

# COM / 365

DEAN'S REPORT 2023

## BUILDING A BETTER NEWSPAPER

KEVIN MERIDA  
REVAMPS THE  
*LOS ANGELES TIMES*  
TO REFLECT THE  
CITY'S DIVERSITY



Producer Carlos Bardasano brings big stories to life on Spanish-language TV

No joke! A silent film about a clown won COM's highest film honor

Students and alums tackle the local news crisis

# COM by the NUMBERS

## DONORS

1,678

Total Donors

\$1,733,242

Total Donations

15

Endowed Graduate Scholarships

24

Endowed Undergraduate Scholarships

6

Endowed Professorships

## FACULTY & STAFF

206

Total Faculty

95

Full-Time Faculty

111

Part-Time Faculty

60

Total Staff

## STUDENTS

1,967

Total Undergraduate Students

528

Total Graduate Students

Advertising: 98  
Emerging Media Studies: 65  
Film and Television Studies: 17  
Journalism: 60  
Media Science: Media  
Communication Research: 126  
Media Ventures: 13  
Public Relations: 81  
Screenwriting: 24  
Television: 44





## A FORCE FOR GOOD

**W**elcome, alumni and friends of COM, to the dean's annual report on our progress toward the college's ambitious mission to build understanding through research, practice and education. Thanks to your support, and the hard work of our faculty, staff, students and alumni community, I have a lot to share about the past year—and also feel lots of hope about what's next in the months ahead.

In this edition of *COM/365*, you'll find stories about how we are working to combat the problems of today's fractured and transforming communication ecosystems, while also building new avenues for success for our students and the diverse communities we serve.

For starters, complex problems require an interdisciplinary approach. "COM Collaborations," on page 14, provides a great overview of four of the college's partnerships to help foster positive change. As always, any collaborative work starts with identifying key challenges.

Take the problem of news deserts, where local reporting is unavailable or much reduced due to shifting business models in journalism brought on partly by the rise of social media and changes to news dissemination platforms. Democracy relies on the free flow of reliable information from trusted, authoritative sources, a core principle guiding our efforts at COM. In "Reviving Local Journalism," starting on page 28, you can learn more about the issues for local outlets overall—and the reporting that COM students and faculty are contributing to help. The 15-year-old Statehouse Program, for instance, provides a wire service for local outlets that can no longer place a reporter on the scene. Various classes on reporting in depth also have produced stories for a variety of local publications.

With his eyes on creating a brighter future, *Los Angeles Times* Executive Editor Kevin Merida ('79) considers "How to Build a Better Newspaper" (page 16). Among other approaches, he discusses creating a fast break desk to improve responsiveness to news and trending topics, a storytelling group, the power of representation in the newsroom for serving the needs of diverse

communities, and being "more aggressive about attracting audiences that may not have come to us, that historically may have had reasons to not trust us."

Diverse, Spanish-language audiences are also front and center for Carlos Bardasano (Questrom '94, COM '97), president and head of content at W Studios, which produces original programs for Spanish-language media and content giant TelevisaUnivision. Turn to page 20 to learn about his work at the nexus of big changes that are on their way for Spanish-language TV in "Señor Televisión."

In the third year of a pandemic that is now moving toward the endemic stage, COM students also applied their trademark energy and creativity to bring joy—and got some great recognition for doing it. Starting on page 24, "Lights, Camera, Clown Shoes!" describes the fantastic storytelling journey of Redstone Award-winning filmmaker Zac Vujnov ('21), who had to roll with the COVID restrictions at the time. He faced three hurdles: he could film using only members of the BU community, all actors had to wear masks and he could only shoot with groups of 10 or fewer. Well, the old adage holds that necessity is the mother of invention—and Vujnov's wry and romantic tale of two clowns who become smitten while hawking trinkets in Boston's Public Garden is an inventive treat indeed. Learn about other student (and faculty) "Annual Accolades" across COM on page 10.

Although we at COM are the educators and staff, it's lovely to see how often we learn from our students, the hope for a better future for us all.

Best,

MARIETTE DICHRISTINA ('86)

Dean

**WE ARE WORKING TO  
COMBAT THE PROBLEMS  
OF TODAY'S FRACTURED  
AND TRANSFORMING  
COMMUNICATION ECOSYSTEMS,  
WHILE ALSO BUILDING NEW  
AVENUES FOR SUCCESS FOR  
OUR STUDENTS.**

**Dean**  
Mariette DiChristina ('86)

**Assistant Dean,  
Development & Alumni Relations**  
Kirsten S. Durocher (CGS'03,  
COM'05)

**Director of Marketing &  
Communications**  
Burt Glass

**Editor**  
Marc Chalufour

**Art Director**  
Raquel Schott

**Contributing Writers**  
Alene Bouranova ('16)  
Joel Brown  
Molly Callahan  
Jeff Cruikshank  
Burt Glass  
Steve Holt  
Amy Laskowski ('15)  
Mara Sassoon (MET'22)  
Shana Singh ('23)

**Copy Editors**  
Angela Clarke-Silvia  
Meredith Mann  
Peter Nebesar

**Photo Editor**  
Cherryl Hanson Bull

Produced by Boston University  
Marketing & Communications

**Cover Photography**  
Patrick Strattner

COM/365 welcomes your comments.  
Write to the editor at [mchalu4@bu.edu](mailto:mchalu4@bu.edu).  
Send address updates to  
[alumbio@bu.edu](mailto:alumbio@bu.edu).

 Recyclable

In keeping with BU's  
commitment to sustainability, this  
publication is FSC-certified.

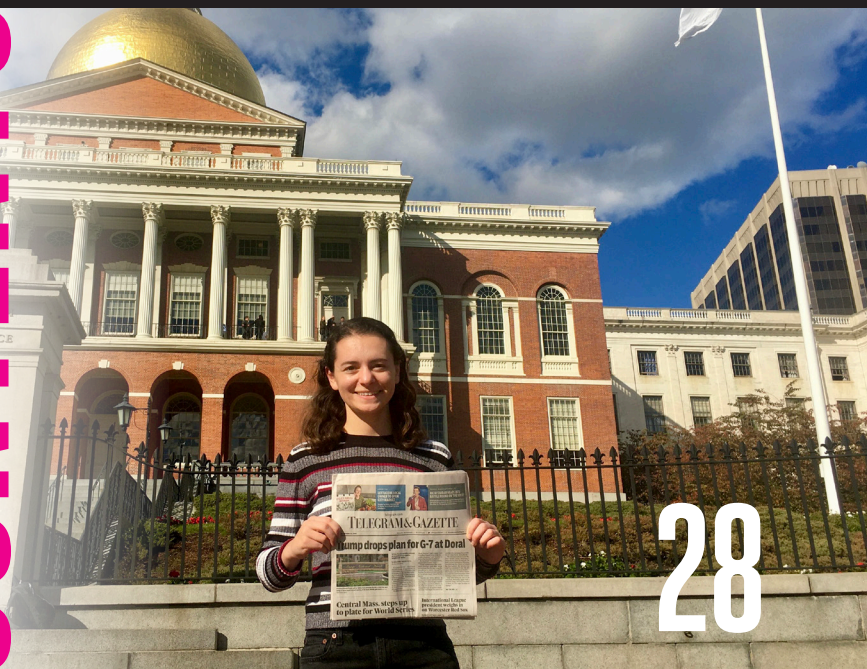
### Stay Connected to the College of Communication

Join the COM online community! Post,  
tag, tweet, ask questions, watch videos,  
network with fellow alums and reconnect  
with professors and classmates.

[bu.edu/com](http://bu.edu/com)  
[buconnects.com](http://buconnects.com)  
[facebook.com/COMatBU](https://facebook.com/COMatBU)  
[instagram.com/COMatBU](https://instagram.com/COMatBU)  
[linkedin.com/school/COMatBU](https://linkedin.com/school/COMatBU)  
[tiktok.com/@comatbu](https://tiktok.com/@comatbu)  
[twitter.com/COMatBU](https://twitter.com/COMatBU)  
[youtube.com/COMatBU](https://youtube.com/COMatBU)



# CONTENTS



## REVIVING LOCAL JOURNALISM

COM faculty, students and alums are working hard to fill the void left by media industry consolidations and bankruptcies.

## COM COLLABORATIONS

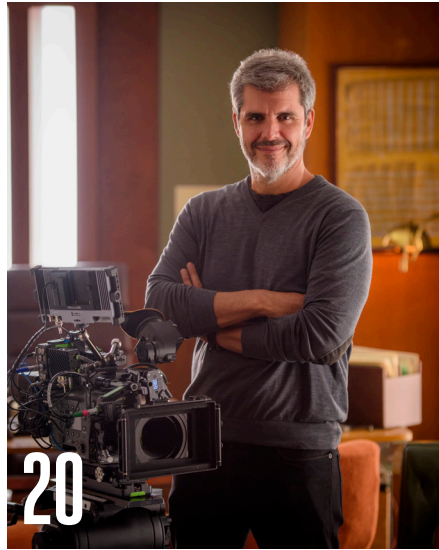
Faculty and students team up with BU peers for interdisciplinary research and storytelling.





## HOW TO BUILD A BETTER NEWSPAPER

Alum Kevin Merida, executive editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, is reinventing one of the largest papers in the US.



## SEÑOR TELEVISIÓN

Veteran producer and alum Carlos Bardasano is at the nexus of big changes coming to Spanish-language television.

## COM THIS YEAR

**4** A Black media symposium, a revamped Career Services department, a new magazine for first-gen students—plus awards, awards and more awards



## TERRIER HEADLINES

**34** What do the Oscars, Super Bowl and NYT bestseller list have in common? COM was there in 2022.



## LIGHTS, CAMERA, CLOWN SHOES!

**24** Behind the scenes in the mad dash to produce the Redstone-winning film *Roses & Red Noses*.



## THANKS TO ALL OF YOU

**38** Four messages of gratitude for the members of the COM community who have provided support over the past year.







Pei-Wen Shao ('22) presents CineBud, an instant messaging app for film lovers, at Pitchfest 2022.

**“Pitchfest provides our students the rare opportunity to show their best work to major industry executives.”**

—Cathy Perron

## SHOWCASING MEDIA INNOVATION

At Pitchfest, Media Ventures students present their vision for the future

By MARA SASSOON

Students are drawn to COM’s MS in Media Ventures program for one reason: they want to be part of the next generation of media entrepreneurs. They spend most of the 12-month program creating a media venture from scratch or a brand extension for an existing media company. Then they head to Los Angeles, where they present their projects to a panel of industry experts at Pitchfest.

“Pitchfest provides our students the rare opportunity to show their best work to major industry executives who generously offer feedback and guidance as our students take their next professional steps,” says Cathy Perron, a professor emerita of film and television who created the MS in Media Ventures program in 2009. “These presentations have led to many jobs for our alums.”

Among the 12 panelists at Pitchfest 2022, on July 28, were media ventures graduates Davi de Azevedo (CGS’14,

CAS’16, COM’16,’17), a senior creative producer for BuzzFeed; Lindsey Emerson (’13), vice president of product management at HBO Max; and Jonathan Goodlow (’15, Questrom’15), a product manager at Google. Other panelists were Lee Rierison, executive vice president, global television business and legal affairs at Miramax, and Howard Davine, head of operations at the independent production company Wiip, whose shows include HBO’s *Mare of Easttown* and Apple TV+’s *Dickinson*.

“It has been an extraordinary experience to witness the network effect of camaraderie and support that the Media Ventures program has fostered. Every year our guest list grows with more alums attending Pitchfest to support each other,” says Jodi Luber (CGS’84, COM’86,’89), associate dean of faculty and student actions and an associate professor of film and television. “Our overarching goal for our students is that they learn the skills and strategies

of product innovation.” The program is media-agnostic, she says, and alums have gone on to work in streaming, social media, advertising, journalism, podcasting, marketing, artificial intelligence and virtual reality. “We want them to understand what creates and sustains value for all invested parties, from customers to shareholders to strategic partners.”

