



# Expressions

A SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS PUBLICATION 2017

## DAVID RATHBUN OFFERS PHOTO MAXIMS

EXPLORING THE FIELD OF GAMES

SNAPSHOTS FROM INDIA

REPORTING ON THE LIONS

Ships Bollard & River | Photo taken by David L. Rathbun



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS

INSPIRING THOUGHT. PERFECTING PRACTICE.

# INTRODUCING EXPRESSIONS 2017

Welcome to the fifth issue of Expressions. This year we again celebrate many successes and we proudly share stories of the School of Communications students, faculty and alumni.

Expressions in many ways, reflects what we achieve and strive toward each year. This year is marked by a record number of awards won by students and faculty in the School of Communications.

Our Multimedia Journalism students and Grand Valley Lanthorn staff earned a dozen Michigan Press Association awards for college journalists. These included four writing awards for Audra Gamble – highest number won by a single college journalist in the state. In addition, many students earned recognition in the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Student Media Awards. These included a first-place (the third year in a row) in radio sports play-by-play. Advertising and Public Relations students also won several ADDY awards.

Our faculty members too have garnered a record number of awards. Professor Roger Ellis was given the Michigan Educational Theater Association's Standing Ovation award for his unconditional commitment to Theater students, especially high school students in Michigan. Professor Alex Nesterenko won the GVSU Graduate Mentoring award, and Professor Joseph McCargar has won the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Teaching Excellence Award for affiliate faculty. Along with outstanding teaching and learning, our faculty members have deeply engaged students in creative and scholarly activities. Many of these activities are detailed in this issue.



I encourage you to proudly tell others about what we do in the School of Communications.  
Best Wishes,

Vandana Pednekar-Magal, Ph.D.  
Director, School of Communications

The primary goal of Expressions has always been to showcase the diversity of activity by our faculty, students and alumni.

In this issue, we offer more examples of the impact and success of the School of Communications on campus and

around the globe. All of the current majors in the School are featured.

Faculty and student experiences are reflected in several articles, including reflections on 20 years of the Summer Film Project by J.H. Philbin (Film and Video Production); the establishment of a new club: The Coalition of Health Communications at Grand Valley State University; and the growth and changes in the Master of Communication program.

Our features, written by faculty, include David Rathbun's (Photography) fundamental principles about photographic image-making; Karen Libman's (Theatre) notes from India; Len O'Kelly's (Multimedia Journalism) history of Grand Valley student radio; and Robert Swieringa (Communication Studies) explores the field of game studies.

In addition, we recognize two alumni: Chad Ghastin (Advertising and Public Relations), this year's School of Communications Alumni-in-Residence, and Kyle Meinke (Journalism), who covers the Detroit Lions for the statewide MLive media group.

We hope you enjoy this issue. I invite you to read more online via our news blog and social media channels, which you can find at [www.gvsu.edu/soc](http://www.gvsu.edu/soc)

Finally, I'd like to thank Claire Fisher, who is this year's Expressions assistant editor. She is a graduating Multimedia Journalism major, and her reporting, writing and editing contributions to this issue are significant.



Lawrence Beery,  
Professor of Multimedia Journalism and  
editor of the 2017 Expressions



Claire Fisher,  
Multimedia Journalism major and a 2017  
Grand Valley graduate. She is assistant  
editor of the 2017 Expressions.

## COVER

The photos on the covers of this issue were taken by David L. Rathbun. After 36 years at Grand Valley, David Rathbun retired at the end of the 2016 Fall Semester. Read more about him and see more of his work on page 12.



## FACULTY/STUDENTS

- 4** The Rise of Student Media: The Radio
- 6** Exploring Heath Communications: Health Communications club helps students make valuable connections with professionals
- 7** Masters of Communication Update
- 8** New faculty in the School of Communications

## Expressions

### EDITOR

Lawrence Beery  
Associate Professor, Multimedia Journalism

### ASSISTANT EDITOR

Claire Fisher, Multimedia Journalism (2017)

### DESIGN

Kim Bode, 834 Design and Marketing  
(Communication Studies alumna, 2003)

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Luke Holmes, Marketing (2018)  
Kevin Sielaff, Film & Video and French (2017)

Grand Valley State University, 1 Campus Drive Allendale, MI 49401

 @GVSchoolofCOM



www.facebook.com/GVSchoolCom

dotCOM blog: <http://gvschoolofcom.wordpress.com>

This publication is printed with recycled materials by Holland Litho, which is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)



## FEATURED EXPRESSIONS

**10** 20 Years of the Summer Film Project

**12** David L. Rathbun Retires

**14** Snapshots From India

**20** Exploring the Field of Games

## ALUMNI

**17** Alumnus Chad Ghastin Shares Laker Legacy

**18** Reporting on the Lions

**22** Scholarships

**23** School of Communications by the numbers

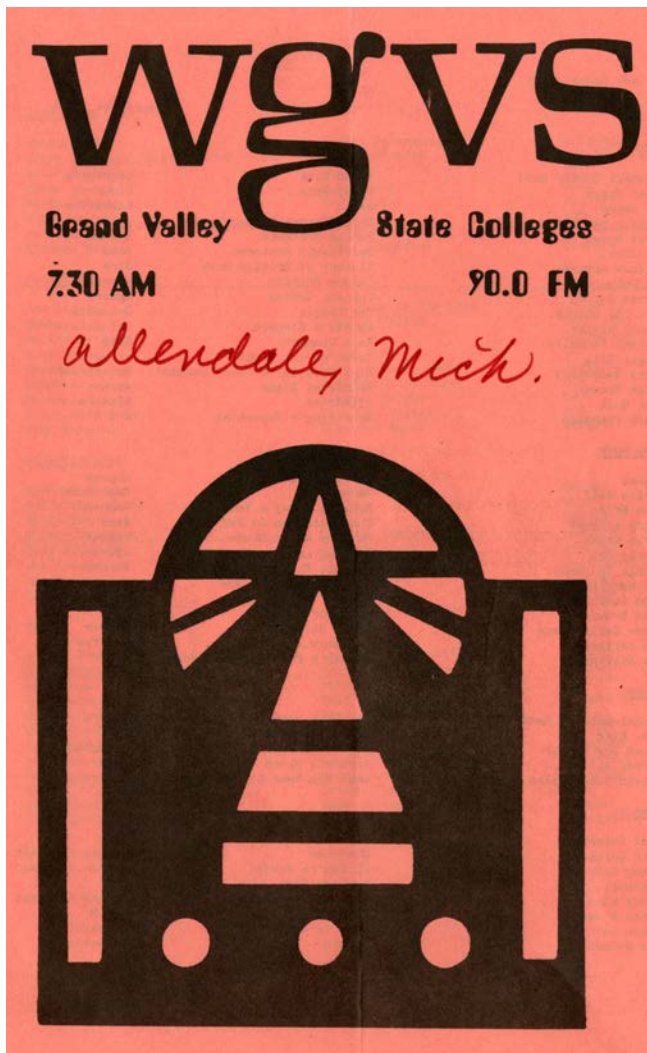
# The Rise Of Student Media: The Radio

By Len O'Kelly, Assistant Professor, Multimedia Journalism

There's a lot of work that goes into starting a brand-new university. As Grand Valley evolved from being a bright idea to bring higher education to West Michigan to taking shape and enrolling students, many of the aspects that we traditionally associate with colleges needed to be created. Student media was no different. The pioneer students at Grand Valley State College wanted to create learning opportunities as well as provide platforms for student expression. Early newspapers such as the *Keystone* and the *Valley View* gave way to the present-day *Grand Valley Lantern*. Likewise, students with an interest in broadcasting worked hard to create their platform as well.

