



alumni newsletter

Communication Department Spring 2009

Former Beauty Queen Turned Hard Investigative Reporter

By Cameran Biltucci

Many women in today's society put their careers on hold to fulfill the American dream of getting married and starting a family. Lauren Reynolds, '93, Channel 10 News I-Team Reporter, was able to achieve this dream while also furthering her successful career in journalism.

Reynolds is a UCSD alum who excelled in school as a communication major. Because her father was an employee for USC, she had the ability to get a full-ride scholarship to that institution; however, the academics and environment drew her to UCSD. Reynolds claims, "UCSD gave me a great base education. I became a more critical thinker and I learned how to really analyze media. The internship office helped me pick out internships, which I think was the number one reason I got my first job in news." Eager to get involved in campus life as well, Reynolds became a writing tutor at the Writing Center, taught as an aerobics instructor at the Recreation Center and joined the sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma. Adding to the list, she was crowned Miss San Diego the same year that she graduated from college. The activities that she participated in at UCSD and her involvement in beauty pageants gave Reynolds the experience to work well with people and improve on her communication



Lauren Reynolds is currently an Investigative Reporter for Channel 10 News in San Diego

skills. Both of these attributes helped her get started and become successful in the news field.

After graduating from UCSD, she started her career as a news reporter for a small network news station. In 1996, she joined the Channel 10 News team. Shortly thereafter, she married and started her family. Today, she is an investigative reporter with many awards and acclamations under her belt. Reynolds has received 9 Emmy Awards, including Journalistic Enterprise, Investigative, Feature and Documentary reporting. Some of her recent and most memorable stories include a two-year investigation into street gang members and white supremacists in the U.S. military services. Reynolds has a passion for investigative journalism and all of the positive outcomes that it brings. "I love investigative journalism. I think

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One Person Multiple Books: How Success Was Found in Self-Help

By Gabriella Pham

Forever ambitious and driven, Patrick Macaraeg, '03, gives "do-it-yourself" a new meaning one book at a time.

Perhaps without self-help books as a source of guidance, he might have been where he is today. He already had all the skills and experience that the books talk about, but he needed a new perspective on how to apply it in the "real world." Before talking with Macaraeg, I thought that self-help books were for those who are hopeless and helpless. Yet, after reading some of his recommendations and reflecting on his success, I now understand that even the most rational person I know needs a little help sometimes to realize who he is and who he can be.

After graduating from Thurgood Marshall College with a B.A in Urban Studies and Political Science, Macaraeg turned to the self-help genre of books to give him some guidance as he made his way through the next chapter of his life. He had a lot of experiences at UCSD that taught him many skills and shaped

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of it as the fourth branch of government. It allows a whistleblower to come forward and it can turn one voice for change into many. We level the playing field for those without power or influence who want to take on those who have both.”

Given the competitive field of journalism, Reynolds believes that it is easier for women to enter the news business. She states, “Women are born

communicators and do a very good job of storytelling.” News stations also try to have an equal number of men and women in the studio to represent the general population. Nevertheless, Reynolds has still managed to stand out in the pool of female news reporters in this field of work. With her busy schedule, Reynolds manages to stay actively involved in the community and mentors individuals who want to pursue careers in journalism. Reynolds urges individuals to follow their dreams because if they love what they do then

they can make a great difference in the world. “I love my job, much more now than I ever have because I have gone from being a general assignment reporter to an investigative reporter. I see the world differently. I have learned how dishonest people can be, how reluctant to prosecute the District Attorney can be, and how limited our oversight at the state and federal level is of professionals from doctors to lawyers to financial advisors. It was a big wake up call, and I am grateful for it.”

From Minor Leagues to Major Motion Pictures

By Aja Vo

While most college students, myself included, are quaking in our flip-flops and pajama bottoms at the mere possibility of failing after graduation Rick Nowak, '90, experienced the pitfalls of the real world while still in college's haven of security. Now in retrospect, he admits he's probably a better man for the trials and tribulations he endured.

It took Nowak six and a half years to graduate from UCSD's Marshall College with a Visual Arts degree after an arm injury ended his promising baseball career. If that isn't adding insult to injury then I don't know what is.

The Monday after Nowak graduated from college at age 24, he took his first steps onto a career path that would ultimately prove to be his calling.

Actually, he admits he only had a foggy idea of what he wanted to do. After his minor league baseball career ended, Nowak promised himself that he would not be one of those guys who found themselves at 30 with nothing accomplished because they were still

trying to make it in baseball. Wisely stepping away from baseball with grace and dignity, Nowak turned instead to another childhood dream: Hollywood.

