
Susan Nash, Director of Administration

Honors Director:  _______________________
Stephen Kuusisto, Director

Date: April 15, 2013
Abstract

The S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications has launched some of the best minds in media into the workforce since the school’s founding gift in 1964. From Bob Costas to Larry Kramer, the list of Newhouse success stories in the business is vast.

What separates Newhouse from other communications schools in the country is its strong alumni. Whether it’s visiting a class, helping a student get an internship, or serving on the advisory board, Newhouse grads want to assist other Newhouse people in succeeding.

This project adds to the foundation created by Clay LePard ’12. It continues and adds value to his project of interviewing advisory board members and uploading their interviews to the iPad presentation kiosk on the third floor of Newhouse 3.

Students, faculty, and visitors can shuttle through the interviews and catch a glimpse of what it means to be a Newhouse student and alumnus.
Table of Contents

Abstract (Page 1)

Acknowledgements (Page 4)

---------------
Chapter One: Finding a Capstone (Page 6)
---------------
Chapter Two: Experience (Page 7)
---------------
Chapter Three: Interviewing the Advisory Board Members (Page 9)
---------------
Chapter Four: The Interviews (Page 13)
---------------
Chapter Five: Double Dose of Big Apple (Page 17)
---------------
Chapter Six: Mirror Image (Page 18)
---------------
Chapter Seven: Reflection (Page 20)
---------------
Chapter Nine: Summary of Capstone (Page 23)
Acknowledgements

None of this would be possible without the creator of the original capstone, Clay LePard ’12. Special thanks to Jean Brooks, Lynn Vanderhoek, Maggie Maxwell, and Sarah Hope who allowed me to work with them and pick their minds on the workings of the fundraising and promotion of Newhouse.
Chapter One: Finding a Capstone

There are two golden rules in succeeding in media. It’s all about who you know and how good you are. As a professional in a field dominated by connections, being a part of the best communications school in the country has its benefits. Turning on network and local television, it’s easy to assume one of those producers or reporters has Orange blood running through their veins.

When Clay LePard approached me and explained that he needed someone to fill his shoes in continuing his Capstone, I saw it as my chance to give back to my school. When I think of the Newhouse name, I imagine of all of the alumni who gave back to the school in hopes of helping a student along with their career. Walking the halls of Newhouse 1, 2, and 3, I can’t help but feel grateful for where I am and for the people who came here before me.

Before talking to Clay, I was at a loss trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my Capstone. I knew I wanted to focus on my broadcast journalism major, but developing an original topic was difficult for me. While tossing and turning between ideas, I was contacted by Clay LePard, class of 2012, who explained his capstone to me.

LePard set out to conduct video interviews with members of the Newhouse Advisory Board, edit them, and upload them to the Newhouse YouTube page. He then worked closely with the Newhouse web designer to upload them to the “Newhouse Network” page. This webpage is connected with an iPad that is hooked up to a flat screen on the third floor of Newhouse 3. All was accomplished by LePard.
After talking to LePard about what he was doing, he asked me if I was interested in adopting his project and building on it. It would require that I interview more members of the Newhouse Advisory Board and edit the video for the iPad. What intrigued me about taking on his project was the ability to help the school that has helped me in my development as a reporter. Another perk was the opportunity to meet and interview Newhouse Advisory Board members.

Once I told LePard I wanted to take on his project, he directed me to meet with Jean Brooks. Brooks is the Assistant Director of Donor Relations and Director of Special Events. We set up meetings where we talked about what LePard had accomplished and what else needed to be done. She handed me a list of the members of the Newhouse Advisory and crossed off every name that LePard had already interviewed and created another list of alumni who needed to be interviewed.

Chapter 2: Experience

Taking on his Capstone has allowed me to go places and meet people I would have never imagined as an undergraduate student. I worked closely with the donor relations department headed by Lynn Vanderhoek and Jean Brooks. I was able to have lunch with Jeffrey Katzenberg (CEO of DreamWorks Animation), talk with sports commentator Mike Tirico, and work the 2012 Mirror Awards in New York City.

My first trip with Newhouse was on April 26, 2012. This trip was the most important part in completing the capstone objective. I flew down to New York City with Newhouse Professor William Ward to meet and interview members of the Advisory Board at Forbes Magazine. Ward was preparing to present on how social
media is being taught in the classrooms and where the future of the media might be headed.