Fifty years ago this academic year, in the fall of 1966, a group of students banded together and asked to be recognized as a student activity group. The "GVSC Radio Guild" was officially recognized by the College's Cultural and Social Council as an organization on Oct. 28, 1966. A memo distributed in November of 1966 announced that "a radio station was coming," and named Gary McConeghy as adviser to the students. McConeghy helped to establish WCRG at Central Michigan University during his time as a student there. McConeghy's input was short-lived, though, as professor Robert Hart, who also worked with the yearbook staff, assumed the duties of adviser in January 1967. The next logical step was to petition the College for funding and space to construct a radio station.

President James Zumberge received a formal proposal with the students' plan for their station. This proposal detailed a formal chain of command, starting with an advisor, who would be a faculty member of the College, overseeing the entire operation. There would be a station manager, a sales manager, a promotion director, and a program director – just like would be found at a professional radio station today. The proposal laid out the potential costs for equipment, asking for \$2,855.70 for a control board, two microphones, two turntables and two tape machines. Closed circuit AM broadcast equipment would cost an additional \$1,467.20, while the lofty goal of an FM transmitter at \$6,891 was also included. The proposal explained the need for "two rooms, ten-by-ten, with provision for storage of records and tapes." The basements of Seidman House, Lake Huron Hall, or Loutit Hall were suggested as a temporary home until the new student center would be completed. President Zumberge approved the proposal in part, granting the GVSC Radio Guild a total of \$1,300 and







Students working at The Whale radio station in the 1970s.

authorization to proceed with development of the station, to be called WGVS.

Work began in earnest to finally launch the radio station. It took longer than anticipated to raise the total funding necessary, but equipment for WGVS was finally in place by the end of 1968. The station was begun as a carrier-current AM station (available only to those within a very short distance of the College) on 730 AM. WGVS began broadcasting for the first time on Oct. 12, 1968, from studios in the basement of Seidman House.

In the years that followed, as GVSC grew and expanded, so did the radio station. The carrier current signal was expanded to Laker Village, and then replaced entirely with an FM signal in 1974. The station was renamed WSRX. Alumni of the station went on to long, prominent careers both on and off the air. 1975 station manager Barry Keefe had a long tenure as news director of Chicago's WTMX-FM. His program director, John Beyerle, served as the United States ambassador to the

Russian Federation from 2008-2012. Michael Slavko, known on the air in San Francisco as the host of M. Dung's All Night Idiot Show, worked for the station. John Keating, the host of Red Wings hockey broadcasts on Fox Sports Detroit, was station manager in 1980. Longtime Grand Rapids air talent like Tim Steele, Tony Gates, Steve Aldrich, Bruce Parrott, and Kevin Matthews all got their start at WSRX as well.

The 1980s saw the student radio station evolve into WGVC (and later WGVU) public radio. Student radio remained largely off the air until 1993, when a group of students again organized to form a radio club. The Cosmic Kinetic Synchronicity took to the air on a low-powered AM transmitter as WCKS. A lightning strike took care of the transmitting equipment, but the birth of Internet radio moved WCKS – "The Whale," as it was then known – online, where it remains today, continuing to launch broadcasting careers



for Grand Valley students in news, talk, and music radio. To listen to "The Whale" today, visit [www.whaleradio.org](http://www.whaleradio.org).

Len O'Kelly, Assistant Professor,  
Multimedia Journalism



Blair Thompson and Aisel Alcedo talking during their radio show in 2013.

# Exploring Health Communications

Health Communications club helps students make valuable connections with professionals

The Coalition of Health Communications at Grand Valley State University is a club which aims to create a common place and time for students who are studying health communications, communications, and those who are undecided. The club works to help students better understand opportunities that are available for them in the field.

“Most students, especially in a major like this where there is not one set career, are lost about what they would like to do after completing undergraduate,” said Rhiannon Cullip co-president of the club. “We have a variety of networking opportunities in which we bring professionals from around the community to talk with members of the club. It gives students a chance to think about different careers they would like to pursue and also allows them to connect with these professionals.”

The group started up again at GVSU in 2015 and has been growing each year since. The club’s advisor and co-creator, Affiliate Professor Lorie Jager said since the group’s founding, she has seen students take an active role in shaping the club to offer the experiences the students’ want.

“There’s been more and more initiative by the students to create what they want,” Jager said. “Since the beginning, there’s been interest and actual pursuit of providing some volunteer opportunities. So (the students) have volunteered over at the children’s center on campus. Just going in different directions with it and creating new opportunities for themselves.”

In addition to exploring career options, the coalition helps students learn about internships and graduate programs.

One of the biggest events that the club is in charge of planning is the Panel of Professionals, which is held



The Coalition of Health Communications 2016-2017 eboard. From left to right: Paige Wells, Risk Management Officer; Jessica Piskerr, Co-President; Rhiannon Cullip, Co-President; and Tyler Johnson, Financial Officer.

in the Winter semester. The Panel is a networking opportunity for students to interact with and learn from professionals in the field.

Last year, during the Panel of Professionals, the club provided additional opportunities for the students to network individually with the professionals.

“The panelists just took time to be at a table and interact with the students one-on-one,” Jager said. “Lots of great connections were made for the students, as well as for the panelists who now feel more connected to Grand Valley.”

Tyler Johnson, financial officer for the coalition, said he has benefited from the coalition’s opportunities for networking and volunteering, information about internship opportunities, and guest speakers. Johnson secured his first internship through connections and opportunities provided to him by the organization.

“What I personally enjoy most about participating in the club is establishing friendships with the other members of the club,” Johnson said. “The health communications major itself only has approximately 100 students. So the club provides a great opportunity to network and talk with other students in the major about classes they are taking, or internship experiences they have had, and what they want to do after graduation.”

# MSCom Update:

Growing master's program generating international student interest and developing a combined program.



Alex Nesterenko, Ph.D.  
Graduate Program Director

The Master of Communication (MSCom) program has served the West Michigan professional communication industry since 1988. Over these three decades, students have come to the program from advertising, broadcasting, health communication, journalism, public relations, and related fields. Qualified undergraduate students are encouraged to segue into the program. However, a high percentage of MSCom students are already executives and experienced practitioners.