This year marked the first year that presentations were back in person in Los Angeles since the pandemic forced the event to go virtual in 2020. Fourteen students gathered to pitch ideas ranging from a web platform billed as a “Buzzfeed specifically for Black womxn” to an extension for Apple Music that would allow DJs to remix, record and publish their music.

“We all now know Zoom is a wonderful and efficient tool, but there is something to be said for the lessons learned in making in-person connections and presenting in front of a room,” says Luber. “We had several students defer their admission and they entered the program this past fall. It was wonderful seeing them at Pitchfest, knowing how long they’ve waited for this moment.” /



# BIG CHANGES COME TO CAREER SERVICES



*“Having these identity-consciousness conversations will allow for more equity in the workplace and a more fair world where people are more aware of how everyone shows up to work.”*

—Heather Fink

## A generous gift funds revamped programming

By MARA SASSOON

COM kicked off the 2022–23 school year with important updates to its Career Services department. Thanks to a \$1 million endowment from Colleen McCreary ('95), the chief people, places and publicity officer at personal finance company Credit Karma, the department has been able to ramp up its efforts to foster student career readiness and promote career equity, says Heather Fink, director of Career Services.

To boost students' career preparedness, the department has added alumni panels to its schedule, including one on careers in production and another on careers in communication research. It also piloted an eight-week Career Toolkit Workshop series in fall 2022, taught by Tom Anastasi, an adjunct assistant professor of management at BU's Questrom School of Business, and Mark Schoenfeld, who cowrote, composed and produced the Broadway musical *Brooklyn* and has sold movie projects to major Hollywood studios.

Over the summer, the Career Services office also got a sleek redesign that includes more welcoming and inclusive accents—think bowls of snacks and posters with phrases such as “Black Lives Matter” and “Trans Rights are Human Rights”—and new modular furniture that can be adjusted to help accommodate more one-on-one and group appointments.

“We are a victim of our own success. Students really enjoy meeting with us,” says Fink. COM has more than 2,500 undergraduate and graduate students, and the department is trying out group appointments in order to reach more of them.

“We’re testing the waters to see how reasonable group appointments are,” she says. “They are not forced. It’s a ‘bring a friend’

sort of program. So, if you and your friend are both interested in PR, why not have the appointment together?”

Fink also has expanded her staff, adding an assistant director and Career Services' first internship coordinator. Together, Fink and her team drafted a new mission statement that emphasizes equity and inclusion in the department's offerings. As part of this mission, they updated the Career Services webpage ([bu.edu/com/career-services](http://bu.edu/com/career-services)) with resources for those with marginalized identities and created workshops focused on discussing identity in the workplace. “Having these identity-consciousness conversations will allow for more equity [when students go out] in the workplace and a more fair world where people are more aware of how everyone shows up to work and what that looks like,” says Fink.

In September 2022, Career Services introduced a pilot COM Mentors program, pairing alumni with current students. The virtual program was an immediate success. “When I sent the email out over the summer asking alumni to participate, 67 signed up on the first day,” says Fink. “There are so many alums who are just really excited to share their ideas and their insights.”

Fink went through the list of alumni and students and tried to match up people in the same field or with similar marginalized identities where she could, “so that students can feel that they have someone in their industry that looks like them and can help them navigate those issues,” she says. There were 84 mentor/mentee matchups for the fall semester. Fink hopes the experience helps students clarify their career goals and gain experience with networking: “Sometimes it takes hearing something from an alum in the field and not just from a career counselor.” /



## NEWBURY CENTER'S NEW MAGAZINE

Katarina Quach  
(left) and  
Valerie Sanchez  
Covaleda

### COM student coedits *Elevate* for first-generation students

By ALENE BOURANOVA

**If there's one thing that Newbury Center student staffers Valerie Sanchez Covaleda (CGS'22, Pardee'24) and Katarina Quach ('24) are well aware of, it's that first-generation college students are not a monolith.**

That was just one of the things the two first-gen undergrads wanted to highlight when they were charged with creating the inaugural publication for the first-gen student center.

That publication would eventually become *Elevate* magazine, a 60-page glossy filled with photographs, poems, essays and artwork solicited from first-generation students, faculty and staff.

Quach and Sanchez Covaleda, the publication's editors-in-chief, purposely provided little to no guidance for submissions—as a result, the pieces cover a wide variety of topics and experiences, and evoke a range of moods and feelings. *Elevate* made its print debut in April 2022.

Each *Elevate* submission features a note from the author or artist explaining the piece and what it means to them. An essay by PhD candidate Alexa Friedman (SPH'23), for example, examines the work ethic she inherited from her mother and grandfather. Friedman writes of juggling multiple jobs and missing out on college rites of passage that peers were able to enjoy. “I felt that my first-gen experience deprived me of the chance to ‘find myself’ outside of my school and work identities,” her accompanying note says.

On the other end of the spectrum, the cover image, a photograph of Gloucester's Eastern Point Lighthouse taken by Dolly Yin (CAS'23), is both a tribute to the exploratory nature of pursuing education and an acknowledgement of how far she's

come. “The bright sunlight that afternoon warmed all of us in the cold winter. As first-gen college students, we worship knowledge, hope, adventure just like those people from that day worshipping the beauty of the landscape,” Yin writes.

That range is precisely what the editors want readers to realize.

“To talk about both the good and the bad of being a first-gen student felt very uncommon,” Quach says. “Capturing the beauty in both of those things is what makes me the happiest about the magazine.”

The coeditors also wanted to create a space free of the “trauma dumping” that first-gen students from low-income backgrounds can feel pressured to do when trying to secure things like financial aid or housing assistance. “You're under pressure a lot of the time to share your story with anyone and everyone,” Sanchez Covaleda says. “We thought it would be great to have an outlet where people can express themselves in a creative way.”

Both Quach and Sanchez Covaleda contributed pieces of their own to the magazine. In her poem “Multitudes,” Quach dissects her intersectional identities as not only a first-gen student, but also as a Vietnamese American and trans woman. “I crunch my feet into the snow trying not to slip/there's no footprints that fit mine, let alone any I can see,” she writes.

Sanchez Covaleda submitted a photograph she took on a trip to Mexico, when she visited her father's native country for the first time. In her artist's note she explains, “Being first-gen is difficult because you have to carry both your heritage and your family's history, while venturing into new spaces and navigating completely foreign experiences.” /



# A TRIUMPHANT IN-PERSON RETURN

42nd annual Redstone Film Festival honors student achievements

By AMY LASKOWSKI



The 2022 Redstone finalists were screened for an in-person audience for the first time since 2019.

**A boisterous crowd was on hand at the Tsai Performance Center to cheer on the winners of the 42nd annual Redstone Film Festival.** The April 15, 2022, event marked the first time the festival was held in person since 2019, and the filmmakers' friends and families were there to celebrate their perseverance and creativity.

Amy Geller ('16), an instructor in film and television, summed up what this year's crop of student filmmakers had achieved in one word: "pivoting."

"These amazing students have done just that, [and] it proves that BU's best and brightest can't be stopped, even by a global pandemic," she said.

The screening and awards ceremony, complete with a red carpet, attracted a sizable crowd. "It's great to be back," said Paul Schneider, chair of the film and television department, as he kicked off the event.

"This is a chance for us to celebrate. The way we look at it, the stars of our department are our students, so we really want to showcase their work, and this is a chance to come together as a community and do that."

The 2022 festival featured original films by COM film and television students with the finalists chosen by a committee of production, screenwriting and film-studies graduates. A panel of seven film industry professionals judged the finalists.

*Roses & Red Noses* was the night's big winner, capturing four awards including best film. (For more about the film, see "Lights, Camera, Clown Shoes!" on page 24.)

Second place was a tie between *Manic* and *Double Take*. *Manic*'s story revolves around a woman who initially appears to be trapped on a first date, but viewers

gradually come to realize there are ulterior motives for the meeting. "This was a very special project for us. [The antagonist] was supposed to be a wealthier character, but we had to shoot it in my apartment, so he had to be more middle-class," director Tim Choi ('22) said to laughter. "I'm really proud."

*Double Take*, about two friends going on an Uber ride that spins out of control, not only shared second place honors, but tied for best editing and took home the audience choice award. "Hearing you laugh, hearing you sigh—there's nothing like it," Geller said before asking people to vote for their favorite film using a QR code on their phones. "You can learn so much from the audience watching your films live." That opportunity was denied the last two years' winners, since the pandemic forced the 2020 and 2021 festivals to be held virtually.

See a full list of winners on page 10. /



McGrory has spent the past decade as editor of the Boston Globe.

# JOURNALISM'S NEW CHAIR

**Boston Globe editor Brian McGrory to lead department**

By MOLLY CALLAHAN

COM's journalism department has a new chair. Brian McGrory, editor of the *Boston Globe* for the last 10 years, and before that, a distinguished reporter and columnist, stepped down from that post to helm the journalism program.

McGrory says he plans to build upon a strong foundation in the journalism department, where he sees room for “a fresh perspective.” He’ll help create curricula that “reflect what newsrooms are looking for right now,” he says. That includes journalists with excellent storytelling skills and who are “fast on their feet, with fundamentally good judgment.” But beyond writing, he says, top-notch journalistic enterprises also need people who focus on audio, video, audience engagement and data analysis.

Mariette DiChristina ('86), dean of COM, praises McGrory's leadership and

vision. “In a world where journalism is both more vital than ever and also more challenged, Brian has provided exceptional leadership at one of the most respected journalistic enterprises in the nation,” she says. “He brings high standards, an innovative approach to newsrooms going through change, and a deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.”

“I'm really proud of what the *Globe* as a whole has accomplished for the past 10 years,” says McGrory, who will continue writing an opinion column for the paper. “We're making a vital transition from a print world to a more digital world, and journalism as a whole is figuring out how to create a sustainable business model for itself, but I've always put front and center that really good journalism is really good business.”

McGrory started working at the *Globe* in 1989, and over



## NEW HIRES

### JOURNALISM

David Abel, professor of the practice  
A. Sherrod Blakely, lecturer  
Shannon Dooling, associate professor of the practice  
Meghan Irons, associate professor of the practice  
Brian McGrory, chair and professor of the practice

### FILM AND TELEVISION

Tunji Akinsehinwa, associate professor of the practice, production  
Thato Mwosa, lecturer, screenwriting  
Emily Saidel, lecturer, television studies  
Margaret Wallace, associate professor of the practice, media ventures

### MASS COMMUNICATION, ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Nivea Bona Canalli, lecturer, media science  
Kelley Chunn, professor of the practice, public relations  
Kathryn Coduto, assistant professor, media science  
Monique Kelley, associate professor of the practice, strategic communication  
Pablo Andres Navarrete Miño, assistant professor, public relations

the years moved from reporter to columnist to metro editor, before taking over for Marty Baron as editor in late 2012. He was steeped in the paper's history even before then, though—McGrory had a *Globe* paper route while growing up, mostly in Roslindale.

As editor, McGrory worked to enhance the *Globe's* online content—currently, the news site has more than 235,000 paid subscribers, making it one of the leaders among major metro newspapers nationally—and focused on helping the *Globe* be not the paper of record, he says, but “the paper of interest.”

In 2014, his staff won the Pulitzer Prize for breaking news reporting for their coverage of the Boston Marathon bombings and their aftermath. Two more Pulitzers soon followed—one in 2016 for feature photography and another in 2021 for investigative reporting.

At COM, McGrory will oversee a journalism department that boasts nearly 500 graduate and undergraduate students and a faculty that includes many *Globe* alumni who once worked alongside him.

“After 10 years, it feels like it's time for something new, and I'm really excited about what awaits at Boston University,” McGrory says. “BU can be a thought center for sustainable journalism in the country; it can be home to a lot of people who are really thinking hard about where this industry has to go to preserve journalism at a time when it's more important to our democracy than ever.” /



# STUDENT WORK RAKES IN AWARDS

COM's success at the Hatch Awards demonstrates the strength of its advertising program

By STEVE HOLT



Each year since 1961, Boston-based The Ad Club has honored New England's best advertising campaigns at its annual Hatch Awards, named for Boston advertising pioneer Francis W. Hatch. Besides recognizing professional advertisers and campaigns, the Hatch Awards' student category highlights excellent work in the region's collegiate programs—a category that COM has dominated. In 2022, COM students took home 20 of the 26 awards, including all four gold bowls—Hatch's highest student honor—after winning 26 of 29 the year before.

