Welcome to Miami’s new Department of Media, Journalism and Film. In 2013 we completed a major overhaul of how we study Media @ Miami and merged our Journalism Program with the Department of Communication and Miami’s film program.

Our independent Journalism Program began in 2003-04 after a two-year task force recommended that the journalism major leave the Department of English, where JRN had been housed for more than 30 years. In fall 2004, I became program director. Then in 2009 the College of Arts & Science asked me to serve as interim chair of the Department of Communication and consider merging journalism and various media-related programs together in a new department.

The journalism major at Miami remains devoted to the critical analysis of journalism and the professional education of journalism students. Unlike more heavily professionalized undergraduate programs – such as Missouri, Northwestern, Indiana or Ohio University, which are not housed in liberal arts divisions – the emphasis at Miami has been more on educating students broadly as capable writers and critical thinkers, while also grounding them in basic reporting, interviewing, storytelling, and editing skills.

Since its inception in 2003-04, the journalism program has also required students to earn a second major, preferably not in a media-related field.

The second major has encouraged students to develop expertise and knowledge in another field and adds value to their Miami degree.

Our new department, in addition to JRN, offer several majors: Media & Culture (formerly called Mass Communication), Strategic Communication, and Comparative Media Studies. We also are developing the long-standing film minor into a major. All of our students, following JRN’s lead, will now earn a second major (or two minors). Our emphasis remains on educating students as conceptual and analytical thinkers while grounding them in various skills (for example, TV and radio production, scriptwriting, reporting, interviewing, storytelling, editing, public speaking, or public relations).

In addition to our vibrant internship programs, many of our writing and production classes are now partnered with area newsrooms and media companies where students produce online, broadcast, and print projects that

Continued on back page
John Lowery changed the lives of the many students he taught in his writing classes, he changed the way journalism was taught at Miami University.

Lowery says one of his proudest accomplishments during his 43 years at Miami was that he helped start the journalism emphasis in the Department of English, a precursor to today’s journalism program.

Besides that, Lowery helped hundreds of students get great internships at newspapers and taught thousands of students the art of writing. He also made an impact on students’ lives along the way.

“John Lowery changed my life,” says Mike Agin, a 1974 graduate from Miami. While he was a student at Miami, Lowery told Agin to go work for The Miami Student and then helped him write his first story. “He took his time and said I might have some value… he led me to something that made sense.”

Nine months later, Agin had an internship with the Cincinnati Enquirer, where he later worked after graduation.

In his four-plus decades at Miami University, Lowery has touched many journalism students through his writing courses. The 77-year-old Lowery officially retired in May 2013. The Journalism Program has set up a scholarship in his name to celebrate his accomplishments at Miami.

Richard Campbell, the former director of the Journalism Program who is now the chairman of the Department of Media, Journalism and Film at Miami, says Lowery is leaving a “pretty rich legacy” which includes establishing the journalism major, establishing a strong internship program and teaching good writing.

“John was really good at mentoring writers and certainly knows how to teach writing,” Campbell says.

Lowery helped his students get internships at newspapers with that good writing. Campbell says, “John always made the connection with editors and championed the best student work and helped get it published.”

Lee Jones, a 2012 journalism graduate, says Lowery was helpful to him in preparing for his career in journalism.

“He was an excellent teacher and an interesting man to talk to,” said Jones, who is now a writer for the Urbana Daily Citizen in Urbana, Ohio. “He would take the time and give you pointers of how to do better and also told us we did well. I credit him for my ability to write features at all.”

Jones says he thinks of Lowery’s influence often when he’s writing that snappy lead. “Today I wrote a feature and I used a pun that he taught in class. He would teach us that sort of thing to play with phrases. I put it to use on a daily basis… to use the creative side that he was able to pound into us in classes.”
Miami starts Public Radio Project class

You won’t find much news about Miami University or the Butler County area in local broadcast media today. Miami’s Media Journalism and Film Department Chair Richard Campbell developed the idea of The Miami Public Radio Project to offer local NPR style news via the Internet to rectify that.