Students come to the MSCom program for a variety reasons, though chief among these is that the program has an industry-appropriate focus. Other graduate programs typically offer courses that are thematically unrelated to each other. The MSCom curriculum, on the other hand, focuses on strategic decision making, which is a concern found throughout the professional communications industry. The MSCom program is a blend of theory, research, and applied practice aimed at helping the student to more effectively conceptualize and solve communication problems. The faculty who teach in the MSCom program work closely with each other to deliver a program that is intellectual challenging and integrated, and reflects industry concerns and needs. Some of the regular faculty who have taught in the program are Drs. Corey Anton, Len O'Kelly, Melba Velez Ortiz, Tim Penning, Valerie Peterson, and Alex Nesterenko, who is also the Graduate Program Director for the MSCom program. Collectively, these faculty bring considerable prior professional experience to the program.

There are three recent newsworthy issues concerning the MSCom program. First, the faculty are developing a combined program. This means that undergraduate students in the School of Communications will be able to apply 12 credits required in their undergraduate major toward the completion of the MSCom program, assuming they are admitted to the graduate program. These 12 credits would be taken during a student's junior and senior years, which would leave only 24 credits to complete the graduate degree. The remaining 24 credits can be accomplished in one additional academic year, or taken part-time over a longer period of time. Details are forthcoming, and the combined MSCom program may be ready for the 2018-19 academic year.

Second, the MSCom program is experiencing an increase in international student interest, principally from individuals who come from parts of Africa, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Indian Subcontinent, and the Pacific Rim. This increased interest may be due to Grand Valley's growing international presence; but, it is also likely due to the efforts of international students who have graduated from the MSCom program, and who have become unofficial goodwill ambassadors for the program. As a result, the MSCom program is working with Grand Valley's Graduate School and the University Communications office to reach out to potential students in these regions.

Third, the program is pleased to announce that Alex Nesterenko, the Graduate Program Director, this February received Grand Valley's annual Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award. Nesterenko notes that "The MSCom program has a reputation for strong and effective teaching as well as active advising and mentoring. It is my great honor to be named by students and faculty alike as worthy of this prestigious award."

For more information about the MSCom program, please contact Alex Nesterenko at [nesterea@gvsu.edu](mailto:nesterea@gvsu.edu), or call 616-331-3668.



## NEW TENURE-TRACK PROFESSORS



**Adrienne A. Wallace**  
(Advertising & Public Relations)

Adrienne is an effective communicator with more than 17 years of experience in both private and public sectors, ranging in scope from nonprofit, health and education to government, politics and finance. For the past seven years, she's served as firm director for 834 Design & Marketing, an award-winning integrated communications firm. Newly tenure-track, but not new to GVSU, she has taught in the APR program at GVSU for eight years, the last three as visiting professor. Adrienne's research interests are broad and include public affairs, public relations and public policy as it applies to food politics and social media participation in a democracy. Previously, she was a Michigan State Political Leadership Program fellow, a Research Associate at WMU and WMU Academic Integrity Board appointee. She is the adviser to GVPRSSA, GrandPR and the Bateman Team. Adrienne is a social-change leader, GR Westsider, wife to tech/PR geek Derek DeVries and mom to rescue pups Rosey and Walter.



**Yasmin Gopal**  
(Advertising & Public Relations)

Yasmin started her career in academe as an online academic coach in the Executive M.B.A. at Athabasca University, Alberta. She has also taught as a sessional at Western University and the University of Toronto before joining Marist College, New York as a Visiting Assistant Professor and subsequently as an Affiliate Assistant Professor. Prior to this academic venture, she has also enjoyed a stint as an elementary school teacher before trying her hand at advertising copywriting and account management. She earned her B.A. and M.A. in English Literature from Patna University in India. She received her M.A. in Mass Communication

from Bowling Green State University in Ohio and earned her Ph.D. in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Georgia.



**Julie Goldstein**  
(Film & Video Production)

Julie comes to Grand Valley from her most recent position as the Academic Director of Media at The Art Institute of Colorado, where she spearheaded the Game Art and Design program. She has also developed a media production company, which has served clients such as Carnegie Speech, Eisenhower Fellowships, The Franklin Institute and Healthology. Julie also works with experimental animation and her films have been exhibited worldwide. Her current research involves motion capture and virtual reality. Julie sees herself as a bridge between old and new technology and is an avid collector of antique cameras and films. She will be teaching animation, animation history, and film culture.



**Faye Yang**  
(Advertising & Public Relations)

Fang (Faye) Yang comes to GVSU from the State University of New York at Cortland, where she was an Assistant Professor of Communications. Faye's teaching and research interests lie in nontraditional advertising's role in the integrated marketing communication strategy. Her recent work about the impact of movies on city images has been published in the International Journal of Advertising. A book chapter on movies' influence on nation branding is forthcoming in the book *Shaping International Public Opinion: A Model for Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy*. Before starting her academic career, Faye worked as a communication specialist, marketing communications consultant, and freelance translator. This year, Faye will be teaching Fundamentals of Advertising and Research Basics for Advertising & Public Relations. Faye enjoys cooking and traveling.





**Jeff Kelly Lowenstein**  
(Multimedia Journalism)

Jeff comes to GVSU from Columbia College Chicago in Chicago, IL, where he was a lecturer. Prior to his position there, he worked for a weekly newspaper on Chicago's South Side, did investigative work around race and poverty issues for a bimonthly magazine in Chicago and was the first database and investigative editor at Hoy Chicago, the Chicago Tribune Company's Spanish-language newspaper. He is a Fulbright Scholar (Chile 2013), Specialist (New Zealand 2015) and Teacher (South Africa 1995). His research focuses on telling stories about vulnerable individuals and communities that would otherwise not be told and on building collaborations to heighten quality and maximize impact. His recent projects include a compilation of his favorite blog posts, an expose' of a reverse mortgage/home repair scam and a yearlong investigation into nursing home abuses.