Projects submitted for a Hatch Award typically emerge from two portfolio classes taught separately by Pegeen Ryan, an associate professor of the practice, and Doug Gould, a professor of the practice. Students work in groups on several campaigns throughout the semester, with Ryan and Gould advising them and serving as creative directors. Most of the time, these hypothetical campaigns are invented by the students using existing brand names, and Gould says every few years students will sell a campaign to a brand once it's completed.

One of the gold bowl winners in 2022 was "Honey Green," in which art director Cameran Schwarz ('21) and copywriter Jaya Gupta ('21) imagined a partnership between Good on You, a sustainable clothing brand, and Honey, which sources promo codes for online shopping. The students created a plug-in that, while browsing for clothes online, scores fashion companies in the browser on their



The "Feel Good at the End" campaign (above and at left) won a coveted gold bowl at the 2022 Hatch Awards.

sustainability commitments. The plug-in then gives the shopper several recommendations for greener, similarly priced alternatives.

"That's a big idea," Ryan says. "One that combines a smart partnership suggestion, creativity, and addresses a relevant and important issue. And their video case study execution was spot-on. So much so that we had people ready to use the product. But it's not real—it's just a concept!"

A gold bowl winner that Gould oversaw, "Feel Good at the End"—which was the concept of copywriter Vanya Kohlweg ('21) and art director Caroline Richardson ('21)—imagined a campaign for low-calorie ice cream brand Enlightened. "The best advertising does two things: it informs and it entertains," Gould says. "What this particular campaign did exceedingly well was it hinted at the guilt of eating ice cream and then made this extraordinary conceptual leap: Imagine if you could make [a stereotypically negative] experience positive?" The campaign's posters, designed by Richardson, feature a "What if..." statement and a piece of the carton peeled back to reveal the ice cream flavor and the alternate, feel-better ending. "It speaks quickly," Gould says. "It was one of my favorite campaigns of the last couple years."

COM has seen similar success on a global scale at The One Club for Creativity's The Young Ones Student Awards and Design and Art Directors Awards (see page 10).

Ryan says she doesn't take for granted COM's run on the local stage at the Hatch Awards. "Hatch is an important part of the professional advertising community, and people from agencies take notice of how many awards COM pulls in," she says. "Our success in shows like these is great for the students and for the school." /

## Quotable Moment

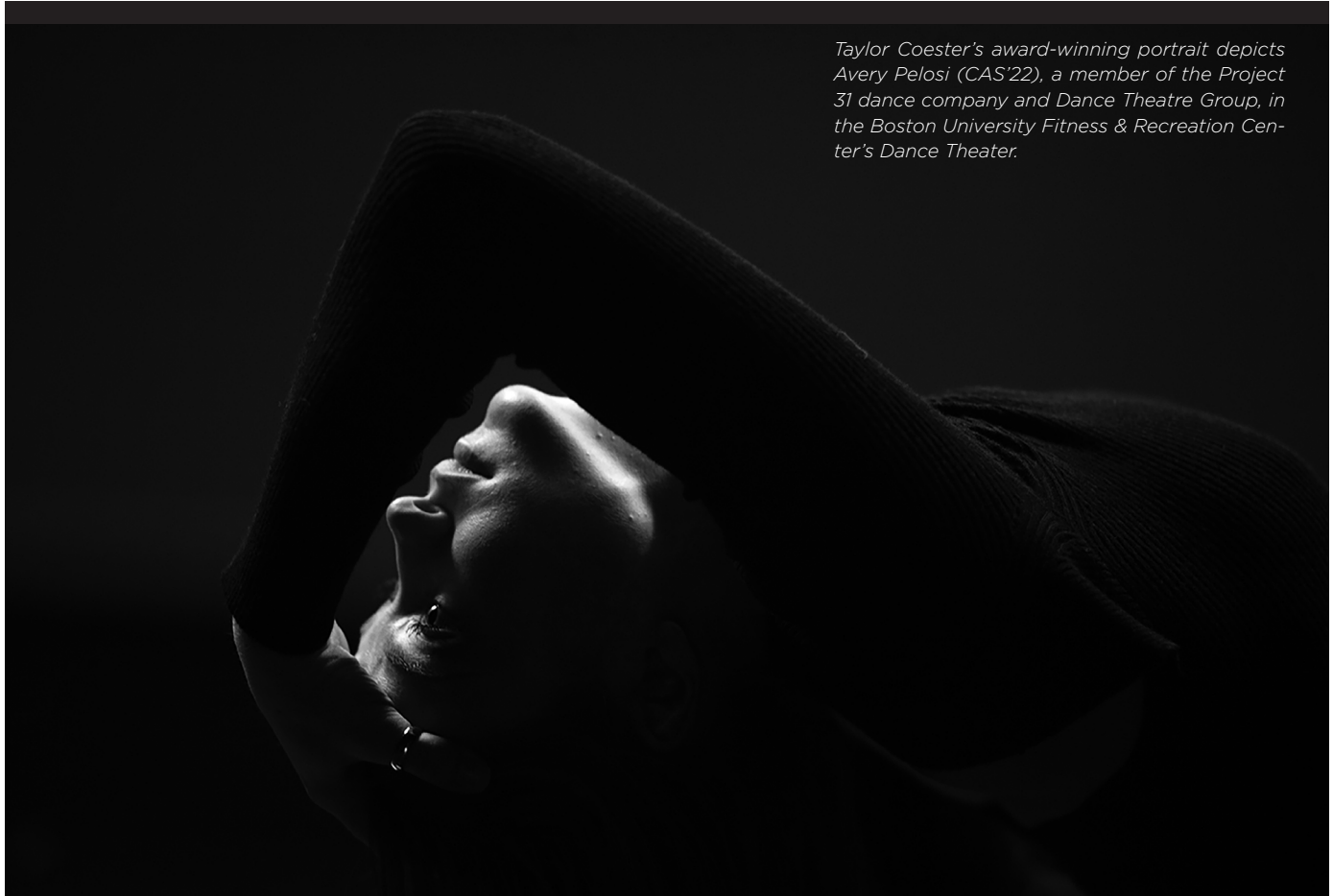
"Star Wars tells the story of the hero's journey, and that path is the deep inner journey of transformation, which starts with a call to action and a challenge that may seem insurmountable. As you embark on your hero's journey, remember that there is no set road map. You have potential for greatness that you don't even know about today... May the force be with you."

JANET LEWIN (CGS'90, COM'92), general manager of Industrial Light & Magic and senior vice president of visual effects for Lucasfilm, at COM's undergraduate convocation, May 20, 2022



# ANNUAL ACCOLADES

From a perfect portrait to a decorated podcast, the COM community produced a range of award-winning work in 2022.



Taylor Coester's award-winning portrait depicts Avery Pelosi (CAS'22), a member of the Project 31 dance company and Dance Theatre Group, in the Boston University Fitness & Recreation Center's Dance Theater.

## ADVERTISING

Jesse Uiterwijk (CGS'21, COM'23) and Kelsey Sarracino (CGS'20, COM'22) won a gold Pencil—the top honor—at The One Club Young Ones, a global creative competition.



## FILM & TELEVISION

*Roses & Red Noses* was the big winner at the 42nd Redstone Film Festival. Read more about that film on page 24; the other festival winners were **Grace Rietta ('23)**, best screenplay; **Geraldo Hinch ('23)** and **Eli Canter ('23)**, best editing (tie); *Dou-*

*ble Take*, directed by Canter, produced by **Cameron Cullen ('22)** and Hinch, and written by Canter and Hinch, audience award; *Thrown to the Wolves*, directed by **Michael Kuhn (CGS'96, COM'98)** and **Niles Roth**, best alumni short; **Rose-Emma Lambridis ('22)**, Fleder Rosenberg Feature Screenplay Award; **Nell Ovitt ('23)**, Fleder Rosenberg Short Screenplay Contest; **Holly Cooper ('22)**, Film and Television Studies

Award for Innovative Scholarship.

The Boston/New England Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences honored several COM teams at its



Rohan Gupta



annual Student Production Awards. Winners included best newscast (BUTV10's *Next Stop*), best public affairs or community service program ("The Massachusetts Center for Unexpected Infant and Child Death"), best magazine program (BUTV10's *Amber*) and best live sporting event (BUTV10's coverage of BU Women's Basketball).

**Rohan Gupta ('23)** received a Webby award for best student video, presented by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences. His short film *Diversity on Demand!* satirized the film industry's use of token diversity.

### JOURNALISM

The Boston Press Photographers Association selected an image by **Taylor Coester ('24)** as the winner of the portrait category in the organization's annual College Contest.

"(Dis)Integration," a podcast produced at WTBU by **Jesse Remedios ('21)** and **Valerie Wencis ('22)** received two student awards at the Public Media Journalists Association conference: first place in the narrative or produced podcast category and second place in the best interview category.

COM honored two Pulitzer Prize-winning photographers: **Carol Guzy** was presented with the Hugo Shong Lifetime Achievement Award, and **Danish Siddiqui** was posthumously named the Hugo Shong Journalist of the Year for Reporting on Asia.



Valerie Wencis ('22)



Jali Griesbach (CAS'22, COM'22)

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Caitlin Dickinson ('22)** and **Clay Patrick ('22)** received the Jack Koten Page Principles Case Study Award, presented by the Institute for Public Relations and the Arthur W. Page Society. They studied how the reputation and profits of the ride-sharing company Lyft were affected by its opposition to the Texas law that permits civil suits against anyone assisting a woman in obtaining an abortion.

*PR News* presented its Digital Team of

the Year Award to **Yichang Li ('21)**, **Paola Rodriguez ('21)**, **Zhentong Mai ('22)**, **Grace Berg ('21)** and team supervisor **Anushka Singh (CGS'19, COM'21)** for their campaign "Team Goodwill Boston," on behalf of the Boston office of Goodwill.

*PR News* named **Jali Griesbach (CAS'22, COM'22)**, PRLab's president of operations, its national Undergraduate Student of the Year Diversity Leader for her efforts to elevate her community and promote change within her organization.

Facing page: Taylor Coester, courtesy of James Hartley (Gupta); this page: courtesy of Valerie Wencis, Guramar Lepiarz (Griesbach), courtesy of CEID (Fleming)



## Quotable Moment

"Our response to mis- and disinformation must become more robust. And if we're going to build a better world, which I know is what we all want to do here, we need to rebuild trust in facts and in lifesaving public health guidance."

**MELISSA FLEMING ('95)**, left, United Nations under-secretary-general for global communications, in a lecture cosponsored by BU's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases Policy & Research and COM, "Public Health Communication in an Era of Mis- and Disinformation," September 30, 2022 (pictured with Traci Hong, associate professor of media science and moderator at the lecture)



# ANNUAL ACCOLADES



COM's highest undergraduate honor, the Blue Chip Award, is given to a group of seniors every spring.