As we waited for the airport to announce that our plane was boarding, I assisted Ward in reworking his PowerPoint presentation. He had his set up on his Mac laptop and I reformatted it to work on a PC. After a half hour wait, our plane was finally ready for us to board. Once we sat in our seats and strapped our belts, the plane’s engines started to roar. As the plane started to shake with the engines anticipation for liftoff, a fire alarm sounded. The engines roar turned to a rumble as the pilot’s voice came over the loud speaker. We were headed back to the gate.

It turned out that the smoke alarm in the bathroom was faulty which made it go off. We had to take our bags and exit the plane to wait in the terminal. After the wait, we were ready to take off. In a little less than an hour, our wheels touched down in New York City. With time playing against us, we grabbed our bags and hustled for the taxi pick-up line.

We called Jean to tell her that we were running late. She said we still had time to make the meeting. When we arrived at Forbes Magazine, we met with Jean on the third floor. There, she came out of the Advisory Board meeting and instructed Ward to head inside and she showed me where I was stationed. In a later section in this paper, I discuss how I found the best available area to interview the board members. When I set up my gear, I returned to the third floor where the meeting was still going on.

The room was set up like a giant rectangle. There was a rectangular table in the middle of the room with more chairs lined up along the walls creating a u-shape.
At the right end of the room, there was a projector and screen. When I entered the room, I shuffled to the left side of the room and sat in the back where there were refreshments.

While I sat straight in my chair, I began to survey the room. Jean Brooks was on my right as she leaned in to me and whispered the names of the board members in the room. “That’s Larry Kramer,” Brooks said. “Over there is Camille Massey. Doesn’t she look great for her age? Right in front of us is Mike Tirico…of course you know him.” It was the who’s who of Newhouse and the industry.

In front of me to the left sat Eric Mower ’66, G ’68. There’s a passageway named after him in Newhouse that connects Newhouse 1 and Newhouse 2. I’ve studied in this man’s hallway before. It was surreal.

The group broke for lunch. Jean not-so-subtly pushed me in the direction of Tirico. She introduced us and mentioned to Tirico that we both wear class rings. We talked about the rings and what they meant to us in a few rounds of questions before I began to ask him what I really wanted to ask him. “How did/do you prepare for your broadcasts?” While I asked the question, in my head, I created a scene with him practicing in the car working on his enunciation.

Back to reality, he chuckled, look left and right, leaned in like he was giving me the secret ingredients to Coca-Cola and said he doesn’t practice. He said he was always able to do this. Some mornings he talks a little more than normal if he has an earlier broadcast but usually he just goes and performs. I was amazed. Oncee I was able to shake myself from the conversation, I began to focus on my task at hand. It was time to interview the Advisory Board members.
Brooks gave me a list of the board members who were at the meeting. On the sheet, there was a list of the members who had already been interviewed by LePard and a list of those who had not. For the full explanation of the interviews, turn to Chapter 3.

Following the interviews, I gathered my gear and said goodbye to the members and Brooks. I rushed out of Forbes and tried to grab a taxi. After being refused several times by taxi drivers, I began to walk until I found a driver. He rushed to LaGuardia and I boarded a Delta plane headed back to Syracuse.

Chapter 3: Interviewing the Advisory Board Members

For my interviews, Newhouse sent me to Forbes Magazine at 60 5th Ave, New York, NY. When I arrived at the magazine, Brooks showed me to the room where I would be stationed throughout the day. It was a corner office on the third floor of Forbes.

After analyzing the room’s lights and angles, I decided this room was not adequate for the interviews. I told Brooks and she asked the people at Forbes if there was anywhere else I could set up for the interviews. They then showed me an art gallery in the first floor adjacent to the foyer of the building. This room was well lit, had great angles, and access for the interviews. The room was next door to where lunch would be served. The plan was to pick board members off while they were at lunch, as I was not to interfere with their meetings.

For the interview, I had a camera, microphone, and a tripod. All of the gear was supplied by Newhouse. I set up the tripod, made sure it was level, and connected
the camera to the top of the tripod. When each subject sat down, I zoomed the camera into their eye and focused the camera. Then, I would zoom the shot out and set it up in the interview frame I wanted. This would keep the shot in focus throughout the entire interview.

I had every board member set up to a wireless microphone so I would not have to worry about holding a microphone and getting in the way of the shot. This allowed me to sit back, react to the answers they gave me, and think of follow up questions.