## NEW VISITING PROFESSORS



**Emily Rogers**  
(Photography)

Emily Rogers joined GVSU in fall 2016 as a Visiting Professor of Photography in the School of Communications. A GVSU alumna, Rogers is a professional artist, educator, and arts administrator. Prior to relocating back to Grand Rapids, Emily was the Program Director at Sierra Arts Foundation, a local arts agency serving northern Nevada and northeastern California. Working at the state and local level, she created and managed programs promoting arts appreciation, excellence, accessibility, and participation in the arts. Emily served as a partner in education with The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, advising an arts integration strategic plan for Washoe County School District. She has worked in curatorial practices, exhibition design, grants management, and community arts development. Her research as a photographer examines the house as an

artifact of the past. Partnering with historic preservation societies and city planning officials, Emily documents and archives the changing landscape of working class neighborhoods. Rogers received her MFA in Studio Art from the University of Nevada, Reno and her BA in Photography from Grand Valley State University. She has taught at the University of Nevada, Reno and the Santa Catalina School in Monterey, CA

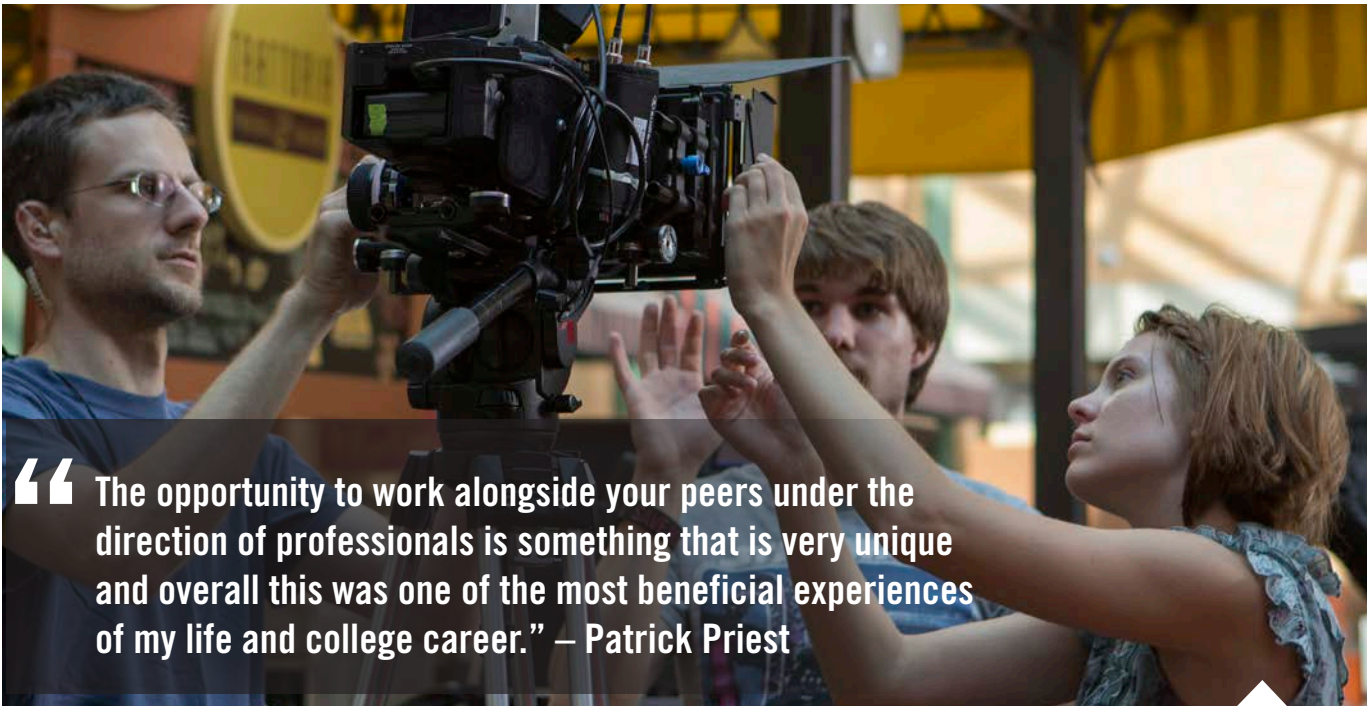


**Dennis Henry**  
(Theatre)

Dennis is an actor and director originally from San Diego. His undergraduate work was at San Diego University where he was named "Distinguished in the Major." Since then, he has worked professionally as an actor and director for nearly two decades and has performed in more than 40 U.S. states while touring with American Shakespeare Center and National Theater for Arts and Education. Additional acting and directing credits include Cleveland Play House (where he was the Artistic Fellow for the CPH Centennial Season), Virginia Shakespeare Festival, Nebraska Repertory Theatre, Pigeon Creek Shakespeare (MI), North Coast Repertory Theatre (CA), and Random Acts Chicago. Favorite roles include Polonius in Hamlet, Sancho Panza in Las Aventuras de Don Quijote and Lady Bracknell in The Importance of Being Earnest. His one-act play, Maude and Ellie Play Chess is an amusing look at Eleanor of Aquitaine and Empress Matilda which was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2015 in the collection Scholars and Poets Talk about Queens. He has presented research at the Grand Valley Shakespeare Conference and British Graduate Shakespeare Conference in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Dennis did his graduate work at the Johnny Carson School for Theatre and Film at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he earned his M.F.A. in Directing for Stage and Screen. He has taught classes at University of Nebraska and Concordia University Chicago and taught workshops in acting, directing and Shakespeare at more than two dozen colleges across the country. His lovely wife, Katie Robbins, works in the technological instructional design field in Chicago.

# 20 Years of the Summer Film Project

By J. H. Philbin, Associate Professor, Film and Video Production



“The opportunity to work alongside your peers under the direction of professionals is something that is very unique and overall this was one of the most beneficial experiences of my life and college career.” – Patrick Priest

Photos courtesy of J.H. Philbin, Photos from the Summer Film Project

Grand Valley’s annual Summer Film Project bring together students, faculty, and industry professionals who join forces to make a film. Founded by Girbe Eefsting and Professor Barbara Roos in 1995, legions of students have worked on the production, editing and/or sound design of these projects.

I have been fortunate to direct 11 of 22 summer films over the past 20 years. It’s been an amazing ride. The nature of the project is different each summer depending on whether we’re making a drama, comedy, sci-fi, crime story or other genres. What remains a constant for me is how exciting it is to watch students grow exponentially over this six-week practicum.

The production crew consists of 20 to 25 students working side-by-side with professionals. After four weeks of prep, the filming happens at various locations around West Michigan over a two-week period, with 12-hour days being the norm. It’s truly a “high impact” intensive learning experience as

you watch the students’ skills and confidence grow before your eyes. Whereas some filming days run smoothly, others are extremely challenging, full of obstacles and hurdles. Regardless, after 8 to 14 long days of filming, on the final day, when the

“It was the culmination of my college film career. Everything that I had learned in all my classes was useful in making this film.” – Nate Abramowski

assistant director shouts “That’s a wrap!”—you can’t beat that feeling. The film crew has become a family, forever bonded by many hours together on the set working toward a common goal.

After production is over, the project then goes into the post-production process during the fall and winter semesters, where a new group of students spend weeks editing and sound-mixing. By April, the film is

ready for its gala premiere at a local movie theater to a packed house full of cast, crew, family and friends. Then the summer films are entered into film festivals nationwide where they've won numerous awards.

Part of what makes Grand Valley's Summer Film Project unique in higher ed is that the faculty and professional participants serve not just as teachers, but they are actually part of the film crew working in the trenches. So, alongside a sound professor like Joseph McCargar, you might find Hollywood cinematographer Jack Anderson, who made a huge contribution as Director of Photography on seven summer films, and even arranged for Panavision in Los Angeles to donate use of their high-end cameras.