Project Director Bob Long works with a team of nine student journalists to offer a weekly newscast and features on important local topics. Since MPRP is not designed to be a “breaking news” website, the goal is to cover issues involving education, human service needs, the environment and much more. These stories can be found on the Media, Journalism and Film website at: http://units.miamioh.edu/mjf/mediaculture/mprp.html

Suggestions for future topics can be sent to Bob Long at longrd1@miamioh.edu.

Jim Tobin’s book, “The Man He Became: How FDR Defied Polio to Win the Presidency,” will come out in November. It already has some advance reviews including a “starred” review by Publisher’s Weekly, which said: “Tobin’s balanced and detailed approach offers a well-rounded look at a slice of F.D.R.’s life generally obscured from popular accounts, and it makes for fascinating reading. ”

Kirkus Review says it is a “rich narrative” story that explains everything from how FDR got polio to how he dealt with the illness and how it helped him win the presidency.

Sacha DeVroomen Bellman, visiting instructor, attended the College Media Association’s Summer Adviser Workshop this summer to learn more multi-media skills. The workshop was in DC and she finished a video story on the World War II memorial. See the result at www.sachadevbellman.wordpress.com.

Patricia Gallagher Newberry, senior lecturer, was elected director of the Society of Professional Journalists Region 4 for 2012-13, and now serves on the SPJ national board.

Newberry also created a NYC Media program for the new Winter term. The course will include five days in New York where students will do Q&As with journalists at The New York Times, Fox News, Media Bistro, a range of magazines (Newsweek, Marie Claire, Harper’s Bazaar and others), and other national media organizations.

They’ll also take in a Broadway show and attend a New York Times “Times Talks” program -- with a little time off to hunt down great spots to eat and shop.

The balance of the course will be taught online, with students investigating issues facing each media organization on the NYC Media tour, then analyzing their learning for individual web or blog sites in the third week.

Joe Sampson, clinical faculty, is involved in a group of folks from Washington and Montana working on a mobile project that tells the story of the worst natural disaster in Montana history -- a flood that hit in June 1964 near Glacier National Park. “Our focus is on the untold story of what the flood did to residents of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation,” Sampson said. The project will debut next summer to mark the 50th anniversary. Here’s a site w/ more details: http://sixtyfourflood.wordpress.com/

Annie-Laurie Blair, clinical faculty, is part of a Miami interdisciplinary faculty group that in May 2013 won a $25,000 seed grant from the Miami Office of Advancement of Research & Scholarship.

In 2013, Blair also trained in data visualization at the University of California, Berkeley, participated in a sustainability panel discussion at the national Society of Environmental Journalists conference, and created a Kickstarter fund-raising campaign to build a bird observation structure at Fernald Preserve in Ross, Ohio.
When Michelle Mitchell came to Oxford to attend Miami in 2002, she was a pre-med major with the hope of becoming a veterinarian one day. Once a sophomore, Mitchell decided a career in medicine was not the right path for her and she quickly became enticed with the thought of having a career in journalism, specifically in newspapers. Today, Michelle is a staff reporter covering Chandler, Ariz., at the Arizona Republic in Phoenix.

“I sort of fell into journalism,” said Mitchell. “The pre-med program is definitely what attracted me to Miami... It is what got me here in the first place.”

When she decided against pre-med, she declared English with a journalism emphasis, and a minor in German.

Mitchell graduated from Miami University in May of 2006, with an abundance of journalism experience under her belt, a 3.71 overall GPA, and a 3.9 GPA in her journalism classes.

Life after Miami for Mitchell consisted of a job as staff writer for a local newspaper in Palm Springs, Calif. The paper covered several big musical festivals, education, and a variety of other events and topics.

When she was hired along with a couple other college graduates, Mitchell stood out among her peers for her work ethic and attention to detail.

Senior Editor James Meier of the Desert Sun said Mitchell coincidentally was hired at the same time as an Ohio State journalism graduate. “What set her apart from her comrade was that she paid a lot more attention to accuracy. She was very careful, and triple-checked her work on a regular basis.”

Sacha Bellman, one of the journalism instructors who taught Mitchell throughout her time in Miami’s Journalism Program, said Mitchell made her own success. “Michelle is definitely one of these people who did all the right things while she was at Miami,” said Bellman. “Getting internships…several internships, while she was here, and getting all the wonderful clips she needed to get where she is today.”