Nowak never wanted to be in front of the camera, he wanted to direct and produce. However, although just out of school, Nowak wasn't naive. He knew that to make it in Hollywood, one had to know someone, who knew someone, who knew another someone.

Though he wasn't on a first name basis with Steven Spielberg, Nowak wasn't without hope. Kevin Yost, a college friend of Nowak's, was working as a driver at Cimarron/Bacon/O'Brien (CBO), a motion picture trailer advertising company, and urged Nowak to join him.

Although no parents shell out a fortune in college tuition to prepare their child for a future in taxi duty, Nowak's job as a runner at CBO allowed him an opportunity to put his Visual Arts degree to good use. As a runner, he delivered tapes, scripts, and admittedly even picked up the boss' kids. However, the job did eventually become a little more technical as he began getting assignments editing various movie trailers, and this was



Rick Nowak, UCSD Alum

where Nowak insists that his Visual Arts degree from a liberal arts university proved to be quite useful.

While he admits that there was a heavy emphasis on theory, UCSD equipped him with enough practical knowledge for him to thrive in the area of film production. He knew the basic functions of the equipment and his position as a production assistant

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the person he is today, but the books that he picked up taught him how to be better at what he already knew. Despite having to focus on finding a career soon after leaving UCSD, he took the time to discover books on his own to “see if one would stick” or just took recommendations from his friends.

This is not to say that the books told him how to be a particular kind of person, because he already had all of the skills the books talked about: organization, communication, and innovation to name a few. He was neither helpless nor hopeless and that is why I found it so surprising that self-help books played a factor in helping him realize the person he could become. “Sometimes [they] served as an opportunity to complement what I’m experiencing in the ‘real world’ while other times, [they] offered that ‘escape’ to another place where I could experience something new and exciting that I would look forward to applying to my ‘real world’.”

Macaraeg gave me some of his favorites to look at: “How to Win Friends and Influence People,”

“Tuesday with Morrie,” “Never Eat Alone,” “Who Moved My Cheese,” “One Person Multiple Careers,” and “The Five People You Meet in Heaven.” Given my prior views of the self-help genre, I found it ironic that someone like Macaraeg would turn to these texts to help him navigate through life. He already knew how to interact with people from UCSD, but he knew that he had to take it to a whole new level as he began to deal with students, colleagues, and potential clients and to pursue a double career. The books gave him a model that emphasized applying what he already knew about himself in a more effective way.

For Macaraeg, having strong and meaningful relationships has helped him succeed. He quoted a phrase that he learned from one of the books: “become genuinely interested in other people.” Because both of his careers require him to constantly interact with others, he found that this idea has helped him decide how he would effectively approach the daily task. For a majority of people, networking is a shameless process to get to the top where the only people in their network are those who will benefit their career. For both Macaraeg and I, the idea of networking seemed like a selfish



Patrick Macaraeg, '03, has successfully proven himself in his multiple careers through the guidance of self-help books.

process. Even though a person may end up with dozens of business cards, he or she may never have a strong and honest relationship that would prove more worthwhile down the road.

Knowing his own abilities and strength only took Macaraeg so far in his life, but learning how to improve on them and effectively use them in the “real world” through self-help books has taken him to greater heights personally and professionally.

A Day at the News: Shadowing Allison Horn, '97

By Jared Gibson

Being in college is a struggle to find a career path that can become a reality after graduation has passed. Some people are fortunate enough to have distinct career goals and for many others it is a struggle to find something they are genuinely interested in doing. You could consider me one of the fortunate ones who have known what he has wanted to do for a long time, but

now the task is making it a reality for myself. For a long time I have always wanted a career in sports broadcasting – it is all I have wanted. And since I have been in college, I have worked internships at KFMB (San Diego’s CBS affiliate) and Channel 4 San Diego, and they have both taught me a lot about what being a journalist is all about.

This quarter, I became acquainted with Allison Horn, a

producer at KGTV (San Diego’s ABC affiliate). Allison is a 1997 UCSD graduate of ERC. Her experience includes being a newsletter writer for Qualcomm, teaching video production at San Pasqual, writing for the photography industry and working in retail before finally settling at her current job as a producer. Obviously, it was not a jump to the big time for Ms. Horn right out of college, but after

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The Mercenary Life of a Media Executive

By Josh Hsu

Cruising through college, the majority of graduating seniors abruptly discover that their track soon runs right into the battlefield. Enemy fire spins you backwards, dead ends leave you discouraged, and detours derail your track. Few are able to adapt, adjust and reinvent their technique, but these elite individuals understand that the end is the prize, and not necessarily the process that leads up to it. Jay Fukuto, the Head of Production for Film Roman, has been successful in the film industry for decades, but not unlike many others, he faced difficulties launching a career that might have proved disastrous for any ambitious young filmmaker. Rather than trip and stumble, Fukuto adopted a unique philosophy of a broad approach, infiltrating the industry through side vents and tunnels.