Cast members have been drawn from here, there and everywhere, from Hollywood to Grand Rapids. Veteran character actor James Karen (Poltergeist, Wall Street, Return of the Living Dead) starred in 2003's Flickering Blue. "The summer film was one of the best experiences I've ever had, professionally or otherwise," he said. Pauley Perrette, star of the hit CBS series "NCIS," starred in our film the following year. "The crew continually astounded me by their professionalism, efficiency, and coolness," she recalled.



Cinematographer Jack Anderson, left, and J. H. Philbin, right, collaborate on the Summer Film Project

Great films begin with a great script, and those have been provided by a host of screenwriters near and far. Some have been Grand Valley students like Chris Randall, Andy Graham and Joshua Kinne. Professional writers include John Dufresne, a prominent novelist, who gave us a

---

“It really made me understand that no one person makes a film, it's totally a collective effort and every role is important no matter how glamorous or lack luster it may seem. Now that I have experienced what it really takes to make a good film, I will forever take that into my film-making life.” – Mike Victor

---

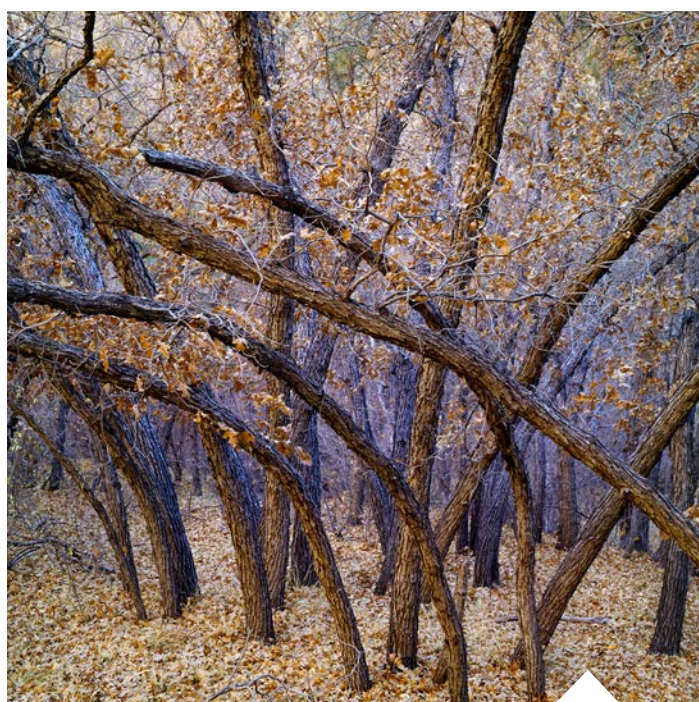
screen adaptation of his short story, The Freezer Jesus (2002) and the feature-length crime/courtroom drama, To Live and Die in Dixie (2007). Angelo Eidse, a Vancouver screenwriter, crafted two wonderful short scripts for the Summer Film Project, Flickering Blue (2003) and Message Sent (2011). Recently, John, Angelo and I collaborated on the scripts for Lucky Jay (2014) and Lucky Jay 2 (2016), our feature-length comedy-drama-satire web series about the life of film professors at a fictional college in the Midwest. Lucky Jay can be found at [luckyjayseries.com](http://luckyjayseries.com).

While making Lucky Jay, I realized the Summer Film Project had come full circle. For this project, we hired local cinematographer Vinny Walsh who worked on a summer film project fifteen years ago! It's gratifying to see crew members return years later to work on the project again as alums, like John Otterbacher, Michael Bosman, Andy Fortenbacher and Brian Gotberg, to name a few.

Many of the summer films are available to watch free online at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/filmvideo/summer-films-42.htm>



# DAVID L. RATHBUN RETIRES



All images are copyright David L Rathbun

**A**fter 36 years working at Grand Valley State University, professor of photography David Rathbun has retired. Rathbun founded and developed the photography program at GVSU in 1981.

Born in Denver, Colorado in 1943, Rathbun graduated in 1965 with a bachelor of arts degree in literature from Wheaton College in Illinois where he discovered the efficacy of a strong liberal arts college education.

Rathbun became aware of the expressive possibilities inherent in color photography after reading “In Wildness Is The Preservation Of The World,” by Photographer Eliot Porter. This book made clear that the arena of color was where Rathbun’s photography was headed.

A fortuitous encounter with Eliot Porter in New York City provided a turning point in Rathbun’s development as a photographer. Porter invited him to move to Santa Fe in New Mexico to embark on a full-time apprenticeship. Rathbun worked as an apprentice from 1971 to 1975. During this time, he mastered the Dye Transfer™ printing process, and served as Porter’s printer. Rathbun first exhibited his color work during this period in the 1974 Biennial Southwest Symposium in Santa Fe. John Szarkowski, director of photography at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, served as a juror for the symposium and selected Rathbun’s image as one of only two color photographs included in the exhibit.

Rathbun was invited by Arthur Siegel to teach and develop a program in color photography at the Institute of Design in Chicago, where Rathbun worked from 1975 to 1981. Rathbun taught color at the institute during the period when color photography moved to the center of expressive photographic image-making nationally.

While teaching at the Institute of Design, Rathbun developed some propositions about photographic image-making. The maxims were submitted by Rathbun in place of his artist’s statement at

“A Lasting Vision Photography Exhibition” in Saugatuck, Michigan, in May of 2015.

- **Images that matter are always about ideas.**
- **Any similarity between objects and images is only apparent.**
- **It is helpful to consider the frame of the image as visual quotations marks.**
- **The majority of photographs show us what things look like; photographs that matter show us what it is like to look.**
- **The discourse of the photographic image is: “Do you see what I mean?”**
- **The likelihood that a thoughtless person will make significant images is minimal, and almost certainly accidental.**



David Rathbun interacts with guests at his gallery at GVSU in 2016.  
Photo by Luke Holmes

Rathbun said these propositions have proven “seminal” over the last 36 years.

In 1975, he became the first color photographer represented by the Douglas Kenyon Gallery in Chicago.

By 1981, Rathbun came to GVSU where he initiated and taught the photography major. Since then he has taught in the photography major that has become distinctive as a liberal arts program and continues to challenge and reward him as a scholar, a photographer, and an educator. He also continues to photograph about color and vision, and the nature of looking when color establishes the agenda of the visual experience.





# Snapshots from INDIA

Photos courtesy of Karen Libman | Photos taken during Libman's Fulbright Program in India

**K**aren Libman, Professor of Theatre, was awarded a 2015-16 Fulbright Grant to research and teach in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the US State Department suspended the Fulbright Program in Bangladesh 8 weeks before she was scheduled to leave. She quickly had to find another country in South Asia that would host a theatre practitioner/scholar. The following are excerpts from letters she sent to friends and family during her 5 months in India as she traveled around the country, teaching and directing theatre.