For my first interview, I spoke with Stephen M. Jacoby ’76. Jacoby is the Associate Publisher & Senior Marketing Executive at Esquire Magazine. Then I interviewed Andrea Pinkney ’85, Vice President & Editor at Large at Scholastic Corporation, followed by Marianne Samenko ’79 the Senior Director for Marketing, JP Morgan Chase. Next was Deborah Henretta G ’85. She is the Group President, Global Beauty Care, Proctor and Gamble. After Henretta was Doug Robinson, partner of Happy Madison Productions. Last was Roger Conner ’70, the Senior Director, Communications & Marketing for Catholic Charities USA.

The editing software I used to cut the videos is called Adobe Premier. The software was provided by the Newhouse School. All of my video was recorded on a Secure Digital (SD) Card. Before I could begin the editing process, I placed the SD card in to the card reader connected to the computer and pulled all of the files onto the hard drive that was given to me by Jean Brooks. This hard drive is the same one that was used by LePard. This allows me to jump from computer to computer and be able to edit instead of only being able to edit on one computer.
I created a folder in the hard drive where I put all of the interviews in their raw format. The raw format is also referred to as unedited. I then opened up Adobe Premier and began to edit the interviews. I had six interviews to edit. I began with Stephen M. Jacoby. I then edited the interviews of Andrea Pinkney, Marianne Samenko, Deborah Henretta, Doug Robinson, and Roger Conner. The order in which I edited the interviews was the same order in which I interviewed the Advisory Board members.

What I was looking for in the interviews were medium length (:45 second) sound bites on what Newhouse means to these distinguished alumni, advice for current students, and where they see Newhouse going in the future. Once I found a sound bite, I would edit it. Then, I would create a slate that would be placed in front of the bite that would read who they were and what they were about to talk about. This is the same template that LePard used when he edited.

Example:
Once the videos were complete, I exported them to the hard drive. This took an average of a minute and a half per video. Then, came the part where I upload them to YouTube for the public to see. The name of the YouTube page is SUNewhouse. This is the same page that LePard uploaded his videos to. Uploading to the website took the most time during the editing process. It would take around 10 minutes for each video to upload to the site.

From start to finish, it took me seven hours to edit all of the videos. In total, I edited and uploaded 18 videos. I decided to edit and upload all of the videos in one day to keep consistency in the product and because I blocked out the entire day to get this job done.

Chapter 4: The interviews

Interview verbatim from April 26, 2012:

Stephen M. Jacoby ‘76

Associate Publisher & Senior Marketing Executive, Esquire Magazine

“Newhouse really sort of taught me a lot of different disciplines and had me open my eyes to many aspects of media. It was also a great door opener. When you mention you graduated from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, people pay attention.”

“When you show up at an interview, bring your resume or have it digitally. Don’t assume anything. It’s amazing to me people show up and they’re not prepared. People who have been working in the business world sort of expect people in the business world to show up prepared, so be prepared.”
“I think the Newhouse name carries a tremendous amount of weight in the media industry and the business community, of course. The Newhouse School was really trailblazing what it meant to be a journalism student. The school has done an amazing job training best-in-class journalists.

Andrea Pinkney ‘85

Vice President & Editor at Large, Scholastic Corporation

“Newhouse means to me that I understand the art, soul and craft of effective communication. I still actually remember my first job coming out of Newhouse as a magazine editor one month after graduating and walking in and feeling prepared. I was ready to go and ready to contribute to that magazine. There are still things I use from my COM 107 class 25 years later, I am still using it.”

“The Newhouse name holds tremendous weight. The Newhouse Network is vast, it’s strong, it’s vibrant. I meet Newhouse alumni everywhere I go and as someone in a position to hire young people coming out of college, those Newhouse resumes always rise to the top. I’m always happy when I hire someone from Newhouse because I know they are ready to do the job.”

Marianne Samenko ‘79

Senior Director for Marketing, JP Morgan Chase
“I was on the PR track and we were actually working with a client for four years so it really gave you real-time and real on-time experience of what you’re going to experience later on when you graduate. To me, it was like this great learning lab and the people you interacted with were terrific. My advisor was Gloria Brundage and she was the lady that put the tiger on the tank back in the old Exxon days so it was really great working with professionals and learning from professionals in an environment on a great campus.”

“When we interview particularly for new candidates for our roles at JP Morgan Chase, the Newhouse students really stand above the rest. They’re already thinking about the business and what they can do because they’ve done their homework.”

“I meet students from UCLA and few other places and some of those smaller communications schools and they’re very book knowledge and savvy and they’re smart but they haven’t actually had the experience that Newhouse has afforded whether it’s in the studio or whether it’s doing actual assignments.”