Fukuto, '76, fell in love with film making in college, and headed directly to USC for graduate school. Like many graduates, Jay found that his career path was initially a lonely one, where nobody gave him a guiding hand. With no connections, it was his assertive philosophy that motivated him to sneak into the Paramount mechanism under camouflage of a mailroom worker. To him, sacrifice was a necessary part of the game, for he truly believed there was more than one way to get to your goal. Getting his foot in the door paid off, as he soon upgraded his connections within

the company. He finally navigated his way out of the thicket and onto production. From there, the gates began to open, where he worked on films and television shows such as 48 Hours, Happy Days, Cheers, Family Ties, and more.



Jay Fukuto now heads Production for Film Roman, best known for producing the hit show "The Simpsons."

Fukuto challenges the 1950's model of success by dismissing the idea of holding a lifelong company commitment. His primary loyalty was not with a certain job title, but with his own particular skill set. This philosophy led him to many different positions, including Executive of

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at CBO helped him further hone his technical skills.

After four years at CBO, Nowak had learned all that he could and was looking to thrive in a new environment. He was recruited by 20th Century Fox to join their creative advertising department. In his two years with Fox, Nowak worked on trailers for some of the biggest films of the 90s, including Independence Day.

Nowadays, Nowak is a seasoned executive acting as Chief Operating Officer at New Wave Entertainment. He is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the company while occasionally sitting in business lunch meetings with some of today's hottest celebrities, notably Tyra Banks.

Not bad for a boy who started off with a broken dream, fractured arm, and an underpaid job. The moral of the story? According to Nowak, "It's okay to start at the bottom, everybody has to put in their dues and you've got to start somewhere. Look at me, I started off late and in worse circumstances than most and I did all right. You'll be fine."

Training Program and Supervisor of Television Department for Paramount Pictures, to co-running UBU production for five and a half years. When doors started closing, he aimed elsewhere. After UBU disbanded, he started working with animation at Disney in 1992, though he had no real experience. However, creativity and imagination were things that radiated from Fukuto's core. He naturally found this to be more rewarding than he could have imagined and ended

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up working at Disney for 4 years as Vice President of Current Programming, then becoming the Head of MGM animation, and in 2001 returning to work with the Disney corporation. Since then he has been a producer for Bratz, and now is currently the Head of Production for Film Roman, the animation sector of Starz Entertainment.

Jay Fukuto has survived a multitude of beginnings and endings with different companies, because he was committed to his philosophy- "Keep your options open and be broad in your approach, for there are a number of approaches to reach your target." The bounty may shift in shape and job title, but the essence remains the metaphoric ambrosia for which he thirsted. Fukuto teaches us a lesson not through a narrow lens, but through a widescope, to



Fukuto produced the hit television show "The Simpsons."

simultaneously pursue that objective through different avenues; it is the fluidity of the individual, the ability to adapt, strategize, and optimize that will keep you going. There are a

multitude of approaches to achieve one's goal, and the broader the net, the likelier it is to capture that dream.

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working a few jobs, she had finally found what she had wanted to do. Ms. Horn was kind enough to allow me to shadow her at Channel 10 and to get a feel for what it was like to be a producer. When I met her 'behind the scenes', I hadn't remembered what it was like in the news station because I hadn't been in one for several years. I sat behind Allison, watching her prepare for their eleven o'clock broadcast, which consisted of aligning stories and checking to make sure all the material was in its place for the upcoming show. After making sure all the stories were in the right order, she printed the scripts for the anchors.

Each anchor has scripts that show their dialogue in case a teleprompter fails, and computers in front of them to aid them while they are live. I then got to take a look at the eleven o'clock news from where she would produce it. Her job is to be a proverbial quarterback for the broadcast. She and other producers have headsets, which allow them to communicate with the anchors through their earpieces. This allows the producers to inform the anchors which camera to look at, how much time until they are live, whether or not there is a change in the script, and so on.

After the show was finished, Ms. Horn took me backstage for a look at the set of Channel 10 News. The one line that I distinctly remember while

she was giving me a tour was that the newsroom "loses its glamour quickly," which for me could not be truer. One of the lessons I learned from Allison is that no one wants to get caught in a career they don't want. It was clear to me that she liked her job and that her situation is something to strive for as a student. We should all be seeking to find a career that we can enjoy. Because I know that for myself, I love sports and I hate news. Two of my three internships were sports-related and it took my meeting Allison to understand that this was much more interesting than my previous news internship. What I learned from Ms. Horn and my trip to Channel 10 News is that to find a career that interests you will make you much happier.