## January 15, 2016

Greetings from India! Well, it's one week since we arrived, and it has already been amazing and so much better than I could have anticipated! First—

our hosts here, Namrata and Manabendra Sarma, are amazing. I met them when I was here in 2013, and when my Fulbright needed to transfer, they jumped to the rescue. We have a quite large apartment, directly across the street from them. It is sparsely furnished, and very Indian in its amenities, but it is more than sufficient. They arranged for everything, including a comfortable (Indian standards) bed, mosquito netting, and the cleaning woman (although clean, well, it's an interesting concept...). So far, they haven't let us cook one meal yet! We go over to their flat in the morning, for they believe strongly in a cooked breakfast.

## Tuesday evening, February 9, 2016

What a day today has been, what I week I have had. I do finally feel like I am getting into the



groove of being a foreigner abroad, a Fulbrighter being able to contribute something to the place that is hosting me. I have never had a fear about what I would get—I knew I would learn tons, but I just didn't know how I could contribute. But so far, I seem to be able to do some things that are interesting to others.

This morning, I go to Gauhati University where I am lecturing about American Drama, addressing the MA students who are taking the American option. I decide to talk about the top 10 American plays for the 20th century. And so I am able to lecture non-stop for 55 minutes professor, introducing them to August Wilson and Tony Kushner and *Raisin in the Sun*. And talking about race in America. Because really, it's all race in America, isn't it? Sigh.

Then quick quick, a taxi (actually, it takes an hour, traffic is awful) to the College where I am leading a 3 week theatre workshop. I have 25 students for 1 to 1 ½ hours each day to make a play!! Not theatre students, students from all disciplines. They are SO enthusiastic. The

fact that I have them up and moving and talking and discussing...this is very different than Indian pedagogy.

And now I am writing this because if I don't, I will surely forget, well, EVERYTHING that is happening so quickly. The lessons of the Fulbright are presence, presence, presence. Because tonight, someone may call and say, "oh, ma'am, can you please come and lecture on feminist theatre in America?" And I will say, of course...and prepare.

### March 3, 2016

The past 10 days or so have been really really busy, and the next few weeks will be even more so. Pretty much all of my projects in Guwahati are coming to an end, and I am both sad and happy. Sad, because overall I've had a fantastic time, and happy because I feel pretty tapped out here. The 20-day workshop at B. Borooah College concluded with a bang as students performed a splendid 27 person production of Dorothy Parker's "Here We Are." I will miss these folks terribly, as the students were as lovely as can be, the faculty so warm, and my time there really satisfying.



**March 20, 2016**

Well, this letter finds things...relatively stable, at least on the outside. We arrived in Hyderabad last week so that I could direct at play at the university here. I am working with the Theatre Department at the Central University of Hyderabad, to do a production with the 4th semester (2nd year) MPA program student. The students here come from all over India, and so the main languages of communication are Hindi and English, which are not anyone's mother tongue. I'll be doing Shakespeare with my students! Not sure what yet, but we'll figure it out!

**March 28, 2016**

Well, remember when I wrote of things being relatively stable from the outside? I apparently didn't do the old theatre director run around the theatre backwards chanting the names of the three witches from The Scottish play, because the s \_ \_ \_ has hit the fan at the Central University in Hyderabad. Technically,, there are not even supposed to be classes right now. In case you haven't been paying attention (or you just get your news from the American media), the university here has been having some issues—mainly, the students have been agitating about the Vice Chancellor's return to campus after a student's suicide (a Dalit student, from the lowest caste, who lost his funding). Many students have been arrested after some rioting, classes have been suspended, the non-teaching staff went on strike (so then students had no food or water in their dorms), and basically, free speech has been exercised in a place where a police crackdown means that people are hurt and jailed, but at least no one was shot. One of my students is still in jail, several who are involved in student politics are very distracted, and here I am, trying to do...Shakespeare.

The major thing to report this week is the lesson on Flexibility. Oh, I thought I knew this one. I really did. After all, I'm in India not in Bangladesh...but the universe is making sure I get this concept. BE FLEXIBLE. Yeah. We open the play in 13 days!



Professor Libman remained in India for an additional 2 ½ months, finishing her work in Hyderabad, traveling to Sri Lanka to conduct a workshop, and ending her Fulbright experience doing Children's Theatre in a rural village outside of Bangalore, with children ages 5-15 and village elders. She flew back to Michigan on June 1, 2016.



# Alumnus Chad Ghastin Shares Laker Legacy



Chad Ghastin posing with University President Thomas J. Haas during the 2016 CLAS Distinguished Alumni-in-Residence Recognition Luncheon.

Since his graduation in 1998, this year's Alumni in Residence, Chad Ghastin, has only missed two Laker football games. A true Laker for a Lifetime, Ghastin tunes in to watch the games and cheer the team on from his home in New York City.

Ghastin graduated from Grand Valley State University with a degree in Advertising and Public Relations. He is currently an independent consultant in New York City focused on digital marketing and customer relationship management with companies including Birchbox.com and NBC News.

Professor Tim Penning said Ghastin was chosen to be the Alumni in Residence because of his career success and his continuing dedication and enthusiasm about the university.

"It's about the people here (at GVSU), this is one of the places where you find people that take an interest in you that help guide you," Ghastin said. "Those are things that are invaluable as you become a professional or as you move on in your career."

While Ghastin started out working at big companies, his work now as an independent consultant allows him more freedom and creativity. He said he enjoys the ability to be brutally honest with his clients to help them improve their marketing strategies.

"I think the biggest thing that I like about the consulting side is that if you like problem-solving and if you like to frame challenges and you like to come up with action plans, it's a blast," Ghastin said. "You really get to look at problems, and you move and talk across a lot of different people in the organization. You really get to frame challenges for

the company and then serve them up for execution."

Specializing in digital marketing and customer relationship management, Ghastin said he works with companies to help them reach the audience that will be right for their product.

When it comes to consulting, what sets Ghastin apart is the wide variety of experience he has had in the field. Ghastin said he has worked with different forms of media and can help companies identify the right media for their audience.

"I've worked across a lot of different industries. I've worked across automotive, financial services, technology, media, publishing, health and wellness and I think that helps me bring a different perspective to things," Ghastin said. "I think of it as what I call my quilt. I have a lot of different patches from a lot of different experiences and I say 'which one of these can I use in this situation?'"

Ghastin credits GVSU with preparing him for his career. He said the hands-on work he was asked to do in his classes, combined with all the different types of communication he learned, helped him to be prepared for his career.

"If you wanted to grow, learn, expand and network, those opportunities are here, but you have to take advantage of them," Ghastin said. "It was really all about the one-on-one relationships they built with the faculty and staff here are really what the launch pad is for achieving success long-term."

Ghastin said GVSU's small size makes students from the school eager to prove themselves in the professional world.

"We're very scrappy at Grand Valley. We have a little bit of a chip on our shoulder. We have grit here," Ghastin said. "We're strivers. We don't do it for the individual attention; it's more about us showing the broader academic world and also other professionals that we bring good product from this school."