Deborah Henretta G ‘85
Group President, Global Beauty Care, Proctor and Gamble.

“I have found that no matter where I go in the world, there are people who know and value the Newhouse brand. In my global travels, on many occasions, I run into people that have gone to Newhouse or have a child that went to Newhouse, know
of someone who went to Newhouse and I will tell you the stature and the value
people associate with the Newhouse brand is tremendous.”

She said she believes Newhouse is preparing their students with the skills that
are needed in this new social media age.

“The Newhouse School is an incredible opportunity to learn the fundamentals
and basics of communication which I just see as the foundation for any career you
would want in this world.”

“This school is a wonderful opportunity for learning.”

**Doug Robinson ‘85**

**Partner, Happy Madison Productions**

“Newhouse is a place where I consider getting my start. It’s where I learned
the vocabulary of what the entertainment industry is all about. It’s where I got a broad
view of the communications world and what was available to me and really where I
found my interest and the direction I was going to head. For me now, it’s a place to
come back and meet other people and to give opportunities to students to hopefully
enter the workforce and move on to their careers.”
“(Newhouse) was a place to meet people, see what was out there and get to know those people. If you can get in front of those people and show you are a hard worker and all you want is an opportunity.

Roger Conner ’70

Senior Director, Communications & Marketing for Catholic Charities

USA

“It’s gotten nothing but more prestigious over the years with more state of the art capabilities and more state of the art learnings that someone could take advantage of today. “

Connor’s son also graduated from Newhouse. He is now working for Nickelodeon in Los Angeles.

Chapter 5: Double Dose of the Big Apple

My second trip to New York City took place on June 13, 2012. This was another project with the donor relations office at Newhouse. While it did not have to deal directly with the advisory board members, it gave me another angle in understanding the Newhouse Network. It was the 2012 Mirror Awards. The Mirror Awards are a celebration of media covering the media (like a mirror). Professional writers from all across the county enter their best stories that critique, bash and celebrate the media. The awards show took place at the Plaza Hotel on 768 5th Ave in NYC.
Other Newhouse students were working the show, as well. We were all assigned to different jobs from keeping the emcee Anderson Cooper content to handing out the awards. My job was to run the Newhouse Twitter account with fellow student Bradley Slavin. We tweeted when the awards were given out, who the winners were and other observations from the show.

While I did not interview any of the board members at this junction, I was able to see how the Newhouse donor relations office works in planning and executing these events. This event was the product of months and months of preparation. It was not only a fundraiser for the school, but portrayed the school in a positive light. It was a rewarding experience to rub shoulders and shake hands with the top people in the business.

One of the most intriguing things I learned from working at the Mirror Awards was that all of this was created only a few short years ago. Brooks confessed that she is amazed everyone is mesmerized by the awards and some people even include a Mirror nomination on their resumes. She was one of the original planners at the inception of the idea and has seen this awards show continue to grow over the past few years. When I asked for her thoughts on the show becoming so big that it needed to be televised, she rolled her eyes in a nauseating fashion. She said her goal now is to control the Mirror Awards before they get too big.

Chapter 6: Mirror Image

My third and final trip for this project was again to New York and again in assistance for the Mirror Awards. It was a new year and I had a new job description. I met with Jean Brooks a few weeks before the trip and she described to
me what I would be doing. This was the first time I was helping out with the judging portion of the Mirror Awards.

I was sent to NYC on March 22, 2013 by train. I had a train at 6:50 a.m. from Syracuse to New York City. For every hour but one, I was asleep in a half fetal position with my head pressed up against the window. I woke up on the outskirts of the city. When the train pulled into Penn Station, I grabbed my bags and found the nearest exit to the street. As I sat in the taxi on my way to SU’s Lubin House, I lowered the window to feel the pulse of the city. As we zoomed by skyscrapers and flew over potholes, my pulse started to quicken at the thought of being at the nucleus of the world. We drove past Central Park and stopped at 61st street. I walked the rest of the way to the building’s address: 11 East 61st Street.

Seeing the orange flag tattooed with the blue block “S” made me feel at home. I texted Jean saying that I’d arrived and she gave me the directions to the fourth floor. Katie Hudson, the SU grad who was working at the desk, pointed me in the direction of a tiny elevator. This elevator was the smallest elevator I’ve ever experienced. There was just enough room for me and my bags.

I met with Brooks to go over the plan for the day. On Friday, I was to sit in on two judging panels for the awards. I handed out name tags to the judges and sorted their parting gifts for helping us with the Mirrors. My other jobs were to keep time and make sure each of my groups was going along with the time that was allotted to them by Brooks.