## COM-WIDE

Nineteen graduating seniors were nominated by faculty members and chosen by their academic departments to receive COM's highest undergraduate honor, the Blue Chip Award: **Natalie Ackerman ('22)**, **Ali Audet ('22)**, **Gwyneth Burns ('22)**, **Melissa Chan ('22)**, **Haley Chi-Sing ('22)**, **Tyler Phelan Davis (CGS'20, COM'22)**, **Sean Doucette ('22)**, **Isabelle Fama ('22)**, **Steven Gelman ('22)**, **Julia Glicksman ('22)**, **Jaliana Griesbach (CAS'22, COM'22)**, **Samantha Haas (COM'22)**, **Chloe Liu (CAS'22, COM'22)**, **Yitong Liu (COM'22, Pardee'22)**, **Samantha Lurie ('22)**, **Emily**

**Lyons ('22)**, **Mavis Joy Cornel Manaloto ('22)**, **Nicholas Mason ('22)** and **Alyssa Yeh ('22)**.

**Yeh** also received the Erin Victoria Edwards Award for Leadership Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

COM presented two faculty awards at the end of the 2021–2022 academic year: **Noelle Graves**, a senior lecturer in journalism, received the Becker Family Teacher of the Year Award; **Steve Quigley**, a professor emeritus, received the Lyndon Baines Johnson Student Advising Award. /

*Reporting by Anne Artley ('22), Marc Chalufour, Nick Kolev ('23) and Amy Laskowski ('15)*



*Alyssa Yeh (left), Steve Quigley (below left) and Noelle Graves (below right) received some of COM's most prestigious year-end honors.*





# FASHION MEETS FUNCTION

**PRLab's newest client hopes to attract med students with sustainable scrubs**



**Scrubs are the foundation of a healthcare uniform, meaning there's a huge market ripe for innovation.** When a new fashion brand wanted to target the market of new medical students and young doctors and nurses, it reached out to COM's PRLab.

The medical apparel and lifestyle brand VERDE enlisted PRLab for the fall 2022 semester, joining a list of nearly two dozen clients served by the student-run lab.

VERDE's medical uniform designs blend traditional American sportswear and technical materials, which provide antimicrobial protection that enhances hygiene and controls odor. The company uses recycled materials and higher-quality fabrics and stitching to ensure the uniforms last long and don't need to be replaced like other scrub brands. "We try to keep a sustainable mindset," says Hai Ngo, a VERDE cofounder.

Launched in April 2022, VERDE came to PRLab wanting to grow its brand awareness. PRLab helped with social media and

traditional media outreach. VERDE also wanted to target pre-med students, so they hosted an event on campus and created a video featuring BU medical students in VERDE scrubs.

The VERDE PRLab team comprised five juniors and seniors: Jiatong (Emma) Li (CAS'24, COM'24), Han Chang ('24), Yadira Cabrera ('24), Bonita Chang ('23) and Joshua Toledo (CGS'21, COM'23). One of their major projects was organizing a photo shoot to highlight VERDE products on campus and around Boston (pictured above). "The entire photo shoot was facilitated by BU students—the models, the photographers and everyone on the team," says Chang.

"We've been extremely impressed by the professionalism of the students," says Scott White, another VERDE cofounder. "We wanted to make sure they were getting real-life, professional experience out of this; we didn't leave anything out, and it wasn't super easy work." —*Shana Singh*



## Quotable Moment

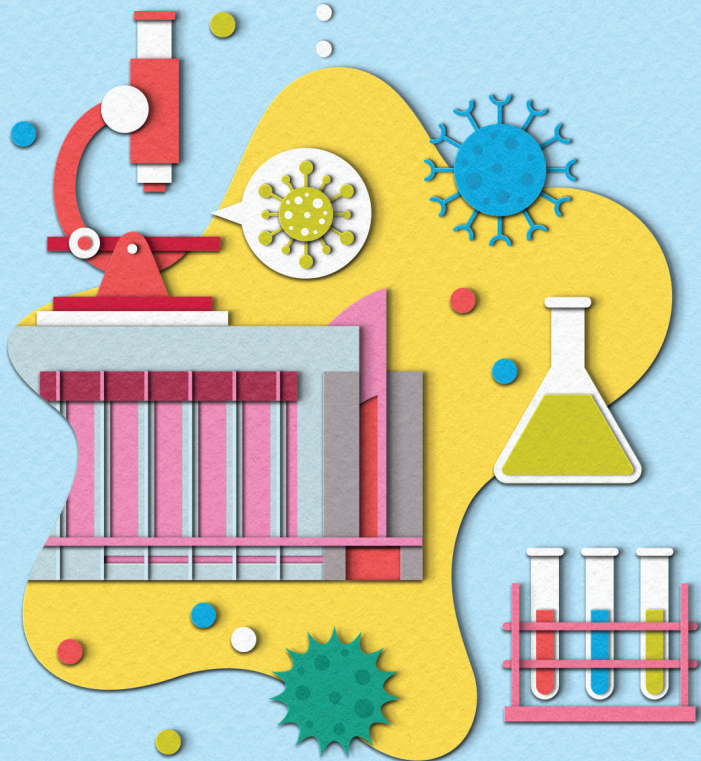
**"If I go in with set expectations of what the film will be, then it won't be a discovery or a documentary process.... I don't know if I can ever fully put my emotions and my feelings at bay during a film like this, but that's why it's incredibly important for me to work with an editor who hasn't spent time with these people.... It's a really important creative process to work with someone that doesn't have the same bias I do."**

**ERIN LEE CARR**, director of the HBO miniseries *Undercurrent*, about the murder of journalist Kim Wall, during a keynote conversation at the Power of Narrative Conference, March 18, 2022

Facing page: Guramar Lepiaz (Blue Chip), courtesy of Alyssa Yeh, courtesy of COM (Quigley, Graves); this page: Taniya Evans (top left), Perry Soti (top right), Guramar Lepiaz (Carr)



CENTER FOR EMERGING  
INFECTIOUS DISEASES  
POLICY & RESEARCH



Understanding today's media landscape requires interdisciplinary expertise. And with increasing frequency, COM faculty and students are collaborating with departments across Boston University to advance their fields—working to create better data journalism, highlight untold global health stories or learn how information and misinformation spread online. These are just some of their collaborations.

**COM AND THE CENTER FOR EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY & RESEARCH**

The link between COVID-19 vaccine misinformation on social media and hesitancy to get inoculated has been explored in the United States, where social media is heavily used. Less is known about the link in countries where social media use is still growing. Traci Hong, an associate professor of media science—aided by a grant from BU's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases Policy & Research (CEID)—is studying that correlation.

Hong has teamed up with Derry Wijaya, a College of Arts & Sciences assistant professor of computer science, and Veronika Wirtz, a School of Public Health professor of global health, to measure content on Twitter that relates to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and posts that contain vaccine misinformation from key political and religious figures in Brazil, Indonesia and Nigeria.

Hong's initiative fits into one of CEID's four strategic pillars—trust (the others are governance, resilience and innovation)—which the center defines as the ideal relationship among scientists, governments, public health organizations and populations affected by an infectious disease. —Anne Artley



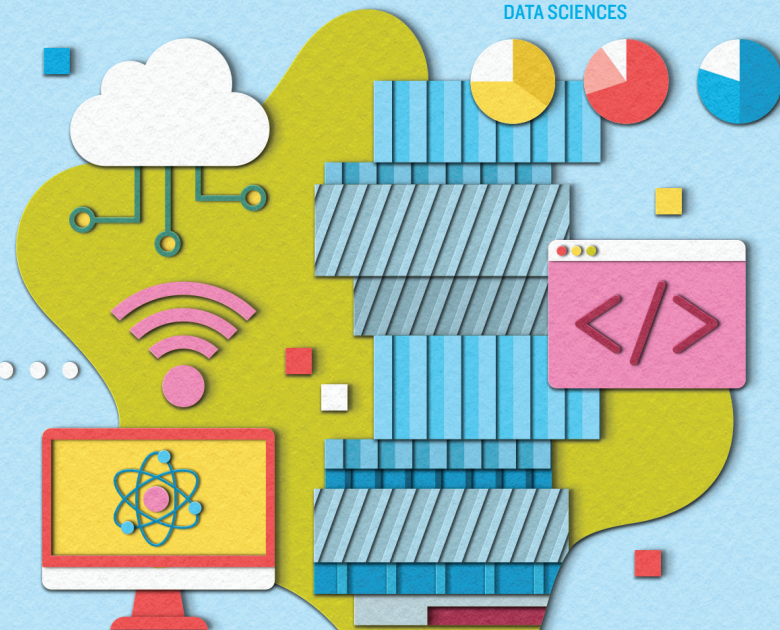
COLLEGE OF  
COMMUNICATION

**COM AND THE FACULTY OF COMPUTING & DATA SCIENCES**

The Justice Media co-Lab—a collaboration among the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences (CDS), BU Spark! and COM's journalism department—brings together journalism and computing and data sciences students to work on computational journalism projects in partnership with external media partners. The goal: to prepare the next generation of investigative journalists to use data in justice-related reporting. Past co-Lab projects have included investigations into federal prosecutorial misconduct, police campaign contributions and the percentage of public contracts awarded to Black-owned businesses. The class' data-based reporting has appeared in the *Boston Globe*, *Bay State Banner* and *The Intercept*, among other outlets.

COM also has two representatives on the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences—founding member Chris Wells, an associate professor of emerging media studies, and faculty fellow Chris Chao Su, an assistant professor of emerging media studies. —Steve Holt

CENTER FOR COMPUTING &  
DATA SCIENCES





# COM COLLABORATIONS

Faculty and students team up with BU peers for interdisciplinary research and storytelling

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



## COM AND THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

An interdisciplinary team of scholars is studying communication and the shaping of public opinion on climate, thanks to the first research grant from BU's Institute for Global Sustainability (IGS), in partnership with the Rafik B. Hariri Institute for Computing and Computational Science & Engineering.

The research team is led by Chris Wells, an associate professor of emerging media studies; Sarah Finnie Robinson, a senior fellow at IGS; and Irena Vodenska, a professor of finance and director of finance programs at BU's Metropolitan College. They are joined by four project champions: Arunima Krishna, an assistant professor, and Michelle Amazeen, an associate professor, both from COM's Department of Mass Communication, Advertising and Public Relations; Gianluca Stringhini, a College of Engineering assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering; and Hyunuk Kim, a MET assistant professor of administrative sciences.

They will examine climate disinformation spread through social media, advertising that mimics news articles and disinformation influence and intervention strategies.

"Despite the evidence that fossil fuel companies are leveraging deceptive forms of advertising to whitewash their image, little, if any, research exists on how these companies are using this practice to shape public opinion about climate change and mitigation," Amazeen says. —*Burt Glass*

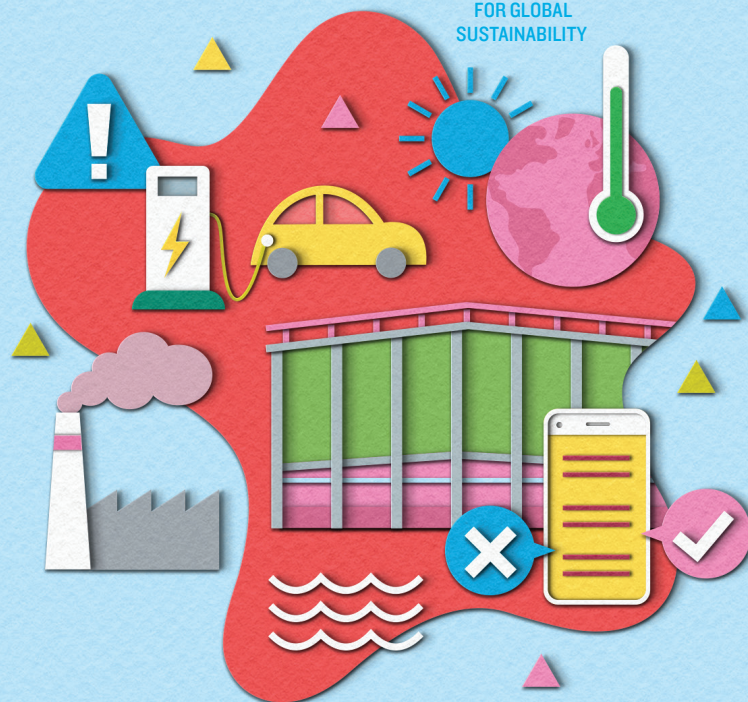
## COM AND THE PROGRAM FOR GLOBAL HEALTH STORYTELLING

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the crucial role journalists play in global health crises. But COVID is not the only health story that matters. From ongoing crises like chronic malnutrition and mental health care to more acute events such as Zika and monkeypox, billions around the world face challenges to their ability to live full and healthy lives. Their stories deserve to be told too.