# Reporting on the Lions

When it comes to covering football, alumnus Kyle Meinke competes off the field for the best scoops. Meinke graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2007 and now works for MLive following the Detroit Lions.

Meinke uses his own style, personal observations and basic reporting skills to produce quality sports writing fans will enjoy.

“(In this job,) I don’t just punch in and do a job and then punch out,” Meinke said. “I’m writing stories, my colleagues are writing stories and I’m trying to either beat them to the information or in style of the writing. I love the competition of writing.”

To stay competitive, Meinke said he works a lot; Meinke said he once wrote 11 articles in one day. During the football season, he works 10-hour days five days a week, but even on his off days he said he writes one or two articles. At a digital-first company like MLive, Meinke’s job is to write articles when news happens.

“There’s not a whole lot of hard deadlines, but there’s always kind of a deadline,” Meinke said. “If an injury comes up or something happens, or a player gets signed or traded, there’s a deadline of basically as fast as you can get something up and then maybe an analysis afterward.”

Game days for Meinke are the busiest. Arriving at the stadium three hours before the game, he uses this time to make observations about the team or write articles.

When he first started working as a reporter, Meinke said these game days could be overwhelming.

“When I first started covering game days, it was so phrenetic, they ask you to do so many things these days that it’s really difficult to handle all the obligations.”

By the end of the game, Meinke has written a minimum of three stories: an article about the players who won’t be in the game, a column at half-time, and an article after the game.

“Those (articles) are in addition to tweets throughout the game, commenting on our live blog, and covering news that happens during the game,” Meinke said. “If a star player gets hurt or if a player breaks a record, those stories go up right away, too. There are days when I’ll have maybe five stories up from the time the game started until the time the game finished.”

Meinke uses Twitter often to help share the latest news with his fans. He also tweets light-hearted thoughts and observations that make his twitter more personal.

“I tweet obsessively. I tweet at least 30 times a day,” Meinke said. “I tweet out things as they happen, quotes from coaches, or general observations. I find that general observations really help me with fans. If I take note of something I don’t necessarily post it (as an article), but I’ll tweet it out.

“Especially nowadays where you can find so much of this information everywhere, I think Twitter benefits from the color you can provide, things like what the shirt looked like that the guy was wearing in the locker room or what was in his locker. People are interested in that.”

Meinke said his busy schedule comes from the huge demand for sports news. Digital news, he said, has only increased that demand.

“No matter how much we write, people still read it all,” Meinke said. “There’s such an appetite for NFL content, but there’s also the digital demand. In the digital age there’s no longer a newspaper in the morning, there’s stories all day. These things move so fast.

“Not only is there great interest in the game, but there’s always an appetite for more stories. So during the season it’s kind of like a never ending cycle of work.”

This constant cycle of work and hectic schedule are one of the things Meinke finds most challenging about his job. Between tweets, blogs, videos, livechats,



Kyle Meinke, right, recording a post-game video with David Mayo at Ford Field.

Facebook, and articles, Meinke finds that reporting is a constant demand for his time.

“I love all these things, but when you combine them all together it just makes for a really long demanding job,” Meinke said. “I write seven stories a day, I’m tweeting and I shoot a video. It can be difficult to apply depth to what you’re doing; you’re just trying to survive sometimes. It can sometimes be more difficult nowadays to explore topics or ideas more in depth than it used to be.”

Despite the challenges, Meinke said he doesn’t worry much about burning out and truly loves following the Lions and writing about them.

“I have friends who work as accountants or work in offices and maybe they like their jobs, but they always kind of feel like jobs. I don’t feel like I have a job,” Meinke said. “It’s a lot of work, especially this time of year. But I kind of feel like I’m just playing around, I’m just playing reporter. I never feel like I’m clocking in, it’s just something I really love to do.”

In addition to constantly working to produce more content, Meinke stays competitive in sports journalism by telling worthwhile stories. This is also an aspect of the job that Meinke finds particularly fun.

“I really enjoy telling stories,” Meinke said. “When you write a story well, you can help fans connect

with a player. And that can help fans enjoy the game more, enjoy the team more, and it can also help a player’s career.”

One of the stories Meinke was able to tell was about Lions former defensive lineman CJ Mosely. The player had the design of a heart rate monitor line shaved into his hair to remind him that he was still breathing after he dealt with the loss of three of his grandparents and his mother.

“I really liked telling his story because he was such a good guy. He didn’t really play a flashy position. He wasn’t a flashy player, but after that story people kind of appreciated him a little more,” Meinke said. “He went from being just a guy on the roster that nobody really knew to being a fan favorite for some people. To me, that shows the power of what we (as journalists) can do if we do our jobs well.”

Meinke said building relationships with sources, like the one he was able to build with Mosely, is how he finds the best stories to tell.

“There’s a lot of components that make a good journalist: you have to write well and you have to understand the game, but getting people to trust you with their stories, with their lives, is half the battle,” Meinke said. “I think that’s what separates good reporters from great reporters.”

# Exploring the field of Game Studies By: Robert Swieringa

**M**onopoly. Scrabble. Risk. Clue. Parcheesi. Life. Sorry. Some of these game titles, if not all of them, are probably familiar to many of you. Perhaps you recall enjoyable gatherings with friends or family around a table, rolling dice or drawing tiles, trying to stay ahead of your opponents. Try these: Carcassonne. Settlers of Catan. 7 Wonders. Pandemic. Magic: The Gathering. The Castles of Burgundy. These games, and many more, represent the recent growth in tabletop games, illustrating shifts in game mechanics and participation for players. They often require players to plan ahead, to make routine decisions, and to continually respond to the choices and moves of their opponents – or the game itself. Exploring games, their designs, the involvement of players, the communities that develop around them, and the experiences of players playing them, are all part of the growing field of Game Studies.

The work reflects, in part, the growth and development of video/digital games. But tabletop games have experienced incredible growth and creative development over the last decade as well. In 2015, the hobby tabletop game market totaled \$1.19 billion in North American sales. This represents a growth of 29% over the previous year's sales. Traditional news outlets, such as the Los Angeles Times, have reported on the growth of tabletop gaming and its opportunity for face-to-face social interaction, which has encouraged the growth of game cafes and game nights at bars. Conventions geared to the avid gamer provide opportunities for folks to engage with others who share similar interests and to encounter game publishers and designers and their new games. These conventions range from small local gatherings to those drawing from broad areas.

Various hobby organizations, such as the Historical Miniature Gaming Society or OGREs: Organization of Gamers & Roleplaying Enthusiasts provide opportunities for gamers to

learn about developments, to share information and experiences of games, and to form connections with one another. Online there are numerous sites and environments allowing folks to engage with the hobbies of tabletop gaming, ranging from industry news outlets like TGN-TableTop Gaming News, to gamer review and play sites like The Dice Tower or YouTube channels of game play and news such as the TableTop series. Of these, BoardGameGeek is one of the largest and most popular websites devoted to tabletop gaming, providing information on a wide variety of game and hobby developments, discussion forums related to over 80,000 game titles, support of an annual game convention, and an online store.