Bellman said the Journalism Program continues to try to give students the hands-on experiences that Mitchell received throughout her internships to give them experiences that will give them a competitive edge in the evolving journalism field.

Mitchell, who is originally from Cleveland, still has fond memories of her years at Miami.

“I loved the campus. I made a lot of great friends there… But if it wasn’t for my journalism professors, I don’t know if I would’ve gotten the jobs that I got, which really jumpstarted my career,” she said.

“They really helped me out. Got me some great internships, and helped me land my first job out of college with the Desert Sun.”

**Finding the right path in Arizona**

BY SHANNON WHITSON
JRN senior

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**GRADUATE NEWS**

**Jon Gambrell,** JRN ’04, is an editor and correspondent on the Middle East Desk for The Associated Press, based in Cairo. He had previously worked in the Nigeria Bureau.

**Leah Rupp Smith,** JRN ’06, graduated from the University of Louisville School of Law and is an attorney with Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC (Labor & Employment Practice).

**Ida Lieszkovszky Hargitai,** JRN ’09, is a producer, writer and host with 90.3 WCPN ideastream, an National Public Radio station, in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Kate Stark,** JRN ’09, is the executive director of the Cincinnati chapter of the American Parkinson’s Disease Association.

**Christopher Washington,** JRN ’09, works in human resources with Fahlgren Mortine, a public relations agency, in Columbus, Ohio.

**Erin Bowen,** JRN ’10 graduated from Michigan State University College of Law. She is an associate now at Dawda, Mann, Mulcahy & Salder PLC in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

**Erin (Fischesser) Caproni,** JRN ’11, is the digital producer for the Cincinnati Business Courier.

**Matt Fitzgerald,** JRN ’12, is a writer for Bleacher Report, where he writes about golf and the Cleveland Browns.

**Amanda Seitz,** JRN ’12, is a multimedia reporter for Cox Media Group Ohio in Dayton.

**JM Rieger,** JRN ’13, is a video editor for Roll Call in Washington, DC.

See more graduate news on our website at: http://www.units.miamioh.edu/journalism/alumni.html
Send your alumni news to bellmasd@miamioh.edu to be included in the next newsletter.
Glamour in the name of journalism

BY SARAH TITLE
2013 JRN GRADUATE

Growing up, the idea of going to work meant putting on a fancy suit, sitting at a big desk with a nice computer, answering phone calls and doing paperwork. Going to boutique and restaurant openings, attending concerts and checking out the local bars were what the weekends are for.

Allison Mitchell has the best of both worlds. A deputy editor for Jezebel magazine in Atlanta, the 2011 Miami journalism graduate lives a glamorous lifestyle all in the name of journalism.

“It just doesn’t feel like work,” Mitchell says. She conducts two to three interviews per month with A-list stars, stays up on the latest fashion trends and captures moments in the hottest Atlanta clubs for the magazine’s “Hot Shot” section.

“For example this week, on Monday I had to go to boutiques and pull outfits for fashion pages, Tuesday I worked with the photographer to shoot all the fashion pages and then that night I interviewed Ludacris,” Mitchell says.

Mitchell attributes her love for entertainment, fashion and music to her family.

She grew up in San Clemente, Calif., with her parents and two older brothers. Her dad used to play records when she was young and her brothers were addicted to MTV. Her mom started taking her to concerts and premieres when she was 10 years old. Events such as an ‘N Sync Concert, Teen Choice Awards and Pirates of the Caribbean premiere inspired her love for celebrities and pop culture.

“I’ve always been surrounded by entertainment growing up in Southern California,” Mitchell says.

Desperately seeking a new perspective outside the “Orange County Bubble,” Mitchell ended up at Miami University, where she majored in journalism and English.

“Journalism always seemed like the natural choice for me. I wanted to be the one interviewing celebrities and I knew journalism would give me access to talking to the celebrities that I loved,” Mitchell says.

While at Miami University, Mitchell wrote for Up fashion magazine and was on Concert Board. In her junior year, Mitchell and her roommate made a pact to find great summer internships. She applied to an editorial internship with the Style Network posted on a website, ed2010.com.

“I thought, someone has to get hired so why not me?” Mitchell says. Her go-getter attitude landed her a summer internship with mystyle.com and eonline.com.