Anne Donohue, an associate professor of journalism, and Jennifer Beard, a School of Public Health clinical associate professor of global health, cotaught a class that aimed to do just that. The students in Global Health Storytelling were future public health professionals looking to beef up their storytelling skills and journalists who wanted more public health knowledge. "Half the class is SPH and half the class is COM," Donohue says. "We have different cultures and vocabularies, but figure out a way to speak to each other."

Donohue is set to retire, but the course will continue under new leadership. Since 2011, COM and SPH have also collaborated with the Pulitzer Center to award and fund fellowships. Past recipients have traveled to Cuba, Haiti, Nepal and El Salvador, among other nations, and their coverage of international health topics has appeared in the *Guardian*, *Slate* and other publications. —*S.H.*

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY





**HOW TO BUILD**



**A BETTER**





## Alum Kevin Merida is reinventing the Los Angeles Times

By JOEL BROWN

Photos by PATRICK STRATTNER

**C**hange was in the air when Kevin Merida studied journalism at COM in the 1970s.

Woodward and Bernstein had broken open Watergate for the *Washington Post*. Boston journalists were covering the impact of the school busing crisis. And student activists were wrestling with issues like race on campus. Merida saw a lot of it firsthand as an intern at the *Boston Globe* and one of the leaders of a BU student paper called *BLACKFOLK*.

“It was an exciting time,” says Merida (’79). “You know what it’s like—when you’re young and you have all your dreams, but you don’t really know what you’re going to become.”

What Merida became is a journalism heavyweight, and in June 2021 was named executive editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. Before that, Merida spent several years as a senior vice president at ESPN, where he was editor-in-chief of *The Undefeated*, a cross-platform effort to look at the intersection of sports, race and society. And before that he was at the *Washington Post*

for 22 years, working as a reporter, columnist and managing editor. His résumé also includes stints as a reporter and an editor at the *Dallas Morning News* and as a reporter at the *Milwaukee Journal*.

Merida is a member of the Pulitzer Prize board and a BU trustee. He returned to campus in October 2022 to speak at the COM symposium, “Black Media: Reflecting on the Past and Reimagining the Future,” at the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground (see sidebar on page 19). *COM/365* spoke to him about journalism today, the role of race and representation, and the future of the industry.

**COM/365: What is the state of the L.A. Times today, in terms of putting out a paper in these very challenging times for journalism?**

**Kevin Merida:** We’re trying to reinvent what a newspaper is—get people to think about it differently. You and I came up in journalism at a certain time, when the newspaper was the primary vehicle. I’m sure it was in competition with Walter Cronkite and all of the anchors of network television, but it was the primary instrument for people to receive news and get what they needed to go about their lives, delivered to their doorstep. I delivered the newspaper as a kid—that’s how I came to journalism.

But obviously in the digital era that’s changed, and people are getting their information lots of different ways. And a news organization today has to do more things than a newspaper had to do. I still love the physical newspaper. It’s beautifully curated by human beings every day, and for those who still get it, it’s a wonderful product. But to reach the audiences that we need to reach today, and in the future, we have to be a broader, more robust thing.

**And what is that thing?**

It includes the signature journalism we’ve always done and finding different ways to present it and captivate people with it and amplify it. But also to be essential to people’s lives in ways that include the 50 best places to hike in southern California and the 55 best places to listen to live music and getting a group of gifted chefs to say,

# NEWSPAPER

here are 10 restaurants you should visit now, and also to have a wildfire map so that you can track where the wildfires are coming, an earthquake bot and a coronavirus tracker to get the latest information. And to do many things, including to produce documentaries and scripted shows and narrative podcasts with our journalism.

We have the fast break desk, which is basically bringing together two teams we had and expanding them to hop on news and trending topics. A new storytelling unit we just announced with an assistant managing editor for storytelling, a new role. To experiment with form and voice matters, because people follow not only big news organizations, they follow individuals. And so lifting voices, finding new ways to bring voice to the platforms that people are consuming, is important. That includes things like live storytelling.

A media company just has to do more than a newspaper thought it had to do, which was basically put out our work and watch people react to it.

**Tell us a bit about your roots in the business. What papers did you deliver when you were a kid? Were you one of those students whose interest in journalism was fueled by Watergate?**

At different points, [I delivered] the *Washington Star* and the *Washington Post*. Growing up, the *Washington Post* was really what I read. It was the dominant paper at the time. I read the columns of Shirley Povich—his sports column was something that got me interested in journalism. And in the aftermath of Watergate, that’s when journalism schools were really hot. Woodward and Bernstein were big figures and had a movie made about them, with big stars. So that was a very exciting time.

It was a rich time, and in Boston a very tense time, with the aftermath of busing. I had bused in high school, so I came from one busing experience to watching the aftermath of another busing experience, as an intern at the *Boston Globe* during a very tense summer in Boston, 1978. And some of us helped start a Black newspaper on campus, so it was also a very robust time for student journalism. It was called *BLACKFOLK*. There were lots of alternative newspapers in addition to the *Daily Free Press*. So as a student journalist there,



“I still love the physical newspaper. It’s beautifully curated by human beings every day, and for those who still get it, it’s a wonderful product. But to reach the audiences that we need to reach today, and in the future, we have to be a broader, more robust thing.”

—KEVIN MERIDA

it was an amazing experience overall, just going to Boston University during that time.

**Diversity and representation are important everywhere, but maybe especially in journalism—and in your city. How is the *Times* doing on that front?**

I’m proud, first of all, of the staff we have. It starts with representation, which we have to continue to increase. In Los Angeles, our city and county, close to 50 percent of the population is Latino, so that’s a very important audience and important consumers for us. It’s important to have representation, to have the people in your newsroom reflect where you live. We have one of the largest staffs of Latino journalists in the country, but we continue to try to grow that.

I’m proud that the person running the largest staff we have, Hector Becerra, grew up in East Los Angeles and is now deputy managing editor. Our sports editor, I believe, is the only Latina sports editor of a major publication in the country—Iliana Limón Romero. Our two leaders who are expanding food coverage are Latino journalists, Laurie Ochoa and Daniel Hernandez. Our head of audio is Jazmín Aguilera. You try to build a newsroom that is reflective of everybody. It makes you smarter, and we have to get smarter.

**And that’s important to attracting new readers?**

We have to be more aggressive about attracting audiences that may not have come to us, that historically may have had reasons to not trust us. We’ve been having a series of community meetings. How do we actively communicate with different groups of people of all demographics? And we let them kick our tires and look under our hood and say, “This is what we think of you,” but [we] also ask, “What should we be doing?”

I’ve just been reading a couple of books about L.A. history, and I think those folks probably had pretty good reason to have distrusted the *L.A. Times* for a long time.



I think people want to see their authentic lives represented. Everybody does, right? And that's always part of the challenge. I think newspapers historically have sometimes struggled with that. They're a little too distant. Sometimes we're accused of swooping in when it's convenient and not really getting the nuances and the dynamics of communities. We have to work on that.

**Burnout among Black journalists was on the agenda at COM's symposium, and given the nature of many of these stories over the last few years, starting with George Floyd, I'm wondering if you've seen that and if you've had to deal with it.**

I certainly won't try to speak for all Black journalists. But let's say this: I think George Floyd's murder was a signature moment for the country, and it had global resonance and a big impact in workplaces everywhere, certainly in newsrooms. And I don't think that has ended. I saw a lot of impact on Black journalists because they were asked to do so much, participating in a lot of candid conversations. And some of them were individuals that people wanted to reach out to, because some of their white colleagues wanted to know how to think about things. Some of that was really genuine and heartfelt. But it did become exhausting. Living as an individual Black person, and to also be required to talk about it and be there to hear what others had to say—there was a lot of that.

In the history of Black journalists in the country, there have always been these moments. And all those who came before—you can kind of lean on that. I would give credit to the Black press covering the civil rights movement, and in the segregated times and under really challenging environments and under death threats. So you have this continuum. And now you have a lot of people today who continue to move the industry. You used the term burnout, but there's also a lot of acceleration, excitement. I see a lot of young, promising, hungry journalists coming to our profession and really making an impact. And it's encouraging to me because the talent level is great. /

*Kevin Merida will be COM's undergraduate convocation ceremony speaker on May 19, 2023.*

*Speakers at COM's Black media symposium pose for a selfie during a down moment. From left to right: Paula Madison, Amber Payne, Deborah Douglas, Kevin Merida and Anthony Harrison; Mark Walton stands in the background.*



## A SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK MEDIA

### COM symposium highlights Black communication professionals and businesses

"If you came to listen to jazz, you're also going to hear some reggae, some salsa, some Afrobeat—and you may walk away with a whole different understanding of music." That's how Mark Walton introduced COM's "Black Media: Reflecting on the Past and Reimagining the Future," an October 2022 symposium held at BU's Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground.

The event featured Black journalists, broadcasters, educators, executives and entrepreneurs, along with faculty and alumni. Professionals from across communication industries discussed producing antiracist journalism, cultivating diverse talent, telling Black diaspora stories, using social media and amplifying Black voices. It was, as Walton ('76), an associate professor of media management at The New School and a member of COM's DEI Alumni Advisory Board, had hinted in his introduction, a lively and wide-ranging slate of talks.

The speakers included Deborah D. Douglas and Amber Payne, coeditors-in-chief of *The Emancipator*; Meghan E. Irons, then the city hall bureau chief for the *Boston Globe* and now an associate professor of the practice at COM; Wesley Lowery, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and an author; DeShuna Elisa Spencer, founder and CEO of kweliTV; Tiffany Walden, cofounder and editor-in-chief of *The TRiiBE*; Kevin Merida ('79), executive editor of the *Los Angeles Times*; Paula Madison, a former NBCUniversal executive; and Ibram X. Kendi, BU's Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and director and founder of the BU Center for Antiracist Research.

Although the symposium was planned as a onetime event, multiple participants expressed the desire to return to continue these conversations. "I hope that BU becomes, through this symposium, something of a lighthouse for those who are in Black media," said Dorothy Davis ('76), a member of COM's DEI Alumni Advisory Board and president of the Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives. —M.C.



# SEÑOR, TELEVISIÓN

---

**Veteran producer and alum Carlos Bardasano is at the nexus of big changes coming to Spanish-language television**

By STEVE HOLT



*Bardasano studied both business and film and television at BU—always with an eye on his goal of producing great TV.*

**S**peaking on Zoom from his office in Miami, television producer Carlos Bardasano shares his screen with me and clicks “play” on a trailer from his newest series, *Travesuras de la Niña Mala*. Like Nobel Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa’s 2006 novel by the same name (*The Bad Girl* in the English version), the drama follows Ricardo Somocurcio’s decades-long obsession with the shadowy and enigmatic Lily he first encounters in Lima in the 1950s. The minute-long clip—a romantic dreamscape shot on location in France—shows the couple reuniting in 1960s Paris, and the scenes feel plucked directly from that time period. Aerial footage showcases the city’s historic architecture at sunset. Dressed as if they’d stepped out of a midcentury French fashion catalog, the lead characters stroll through crowded plazas and past the Eiffel Tower, and dine in outdoor cafés. Antique cars roll by in the background.







Travesuras de la Niña Mala is one of the marquee shows on TelevisaUnivision's new ViX+ streaming platform—and it's Bardasano's most ambitious project yet.

“It’s a very ambitious show,” says Bardasano (Questrom’94, COM’97), president and head of content at W Studios, which produces original programs for Spanish-language media and content giant TelevisaUnivision. “It’s probably one of the most expensive shows ever shot in the Spanish language.”

How expensive? “It’s a multimillion-dollar series,” is all he can tell me. Pulling together a pricey, sprawling drama like *Travesuras* is a departure for Bardasano. Over his 25-year career, he has produced hundreds of episodes of primetime broadcast television—still the preferred medium for most viewers in Latin America. These have mainly been in the popular genre known as telenovelas, although Bardasano has worked on a few sitcoms and dramatic series, and even produced the Billboard Latin Music Awards show. *Travesuras*, Bardasano’s first exclusively streaming show, will be one of the top draws on TelevisaUnivision’s shiny new ViX+ platform, which launched in July 2022. It’s also his grandest project to date—portraying four distinct decades across a handful of global cities. W Studios tapped Alejandro Bazzano, who directed the Spanish-language crime series *Money Heist*, which is among the top five most-viewed shows on Netflix, to direct the show.