For each judging session, there was a packet containing all of the judges’ scores. I sat with the packet for every meeting as the judges went over the entries.
There were dozens of entries for every category. Grading worked on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the best. The entries were judged by three judges. The three scores would be added up with a top potential score of 15. Every panel decided to create a numerical line for how far they would go down on the list to see how many entries they would discuss. For example, they would not review any entry below the grade of 12 to save time. Each category had to have 4-5 finalists that would be passed onto the next round where different judges would decide a winner. Once the finalists were chosen, I would circle them on the sheet, double-check with the panel leader and then report them back to Brooks. She would then add them into her computer.

Chapter 7: Reflection

My mindset during the interviews with the members was to be efficient and concise. I learned through my classes in Newhouse to be conversational when asking questions and be prepared. As I was getting ready for my trip to New York, I looked up information on every person I was going to interview. I didn’t want to go into the conversations blind. I wrote down a few facts about each person and brought them up during the interview. Going the extra mile makes that much of a difference in these interviews.

Another tactic I used was asking about their families. Deborah Henretta and I talked about her kids for several minutes before we went into the interview. I believe this loosened her up and bettered her answers. She appeared to be stiff and nervous when we first sat down but after talking about her kids, she began to connect more with me and the camera, making the interview that much better.
Looking back at all that I did for the Capstone, there are a few things that I wish I could have done better. I wish I had a better handle on the web development of the Newhouse Advisory Board webpage that was worked on by LePard.

The page looks overly simplistic and dull. I spoke with Brooks several times about updating the webpage. One of my plans was to create an interactive map where visitors could scroll through the iPad and see how and where the Newhouse Advisory Board members worked throughout the world. This would show how large the Newhouse footprint is.

Working with Brooks and Vanderhoek was an extremely rewarding experience. Brooks, especially, was with me during the entire process. We communicated through emails, text messages, and meetings. She was able to help me in booking and paying for my transportation to New York City, talking with advisory board members, and allowed me to help in her the planning of special projects.

Brooks played a mother figure to me. For my trips to New York City, Brooks scheduled my flights to the Advisory board meetings and scheduled my train ride for the 2013 Mirror Awards. Newhouse paid for all of my meals and travel expenses. For the 2012 Awards, I drove down to New York on my own. She was not able to get me housing, but I stayed with a friend. It was easier for me to complete this project with them playing for the travel and food.

Every time I was in New York working on my Capstone, Brooks was there with me helping me navigate the city and made me feel at home. She was one of the people who made this capstone experience worthwhile. I will be grateful for all that
she has done for me. Whenever I was having a trouble with this project, her door was always open for me to stop by and go through everything with her.

Working with Brooks allowed me to see the inner workings of what she does for Newhouse. She allowed me to sit in on her meetings in Newhouse when she was deciding who was going to be the emcee of the Mirror Awards. We discussed who would be a famous enough emcee that would bring attention to the show.

In 2012, we settled on bringing Anderson Cooper. We considered asking NBC’s Brian Williams but Brooks believed that he would say no before we even asked. She was right. We then asked Lester Holt of NBC but he could not attend because it was the same weekend as his son’s graduation from college.

For the 2013 show, Brooks wanted to ask someone who was a minority to come. Brooks was always a fan of bringing in minorities and women. We thought about asking Robin Roberts but it was decided that it was too close for her well-known bone marrow transplant. Brooks believed Roberts would be the show rather than being a supporting act. Brooks was hell-bent on bringing in someone from the ABC/ESPN family. She was able to schedule ABC’s David Muir to be the emcee. It’s really cool to see the entire process of debating the emcee and actually seeing them host.

I am happy with my note-taking ability throughout the entire process. I was able to recall all of the events in clear detail. It makes it a lot easier to write this Capstone when I have a vivid memory and receipts of what I have done.
Working on this Capstone advanced my professionalism. I learned how to talk to professionals in the field, professors, and faculty members. It gave me an inside look at how Newhouse works and the hierarchy it takes to get things done.

I am extremely honored to be chosen as LePard’s successor to this project. I was able to put to work the skills I learned in the classroom. I interviewed, shot, and edited. This project helped me learn to ask better questions, listen, and network. It’s important to be yourself and be positive when you’re out in the field.