Patricia Newberry, a journalism senior lecturer who had Mitchell in her business media class, said Mitchell always had that kind of attitude. “She was really a self-starter. She could figure out how to get it done. I talk to a lot of students about internships and some of them have no idea how it works and she just intuitively knew,” Newberry says. “She made these things happen for herself.”

At her summer internship, Mitchell took on a tremendous amount of responsibility. She pitched fashion and beauty stories daily and managed around 50 photo galleries.

Mitchell’s work ethic impressed her boss, Danielle Datu, an editor at mystyle.com. “She juggled projects amazingly. She also required little direction, but produced work that was clear and extremely helpful to the team overall. As the internship went on I was able to give her more and more stories to do because she was just so capable.”

After graduation in May 2011, Mitchell attended the University of Southern California to get a master’s degree in journalism. On a whim, she applied for an internship on Twitter with ryanseacrest.com. And she got it.

“I used to sit outside during lunch and celebrity watch because Ryan Seacrest and Giuliana Rancic would walk in and out,” she says. “The Kardashians would come in and out. I even saw Eva Longoria and Ryan Seacrest have a conversation right in front of me.”

Growing up Mitchell said she always wanted to be like Rancic, a co-anchor on E! News. Interviewing celebrities and covering music and openings were dreams finally becoming a reality. She quit school to follow her dreams.

Mitchell worked at Nordstrom in early 2012 while she applied for jobs and internships. In April of that year, she heard back from the editor in chief at Jezebel magazine where she previously had applied for an internship. They had an opening in Atlanta for an assistant editor.

Within three weeks, Mitchell packed up her California life and moved to Atlanta. She has been promoted twice since then, most recently to deputy editor. She also serves as executive editor of Cumulus Media’s newest publication, NASH magazine, which is owned by the same company as Jezebel.

Mitchell finally got to meet her idol, Giuliana Rancic, when her boss asked her to fly to Florida and interview her. This was the moment when Mitchell realized everything was coming full circle for her. “I’ve always been lucky to always do what I love and my hope is to continue to do what I love and grow more,” Mitchell says. “You have to follow your heart to be successful at anything.”
Leaving a legacy
CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

“He pushes you to a new level where you didn’t think you could go in your writing,” she says. “He pulls better writing out of you. It comes naturally to him.”

Lowery teaches his students to find a good story, then dig to find the best information.

“He reminds me of an old-school editor,” Theodore says. “He makes you find the story.”

Lowery himself is more humble about his legacy.

“I’ve done what I wanted to do and teach basic journalism,” he said from his screened-in porch at his home in Hamilton. “I wanted to turn out journalists and I did.”

His best memories are from the students who succeeded, he says. “I’m pridelful enough to take credit for their success.”

One of the ways Lowery continued to stay fresh in his teaching was by working at newspapers during the summer months. He worked at most of the major Ohio daily newspapers as well as in Buffalo, N.Y., and Richmond, Va.

Those connections helped the internship program, which Lowery ran for more than 30 years. “I thought it was the best thing I was doing for my students,” he says. “As a rule, all students succeeded in the internships.”

Establishing his class on reviewing the arts also is one of Lowery’s favorite accomplishments. For years, he directed a American College Theater Festival through the Kennedy Center for the Midwest Region. He received a Gold Medallion award from the organization in 1991.

John and his wife of 27 years, Nancy, have four children: Tim, John, Mary and Robert.

Lowery is not sure what he will do in retirement. He is continuing to teach as an adjunct. “Nancy says I’m a happier person when I’m teaching,” Lowery says.

The family also might build a house on property they own in Atlanta and move south. Lowery is from Georgia. He received his bachelor’s degree from Mercer University and his master’s degree from the University of Georgia. His wife is also from Georgia and misses the area.

Lowery is happy with the way the Journalism Program has evolved at Miami, from his early years of a few classes to a full program that is part of a bigger Department of Media, Journalism and Film.

He also has moved around on campus. From the early years as adviser of The Miami Student with an office in Shriver Center, to Upham Hall and later moving with the English Department to Bachelor Hall.

The biggest changes were when journalism became a free-standing program and when the program moved to Williams Hall, where Lowery taught his last semester of classes.

“I’m proud to have been part of laying the foundation of that program.”