“We have done period pieces, and we had to do things where we had to travel to different countries. But having to do both?” Bardasano says. “It’s tough, and we wanted to up the level on this.”

The average TV watcher in Medellín or Mexico City may not recognize his name because he’s always behind the scenes. But now, as the world’s largest Spanish-language media company prepares to enter the streaming wars, Bardasano—who serves on the Dean’s Advisory Board at COM—holds immense sway over the stories being told to close to 600 million Spanish-speakers around the globe.

## EPISODE I: LOVE AT FIRST SCREEN

As a child in Caracas, Venezuela, Bardasano was never far from the allure of television



and entertainment. Working for the country’s main broadcast network, his father produced commercials for companies like Pepsi. “I don’t remember not being on a set since I was very little,” Bardasano says.

At home, Spanish-language network Televisa—then and now the world’s largest—was often on in the evenings. (The Mexico-based network and the US media company Univision announced their \$4.8 billion merger in April 2021 and closed it in January 2022.) American series like *The Love Boat*, *The A-Team* and *Cheers* were also frequently on. Bardasano looked forward to the family’s summer trips to the US so he could catch Johnny Carson and David Letterman, which weren’t shown in Venezuela. One of his most vivid childhood TV-watching memories was of seeing a name pop up over and over at the end of some of his favorite shows: legendary producer Aaron Spelling, who created more than 200 series over his 50-year career, including *Charlie’s Angels*, *Dynasty* and *Beverly Hills 90210*. Bardasano imagined his own name there, at the top of the credits. “Television has been my passion since I can remember,” he says.

Bardasano followed that passion to BU, where he entered Questrom School of Business to study the business side of entertainment. He turned some initial anxiety about the language barrier into motivation to listen more carefully in his undergraduate business classes. Throughout his undergraduate studies, he took summer internships with media



and entertainment companies like Disney and kept his eye on his dream of eventually producing great television shows. After searching the country for a graduate program that would combine media and management, he landed across Comm Ave at COM, where he enrolled in the master’s program in film and television management. He credits the international community at BU with “opening my mind and my eyes” to a world in which Spanish-language television could be a career.

He didn’t start out there, however. His first job was at Universal Studios, working on NBC sitcoms of the late 1990s, like *Something So Right* and *Fired Up*. Then he moved into executive and supervisory positions at Paramount Pictures and Sony Pictures Television, respectively. His Spanish-language production work ramped up when he joined Telemundo in 2000 as its vice president of programming, responsible for all primetime programming and production. Over the next two decades,





Bardasano would earn producer, executive producer and writer credits on some of the most consequential Latin American shows of the modern era—including telenovelas like *La Piloto*, which he developed, and *Amar a Muerte*, one of the most-watched telenovelas of 2018.

## EPISODE 2: TELENOVELAS...AND BEYOND

Bardasano smirks as he tells me his favorite definition of a telenovela: “two protagonists—a guy and a girl—trying to kiss each other, and a writer not letting them.”

Sometimes confused with soap operas, telenovelas differ in a few ways, he says. Telenovelas tell a finite story with a beginning and an end, even if it takes 200 episodes to do so. Soaps, on the other hand, “go on for generations,” he says. Telenovelas also tend to air during primetime and are watched on broadcast TV rather than streamed. In fact, he says, as much as 90 percent of Spanish-language television is watched when it airs.

When *Amar a Muerte* (*Love to Death*)—for which Bardasano served as executive producer—premiered in Mexico in 2018, for instance, 3.8 million households were tuning in. Just over 1.5 million households watched the show’s US premier. The show, which aired 88 episodes over a single season, won 14 TVyNovelas Awards in 2019, including Best Telenovela of the Year.

The genre has found its way into general market American programming. Network shows like *Ugly Betty* and *Jane the Virgin* draw from the telenovela formula—albeit

with fewer yachts and wind machine-blown hair. *Jane*, which ran for five seasons, integrates many of the genre’s well-known tropes—characters coming back from the dead and secret identity reveals—throughout the plot. And the telenovela’s storytelling elements of love, treason and revenge also play prominently in the themes of other shows, Bardasano says, such as Shonda Rhimes’ *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Bridgerton*.

“When you see something like *Grey’s Anatomy*, it’s using the same elements that the novela uses, that come from Shakespeare, and Shakespeare took them from the Bible,” he says. “It’s all about the heart.”

Telenovelas, the only purely Latin American TV genre, are still “part of the central structure of any network” aimed at a Spanish-speaking audience and not going away anytime soon, Bardasano says. But the creation of streaming platforms and series like *Travesuras de la Niña Mala* is an acknowledgement of shifting demographics and media consumption habits across the Spanish-speaking world. This is especially true among the more than 62 million Hispanic people in the US, who possess “humongous purchasing power,” Bardasano says. Creating streaming content has become an even bigger priority since Televisa and Univision merged. W Studios is playing an outsized role in that.

“When you see something like *Grey’s Anatomy*, it’s using the same elements that the novela uses, that come from Shakespeare, and Shakespeare took them from the Bible. It’s all about the heart.”

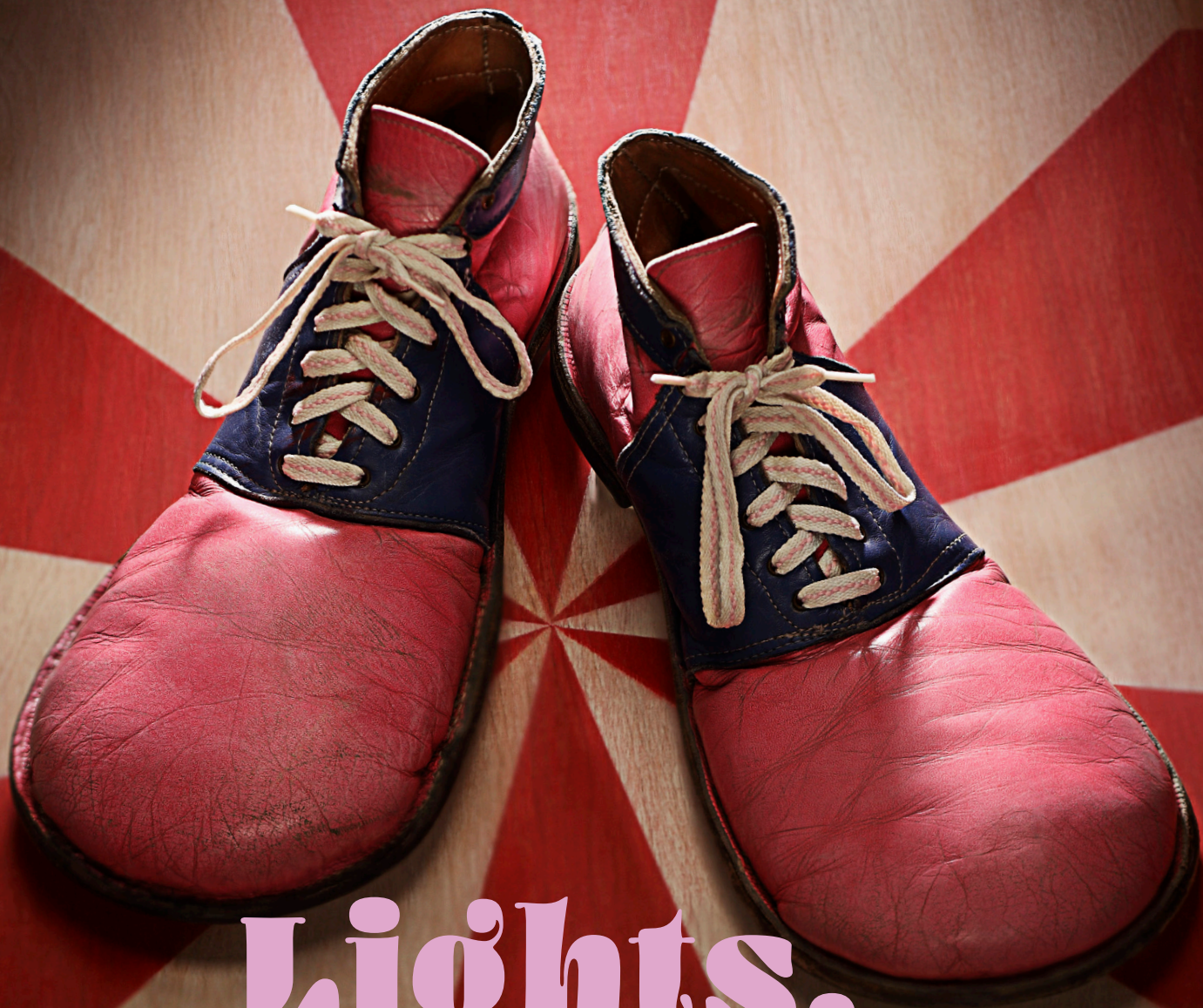
—Carlos Bardasano

“It’s not an *or* but an *and*,” Bardasano says, referring to the addition of streaming series to his portfolio. However, he says “with the creation of new platforms like ViX and ViX+, we have the opportunity to do the things that we never before have been able to dream, just because of the budgets that these new platforms are making available to us.” A streaming platform, Bardasano says, also gives him the opportunity to present content that pushes the envelope beyond what he’s traditionally made for more family-oriented network television.

Whether he’s immersed in the romance-fueled hijinks of a telenovela or a period drama like *Travesuras*, Bardasano says he relishes the chance to tell stories that, he hopes, transport viewers to Paris in the ’60s, a yacht in the Caribbean, or any number of fantastic destinations. /

*Carlos Bardasano will be COM’s graduate convocation ceremony speaker on May 19, 2023.*





# Lights, Camera, Clown Shoes!

BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE MAD DASH TO  
PRODUCE A REDSTONE-WINNING FILM

By MARC CHALUFOUR





## Zac Vujnov had a great idea

for his final film project at COM: a buddy treasure hunt starring a college student and an elderly man. The script got Vujnov ('21) accepted into Production III, an undergraduate honors thesis class where he and a team of classmates would produce the film. Then BU began announcing COVID protocols.

All actors would have to come from within the University community? Scratch the elderly lead.

Fortunately, Vujnov had another idea: a faux documentary chronicling a young bowler's chase of his father's records.

No go: actors would need to be masked.

A psychological comedy-thriller about a woman stuck in a bee suit?

Nope. Sets would be restricted to groups of 10 or fewer people, with no more than two actors performing—and the pivotal scene involved a large crowd.

“Before COVID, everyone had all of these crazy, beautiful ideas,” Vujnov says. But public health restrictions threatened those artistic visions. “I wasn't going to put everyone in surgical masks. I hated the look of that.”

He had to think of something soon—he was running out of time.

Student filmmakers have always grappled with low budgets, crowded academic calendars and inexperience. The pandemic made the process nearly impossible. Still, Vujnov wanted to write a script that wouldn't require compromise. He settled on an idea: a rom-com starring two (almost) silent clowns.

*Roses & Red Noses* tells the story of Colin and Carol, who perform for tips in Boston's Public Garden. The film is goofy, touching and a little mysterious. There's even a chase scene. And thanks to the filmmakers' deft storytelling and ability to surmount whatever challenges the pandemic threw at them, the film cleaned up at the 2022 Redstone Film Festival.



Zac Vujnov had to discard several film ideas before he wrote *Roses & Red Noses*—the 2022 Redstone Film Festival winner.



### MASKING UP

Production III is typically offered in the fall. Student filmmakers have the semester to produce a rough cut for class credit, but final editing and sound mixing can spill into the spring. Because of the pandemic, though, the department postponed its 2020 section to spring 2021, which left no margin for error. The script for *Roses & Red Noses* was approved just before the start of the semester by Paul Schneider, chair of the film and television department and instructor for Production III. Vujnov and his crew had less than four months to cast, rehearse, shoot and edit.