The growth in the production of tabletop games and in the opportunities for gamers to connect with one another, face-to-face and via the internet, provide wonderful opportunities to examine the experience and culture of tabletop game playing. As an avid tabletop gamer for over 40 years, I have been shifting my research interests in communication, community, membership, and experience from science labs to games, their conventions and associated online settings.

For example, I am turning to examine tabletop gamer culture by examining discussion forums on the website BoardGameGeek. Each title represented on the site has its own page with various forums for gamers to discuss any and all facets of the game and its play. One concern that appears common to many board gamers is the “replayability” of a game - whether or not a game offers a satisfying play experience beyond the first time playing it. A number of things may influence this determination such as the relative complexity of the game's mechanics, the topic or theme of the game, how long the game takes to play, or the range of available options and strategies to pursue in the game.



Consider the idea of “strategies” in a game for a moment. When a particular strategy in the game always wins, or the game will likely end in stalemate with competent play by the players, or perhaps even playing poorly can still lead to a win, gamers often describe such games as “broken” or “solved.” Tic-tac-toe is a “solved” game: there is one winning strategy that, if used, will always win or lead the game to a draw.

Looking at these online discussions of gamers about games that may get labeled “broken” or “solved” provides a window into board gaming cultures. How the terms are applied, to what games, with what reasons offered by players can inform us about how communities understand games. It can also inform us about how communities value games. These can help us to

understand what is consequential to a community and how members engaging with one another help to foster common understandings about the activity of game playing and how to talk about it as members of the community.

In the late 1930s, Dutch cultural theorist Johan Huizinga described the value of play within a culture as providing the time and space to reinforce cultural norms and beliefs. For the individual, play provides a chance to suspend reality and engage in enjoyable and motivating activity. Game Studies moves to uncover our involvement in games, in the worlds we create with them, and the connections we form with one another through their play, whether it be by iPad, computer, Nintendo, or across the dining room table with family and friends.

Photo by Kevin Sielaff



# Support the School of Communications

There are many ways to support Grand Valley State University. You can designate your gift specifically to the School of Communications by giving to any of the following funds. Learn more about giving to GVSU and the School of Communications at [www.gvsu.edu/give](http://www.gvsu.edu/give)



## School of Communications Scholarship

The School of Communications Scholarship is designed to honor upper level School of Communications students who have demonstrated promise in their chosen field of study. Scholarship funds will be awarded on a competitive basis. The student must have declared a major in the School of Communications, be in good academic standing, and have completed a minimum of 30 credits at GVSU.

## Dr. Margaret Proctor School of Communications Scholarship

The scholarship is intended to benefit School of Communications students who write in a vivid, direct and unique voice. It is designed especially with fiction-writing in mind, which includes writing for film and theater.

## The Warren Reynolds Scholarship

The Warren Reynolds Scholarship is named in honor of the longtime sports director at WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids. Warren Reynolds, who died of cancer in the year 2000 and was a champion of charitable causes throughout the region, left a legacy of integrity in broadcast journalism. This scholarship is intended for students who exemplify these ideals and show a passion for electronic media. Preference will be given to students pursuing a career in sports broadcasting.

## John J. and Marjorie E. Shepard Communications Scholarship

Established in memory of John J. and Marjorie E. Shepard, to support students in the Grand Valley State University School of Communications.

It was their wish that a portion of their estate be designated for a scholarship to benefit students pursuing careers in broadcasting.

## Calder Scholarship

Full Tuition for a Senior student working in the Arts (Photography, Film and Video, Theatre). Applicants are nominated by academic units. Each unit may nominate up to three candidates. Applicants should be completing their third year of study. The Scholarship provides full tuition for their senior year. The committee awards one scholarship per year.

## Eastman Scholarship Program

Annual tuition and fees to Film and Video majors. (Requires going through Film and Video faculty.)

## William J. & Margaret G. Branstrom Fund Award for partial tuition

For Photography and Film/Video students.

## Joseph Ehrenreich Scholarship: Press Photography

Five \$1,000 grants per year from the National Press Photographers Foundation. Students must submit a portfolio of their work demonstrating skill, versatility and potential. Financial need is also a criterion.

## Dirk Koning Film/Video Scholarship

Dirk Koning was the founding Director of the Community Media Center in Grand Rapids and an adjunct faculty member at GVSU. Dirk was a media visionary, a passionate ambassador for public access, who believed that the airwaves belong to the people. He was an internationally recognized media activist



and champion for free speech. Dirk died unexpectedly in 2005 at the age of 48. We have named this scholarship in his honor. Scholarship moneys from this fund are awarded on a competitive basis to upper level Film and Video Production majors who have made or intend to make media that contributes to the improvement of society.

### Frederick A. Chapman Endowed Memorial Public Relations Scholarship

This fund assists students in Public Relations who are committed to community service.

### Friends of West Michigan Public Broadcasting Student Employee Scholarship

Two annual full tuition scholarships. Available to one TV and one Audio student, each of whom have worked at TV or radio stations WGVU/WGVK-TV or WGVU-Radio.

### MCA-A Bill Rigstand Communication Scholarship

Annual \$2,000-plus Detroit-area internship.

## REGISTERED INTERNSHIPS 2016

### Major Program Students

Advertising and Public Relations:	191
Communication Studies:	82
Film and Video Production:	59
Health Communications:	43
Multimedia Journalism:	25
Journalism:	4
Broadcasting:	20
Photography:	5

# By the Numbers

All data as of Fall 2016 semester

## FALL 2016 REGISTERED STUDENTS

### Major Program Students

Advertising and Public Relations.....	517
Advertising.....	274
Public Relations .....	168
Broadcasting .....	24
Journalism .....	24
Multimedia Journalism .....	131
Communication Studies .....	339
Communications .....	52
Graduate Students .....	50
Undergrad.....	2
Film and Video Production .....	312
No Emphasis .....	271
Animation/New Media.....	8
Cinema .....	2
Documentary/Nonfiction Production .....	1
Fiction Filmmaking.....	11
Individual Study .....	17
Sound Design .....	1
Video .....	1
Health Communications.....	113
Photography .....	70
Theatre .....	41

### KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US:

[www.gvsu.edu/soc/](http://www.gvsu.edu/soc/)

dotCOM blog: <http://gvschoolofcom.wordpress.com>

@gvschoolofcom

[www.facebook.com/GVSchoolCom](https://www.facebook.com/GVSchoolCom)



Orange Staircase | Photo taken by David L. Rathbun



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS



INSPIRING THOUGHT. PERFECTING PRACTICE.

[www.gvsu.edu/soc](http://www.gvsu.edu/soc)