Chapter 8: Summary of Capstone

This capstone was a continuation of the project started by Clay LePard ‘12. He interviewed a dozen members of the Newhouse Advisory Board on camera, uploaded the videos to YouTube and helped create a website where the videos can be watched. He worked with Lynn Vanderhoek, Newhouse Assistant Dean for Advancement, and Jean Brooks, Assistant Director of Donor Relations and Director of Special Events, in setting up an iPad and monitor on the third floor of Newhouse 3 where the videos play.

In the fall of 2012, LePard asked me if I was interested in furthering his Capstone. That spring, I was sent to Forbes Magazine in New York City by Newhouse to interview the members Advisory Board members.

For the interview, I brought down a camera, tripod, and microphone supplied by Newhouse. To record the video, I used a secure digital (or SD) card similar to the ones found in everyday digital cameras. All of the skills that I used while shooting and conducting the interviews were taught to me by Newhouse.
During my trip to New York City, I interviewed Stephen M. Jacoby ’76, Andrea Pinkney ‘85, Marianne Samenko ’79, Deborah Henretta G ’85, Doug Robinson ‘85, and Roger Conner ’70.

To edit the interviews, I used the computer software Adobe Premier to edit the interviews. After they were edited and exported, I uploaded them to YouTube where the IT department is adding them to the website to be viewed on the iPad in Newhouse 3.

In addition to editing the interviews, I traveled to New York City two more times to help with the 2012 and 2013 Mirror Awards. This awards program is conducted by the Newhouse School and led by the members of the donor relations department. The show gives awards to media who write about media, hence the name “Mirror” Awards.

For the 2012 awards, I worked during the show as a social media coordinator. I tweeted from the “NewhouseSU” account as well as from my personal. I would tweet which award was coming up next and then who the winners were. Working with Bradley Slavin, a fellow Newhouse student, we kept our fingers on the pulse of the show and informed the Twitter world on what was going on.

Leading up to the 2012 show, The Times Picayune in New Orleans announced that they would print their paper three days a week instead of daily circulation. The paper is owned by the Newhouse family. New Orleans residents and newspaper junkies were tweeting Slavin and me throughout the entire awards show voicing their displeasure with the Newhouse family. It was one of the most interesting experiences and takeaways I have from the 2012 show.
For the 2013 awards, I worked with the judging portion of the competition. I was able to sit in on the judging panels and observe their debates on which entries would be able to move on. I would write down the top four that were elected to move on and report those entries back to Brooks. I sat in on three separate sessions over the course of two days.

The three panels that I sat on were the Best Single Article – Traditional/Legacy Media, Best Single Article – Digital Media, and Best Commentary – Traditional/Legacy Media. The judges were Newhouse professors, graduates, and friends of Newhouse who work in the industry. Sitting in on the judging was extremely beneficial to me. It was interesting to see how detailed the judges were and how they were able to scrutinize every little word or sentence in the contestant’s pieces. It made me look back at my own work that I have done in the field and reanalyze its quality.

While this project helped me in my education, I hope the finished product helps a fellow student. I want students to look at my interviews and feel inspired by something an alumnus says. The interviews provided advice on internships, the Newhouse Network, and what the Newhouse name means to them.

While my Capstone’s intention was to continue LePard’s work on the Advisory Board, my experiences with the donor relations department played just as important of a role in my understanding of the project. I am extremely grateful for being able to help out the donor relations department.

All of these experiences written above added to my total understanding of the Newhouse Network. The Network is unbelievably vast. Think of it like a family.
There is direct family through blood (alums of Newhouse) and then family through association (those who have connections to the school).

A successor has yet to be named in taking over this project. While most of the board members have been interviewed, the focus for the rest of this project should be updating the interviews and reworking the website.

In the future, I want the website to become more user-friendly. I would like to see updates on what the alumni are doing, their stories, and professional work. It would be great to see the Young Alumni Advisory Board added to the interviews on the iPad and website. This would be a better connection for the current students in Newhouse and visiting friends. It would allow the students to see younger faces with better stories that they can relate to. Hearing from a graduate in the class of 1972 is different from hearing a graduate from the 2000’s.

Here is a wish list of things I want to see done in the future with this Capstone:

1) Make the website more interactive for users

2) Have an ongoing Twitter feed on the website where visitors can see board member’s tweets in live time

3) Interview the rest of the Advisory Board.

4) Have the videos run on a consistent basis rather than making the viewer click on each video

5) Re-interview members who were interviewed by LePard. Update their information. Two years is a long time in this business where advice and stories could change.
6) Have a biography for each alumnus that goes with a picture.

   - When you click on their picture, the video starts to play.