Producer Nicole Barradas ('21) immediately dissected the script, breaking scenes, equipment and props into a series of spreadsheets to estimate costs and draft schedules. Schneider holds weekly production meetings for each project. One of his most valuable roles, he says, is helping students understand what's feasible given their resources. "There are so many logistical challenges," he says. "Filmmaking is a little bit like fighting a war: if you don't have any gasoline for the tanks, it doesn't matter how good the tank is—it won't run."

One way he's able to help is with Student Film Fund grants. Each Production III project receives money from the fund, a pool of gifts from dozens of donors, which provides student filmmakers with a level of stability. "If you never know from year to year whether you're going to have any funding, it makes it very difficult to plan."

In 2021, Production III projects received about \$500 each. The *Roses & Red Noses* crew took to social media to raise an addi-

tional \$2,000. They hit their target just as production began. The film's closing credits thank 42 donors.

Student filmmakers benefit from COM resources in other ways, borrowing cameras, lenses, lights and dollies, for instance. Of course, each script has its own needs and faces unexpected costs. For *Roses & Red Noses*, one expense was obvious from the title: clown costumes.

"You'd be surprised how difficult it was to find a female clown mask that wasn't incredibly creepy," Barradas says.

The masks also had to be comfortable enough for the actors to wear for long periods of time. And once Colin, played by Fady Demian (CAS'22, CFA'23), began running around downtown Boston, his clown shoes fell apart. "They had huge holes in them," Barradas says. "We ran through three or four pairs." More than a year after production began, Amazon's algorithm continues to recommend clown-related products to Barradas.

The biggest expenses? U-Haul truck rentals followed by food for the cast and crew. To get around the lack of public bathrooms near their Public Garden location shoots, Barradas needed a stack of petty cash so anyone in need of a break could go to a nearby coffee shop.

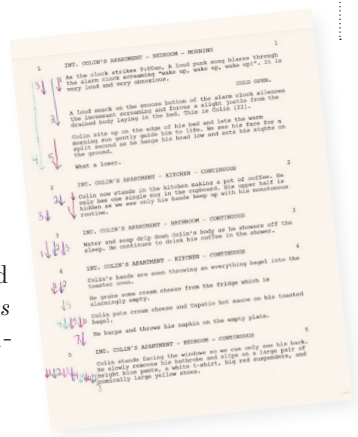


**"You'd be surprised how difficult it was to find a female clown mask that wasn't incredibly creepy."**

**—Nicole Barradas**

### BODY LANGUAGE

*Roses & Red Noses* includes just five spoken lines. Despite the silence, there's no mistaking the sad state of Colin's life





when we meet him at the start of the film. He moves lethargically through a grimy apartment. We can see he's unhappy despite the red grin painted on his mask. His evolution is communicated almost entirely through motion.

The film was shot primarily in Boston's Public Garden, where the protagonist performs for tips.



**“We would cut in our separate rooms for eight hours straight... Hard drives were flying all over the place.”—Zac Vujnov**

To prepare, the actors worked with Yo-EL Cassell, an assistant professor of movement at BU's College of Fine Arts. He helped them build expressive movements into their performances. “When we move, we reveal,” Cassell says. Over the course of the 14-minute film, Colin's movements evolve from morose to joyous—and reveal the transformation at the heart of Vujnov's story.

Once the crew wrapped its last shoot, they scrambled to complete a rough cut of the film to get the class credits they needed to graduate. “We went from an empty project file to a final cut with titles and graphics in three weeks,” Vujnov says. Conveniently, he was roommates with his editor, Sam Broach ('21). “We would cut in our separate rooms for eight hours straight—I would be mixing all the sounds and making the music and he'd be doing color. Hard drives were flying all over the place.”

### DELAYED GRATIFICATION

*Roses & Red Noses* was an unusual film made during an unusual year. “I like to make a lot of crime stuff. I love gritty, dark characters. I like bad people,” Vujnov says. The lighthearted *Roses* represented none of the above. And yet, he and the cast and crew pulled it off in record time, growing closer as they cleared each hurdle in the production. “Once all of my original script ideas got thrown to the wayside, this stopped being about me. It's not my film, it's our film—these people will be with me for the rest of my life because of this project.”

They finished the film in time for graduation, but too late to enter it in the 2021 Redstone Film Festival. The wait was worth it. Vujnov and Barradas, who had since



moved to Los Angeles, watched the 2022 awards ceremony online as their film won again and again. Vujnov received the award for best sound design, director of photography Jen Cuciti ('21) received best cinematographer, Broach tied for best editing honors—and *Roses & Red Noses* was named best film.

“It's incredibly hard to make a good film,” Schneider says. “When something turns out well, you know it means all the stars were aligned.” /

Watch *Roses & Red Noses* at [bu.edu/com/roses](http://bu.edu/com/roses).



\$1.00 PER COPY \$1.00  
QUARTERS ONLY   ← 4 QUARTERS  
COIN RETURN

*Sorry, We're*  
**CLOSED**





# REVIVING LOCAL JOURNALISM

COM faculty, students and alums are filling the void in a changing industry

---

By MARA SASSOON









57%

DECLINE IN NEWSPAPER  
NEWSROOM EMPLOYEES  
SINCE 2004.

of these news deserts exist in low-income, rural areas that also lack reliable internet access. As the problem spreads, even affluent suburbs are losing their papers as media conglomerates merge or close more papers. “Seventy million people live in the more than 200 counties without a newspaper, or in the 1,630 counties with only one paper—usually a weekly—covering multiple communities spread over a vast area,” the report adds.

The regionalization and homogenization of newspaper coverage has even been occurring in Massachusetts. “What’s happening is, as the industry is getting hollowed out by the hedge fund owners, local coverage is suffering. I can point to two examples: the *Marlborough Enterprise* and the *Hudson Sun*,” says Berger. After a series of consolidations, both papers became part of Gannett’s Wicked Local in the 2010s. They went from publishing daily to publishing weekly and then, in 2021, they were shuttered. He remembers the day his hometown paper, the *Brookline TAB*, also part of the Wicked Local network, ran a story about how federal American Rescue Plan Act money was being used for a road repair project—in Taunton, more than 30 miles away.

Many papers in Massachusetts have stopped covering local topics such as school committees and select boards. “Reporters are given regional jobs and regional issues—which have their place—but the role of local journalism is to tell people what their local elected officials are doing, what the school lunch menu is and what the high school sports teams are doing. That’s going away,” Berger says.

As newsrooms shutter, there has been a spiral of other negative effects, says Daly. The decline in an area’s local

**“[Students] see the joy on people’s faces knowing the public will learn about their efforts, and they see the surprise on city officials’ faces when they show up to the lesser-known—but often more important—government agency meetings.”**

—BROOKE WILLIAMS



news presence has been linked to lower voter turnout. It also has implications for those who do vote. “In places where there is no local news, people are paying more and more attention to national news, and they are, in the process, becoming more and more politically polarized,” he says.

Indeed, a 2020 study by researchers from MIT, Sciences Po Paris and Yale, “Media Competition and News Diets,” connected the decline in local journalism to “increasingly nationalized news diets” and “a decrease in split-ticket voting across Congressional and Presidential elections.”

“It’s easier to hate someone who is an abstraction or a brand name, and represents people 1,000 miles away from you,” says Daly. “When you are talking about local politics, it’s a different ethos. It’s less emotional and more practical—more focused on solving common problems. Do we need a new school? Who’s going to pay for it? Where should it go? These are not the hot button issues that really fuel partisanship.”

Though the situation is dire, both Berger and Daly have hope for the future of local reporting, especially when they consider the work their students produce.

### TEACHING ON-THE-GROUND REPORTING

At COM, undergraduates have the opportunity to learn how to report in a community and cover a beat. Each section of JO 210 Reporting In Depth partners with a different news outlet to produce public interest stories. Previous classes have partnered with WGBH, the *Brookline TAB* and the *Cambridge Chronicle*, among others. Each section is limited to 15 students and functions as a newsroom.

Since 2019, COM has partnered with the *Boston Globe* for one of the sections of JO



210 taught by Brooke Williams, an associate professor of the practice of computational journalism. Students contribute articles to the *Globe*'s section covering the city of Newton. "When they complete this class, not only do they have professionally published clips, but they also have the skills needed to dive into covering towns and cities far too often lacking robust journalism," Williams says. "They see the joy on people's faces knowing the public will learn about their efforts, and they see the surprise on city officials' faces when they show up to the lesser-known—but often more important—government agency meetings."

The class is modeling a way that students can be dispatched to cover areas in need of a news presence. "We started to think about how we could partner with professional news organizations to help make up some of the gap," says Daly, who has also taught sections of JO 210. "I think it's been a great success." But, he adds, "I think we can do more, something even more ambitious." He sees the potential to expand COM's partnership with the *Globe* and have students cover city neighborhoods closer to campus, such as Fenway, Allston, Brighton and Jamaica Plain.

While Daly acknowledges these classes won't solve the problems local journalism faces, he can see how they have made a difference and prepare students to help in areas that are, or maybe become, news deserts. "We need to encourage programs like ours to step up and do more of the real-world professional coverage that urban neighborhoods and their close suburbs need," he says.



**“We need to encourage programs like ours to step up and do more of the real-world professional coverage that urban neighborhoods and their close suburbs need.”—CHRIS DALY**



## REPORTING FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

Many students who have covered local news while at COM have been inspired to go into the field after graduation. Some have joined nonprofits like Report for America, an initiative launched in 2017 whose primary goal is to stop the collapse of local journalism by pairing emerging journalists with news organizations.

Hannah Schoenbaum ('20) is a corps member with Report for America, covering North Carolina government and politics for the Associated Press out of Raleigh. She says her experience in the Statehouse Program was so transformative, it encouraged her to pursue political journalism as a career. "That program taught me the ins and outs of covering state legislature," she says. "I fell in love with telling in-depth stories about the struggles that people were facing and the intersections between life and policy in Massachusetts. It was a great training ground."

Schoenbaum felt a personal connection to Report for America's mission. "There's a gap in statehouse coverage across the country. Even in our bureau here, it's just me and one other statehouse reporter for the AP. One reporter can only do so much," she says.

Mia Khatib ('22) is also a Report for America corps member in the Raleigh area. She has reported on education, gentrification and affordable housing for the *Triangle Tribune*, which serves Black communities in North Carolina's Wake and Durham counties. She didn't appreciate the impact of local journalism until she began writing for the *Tribune*. "I'm seeing how so many people in these smaller communities rely on these local papers to find out what's going on in their communities, what they need to know about where they're living and what changes are on the horizon that could affect them," she says.

Khatib and Schoenbaum recently teamed up to mentor students in a journalism class at Riverside High School in Durham, which produces one of the few bilingual student newspapers in the country. The project fulfills a requirement of the program: that corps members engage with the communities they report on. "Most corps members decide to work with a high school journalism class, because we believe so strongly in nurturing the next generation of reporters who are going to heed the call and do the same kind of work that we're so passionate about," says Schoenbaum.





## GOING HYPERLOCAL

Berger sees a beacon of hope for the future of local journalism in the emergence of more hyperlocal, mostly digital-first, news outlets, such as the Concord, Mass., independent nonprofit newspaper, the *Concord Bridge*, which launched in October 2022. “It’s just a question of can they find the resources, mainly the financial ones, to be able to pull it off? It’s definitely encouraging,” says Berger.

Another shining example of a newer hyperlocal publication in Massachusetts Berger points to is the *New Bedford Light*, established in June 2021. The online newspaper, which emphasizes that it’s a free, nonprofit, nonpartisan publication, is funded by individual contributions, partnerships with other media outlets and grants.

Anastasia Lennon (’20), a Statehouse Program alum, is a reporter for the *Light* who counts among her beats the fishing industry, a topic of great concern to a town that is one of the top commercial fishing ports in the country. “I have a real sense of responsibility,” Lennon says. “I’m there to do a job for the community and make sure certain stories are told—accurately and within the right context.”

Although Lennon didn’t plan on going into local journalism when she started her master’s degree at COM, she’s glad she did. Local reporters know what’s happening in the community and who to talk to about

**“We cannot function without a local news presence. We, as the next generation of journalists, have a responsibility to save local journalism.”**

—HANNAH SCHOENBAUM



it. They’re also able to build relationships and trust. “Non-local journalists will parachute into a community, and they don’t really know much about it,” Lennon says. “They’re just there to get a story, and it feels transactional.” Community publications also boost civic engagement. “Voter turnout is not the highest in New Bedford, and I think having this local coverage can make a difference,” she says. “It’s also important for holding people in power and making sure they’re held accountable.”

Daly, too, finds the emergence of ultralocal publications and other experimental forms of journalism promising. “I see these little sprouts—like podcasts covering local issues—and I go, ‘I hope that grows and becomes something,’” he says. He’s also encouraged by the role journalism schools across the country play in upholding local outlets. Many college and university journalism programs have followed COM’s model of working with local professional news organizations to improve their reporting capacity. “Students can cover those night meetings, cover protests, cover all kinds of stuff,” he says. “And our students are good at those things. They’re capable and they’re part of the answer.”

Young journalists like Schoenbaum and Khatib believe that the future of journalism is in their hands. “It was instilled in me from day one at COM that local news is so important to our democracy and life as a whole,” says Schoenbaum. “We cannot function without a local news presence. We, as the next generation of journalists, have a responsibility to save local journalism.”



# TERRIER HEADLINES

What do the Oscars, Super Bowl and NYT bestseller list have in common? COM was there in 2022.



Filmmakers Robert Fyvolent, David Dinerstein, Questlove and Joseph Patel (left to right) accept the 2022 Grammy for best music documentary for *Summer of Soul*.

**Sly and the Family Stone hit the stage like a funk supernova. The aging Mahalia Jackson shares a microphone with young Mavis Staples. Stevie Wonder gets the joint jumpin’ just before his career soars into the stratosphere. Nina Simone goes deep for “To Be Young, Gifted and Black.”**

And that isn’t even half of the talent onstage.

Assembled from 40 hours of film that was shot at the Harlem Cultural Festival concerts in 1969 and stored in a basement for the next half century, the documentary *Summer of Soul* collected an astonishing treasure trove of performances (and clothes and hairstyles). The film, and producer David Dinerstein (’84), received the

Academy Award for best documentary and the Grammy for best music documentary.

“I am thrilled that the film is getting this kind of reception,” Dinerstein says.



Most of Dinerstein’s Hollywood career was spent as a marketing and distribution executive at Miramax, Paramount Vantage and Fox Searchlight studios. He had a hand in the success of many of the best films of indie’s golden era: *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *The Full Monty*, *Sex, Lies & Videotape*, *Clerks*...you get the idea.

But for all that success, Dinerstein had never been an Oscar nominee until 2022; his was the kind of work that gets accolades behind the scenes. In recent years, though, he has moved over to the production side. He partnered with veteran producer Robert Fyvolent a few years ago to form the production company Mass Distraction Media.

For *Summer of Soul*, the partners cut a



deal for the footage with filmmaker Hal Tulchin, who shot it and had been trying to get a film made since 1970. Then they hired Questlove (aka Ahmir Thompson) of the Roots, the bandleader on *The Tonight Show*, to direct what would be his first movie. “We felt that we needed someone who could contextualize the importance of the music at that time with what was going on in America,” Dinerstein says.

**Assembled from 40 hours of film that was shot at the Harlem Cultural Festival concerts in 1969 and stored in a basement for the next half century, the documentary Summer of Soul collected an astonishing treasure trove of performances (and clothes and hairstyles).**

The result is a stunning document of the summer concert series that unfolded over six Sundays (five were filmed) in Harlem, including plenty of audience shots and brief interviews from then and now to put the series into the context of that Woodstock summer and our nation’s racial history.

“For us, everything changed in terms of the gravitas of this film as we experienced a lot of civil unrest and murders, like that of George Floyd,” Dinerstein says. “We felt an obligation and responsibility once we saw what was going on in America today while we were watching the footage—there were so many parallels. The film was very timely, and I think anyone that sees it will have a very joyful experience, but will also understand why this series of concerts in Harlem in 1969 was so important.”  
—Joel Brown

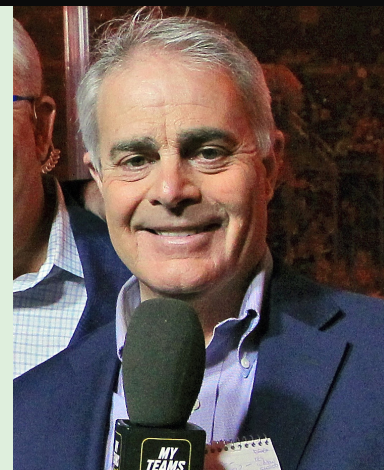


**Kate Pierson ('70)** concluded a nearly five-decade run as a member of the B-52's. The band played the final shows on their farewell tour in January 2023. Pierson was a founding member of the group in 1976 and sang and played guitar, bass and percussion on classics such as “Love Shack” and “Rock Lobster.”



**Craig Wong ('03)** was the creative director behind one of the most successful ads of the 2022 Super Bowl, the floating QR code for cryptocurrency brand Coinbase. Reminiscent of an early video game, the ad features a colorful QR code floating on a black screen—and it reportedly inspired more than 20 million visits to the Coinbase website during the minute it aired. The ad won the Super Clio for best Super Bowl ad and received the top prize at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.

**Al Morganti ('76)** received the 2022 Elmer Ferguson Memorial Award for excellence in hockey print journalism, presented by the Hockey Hall of Fame. Morganti has written for the *Boston Globe*, *Atlanta Constitution* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. He’s also well known as a television analyst and radio host.







**Jen Judson ('10)** was inaugurated as the 115th president of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. A land warfare reporter for *Defense News*, Judson announced goals of advocating for the value of a free press and protection of journalists, and also rejuvenating the club—a center of professional and social activity for thousands of members—following the suspension of many events during the pandemic.

**Sabrina Wind ('90)** joined Will Packer Media as the head of scripted television and production. Wind's prior producing credits include *Reba*, *Desperate Housewives* and *Muppets Now*. Will Packer Media has produced films including *Straight Outta Compton* and *Girls Trip*, and series including *Ready to Love* and the 2016 adaptation of *Roots*.



**Karine Aigner ('96)** won the grand prize in the 58th Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition organized by London's Natural History Museum. Her winning shot, "The Big Buzz," shows a ball of cactus bees competing to mate. She also won the Photojournalist Story Award for "The Cuban connection," a series exploring the relationship between Cuban culture and songbirds.

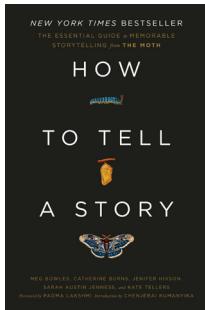


# TERRIER TITLES

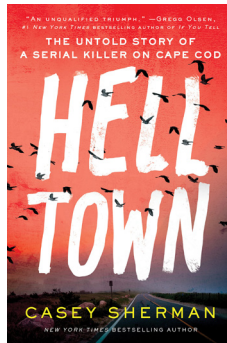
A debut novel by Sopan Deb, a nonfiction best-seller by Dan Charnas and a page-one review in the *New York Times* Book Review section for Erich Schwartzel—alumni writers had a busy year. Here are some of their top titles from 2022.



**Keya Das's Second Act**  
(Simon & Schuster)  
By Sopan Deb ('10)



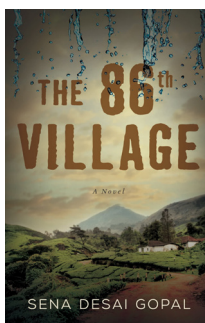
**How to Tell a Story: The Essential Guide to Memorable Storytelling from The Moth** (Crown)  
By Catherine Burns ('91), Sarah Austin Jenness ('00) and others



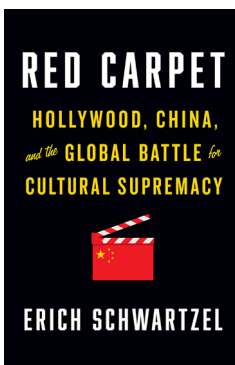
**Helltown: The Untold Story of a Serial Killer on Cape Cod** (Sourcebooks)  
By Casey Sherman ('93)



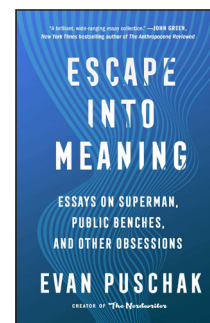
**Dilla Time: The Life and Afterlife of J Dilla, the Hip-Hop Producer Who Reinvented Rhythm** (MCD)  
By Dan Charnas ('89, CAS'89)



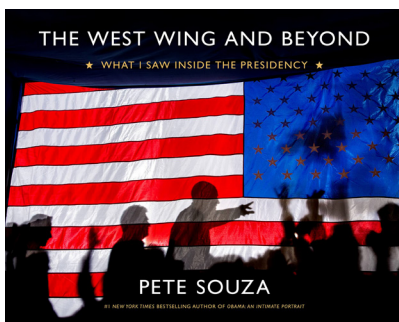
**The 86th Village** (Agora)  
By Sena Desai Gopal ('03)



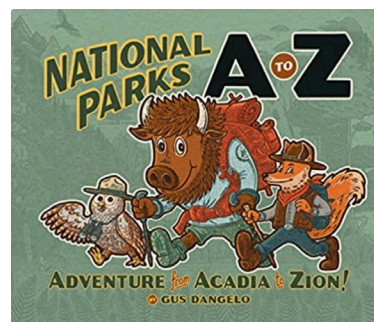
**Red Carpet: Hollywood, China, and the Global Battle for Cultural Supremacy** (Penguin Press)  
By Erich Schwartzel ('09)



**Escape Into Meaning: Essays on Superman, Public Benches, and Other Obsessions** (Simon & Schuster)  
By Evan Puschak ('10)



**The West Wing and Beyond: What I Saw Inside the Presidency** (Voracious)  
By Pete Souza ('76)



**National Parks A to Z: Adventure from Acadia to Zion!** (Mountaineers Books)  
By Gus D'Angelo ('85)



# THANKS TO ALL OF YOU

A gift to Career Services (page 5), contributions to the Student Film Fund (page 24), accomplished alums who continue to give back to their college (pages 16 and 20): the stories of 2022 inevitably touch on the generosity—in time, talent and treasure—of the COM community. Thanks to all of you for making COM’s vital work possible.

## \$1,000,000+

National Philanthropic Trust  
Schwab Charitable Fund

## \$100,000–\$499,999

Boston Foundation  
Burroughs Wellcome Fund  
Combined Jewish Philanthropies  
Goldman Sachs  
Colleen W. McCreary (COM'95)  
and Andrew McCreary  
Morgan Stanley Global Impact Funding Trust, Inc.  
Rita Allen Foundation  
Hugo Shong (COM'87) and Luo Yan (CFA'90)  
The Benevity Community Impact Fund  
William E. Whalley (COM'55, CGS'53)

## \$50,000–\$99,999

Abraham Kaplan Charitable Foundation  
Leonard J. Asper and Susan C. Asper  
Sandra A. Frazier (COM'01)  
Donald M. Kaplan (CAMED'73)  
and Edna E. Kaplan (COM'88)

## \$25,000–\$49,999

Mariette DiChristina-Gerosa (COM'86)  
and Carl J. Gerosa III  
Joshua Foundation  
Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund  
The Asper Foundation

## \$10,000–\$24,999

Adam B. Abrahams (COM'03) and Adam Plotkin  
Francine Achbar (COM'67) and Stuart Mushlin  
Herbert T. Cohen and Julia R. Neuringer

- 1839 Society Member
- Young Alumni Giving Society Member
- Faculty/Staff Member
- Parent
- Loyalty Society Member
- First-Time Donor
- Deceased

Cullom Davis and Bridget Davis  
Heather A. Elder (COM'91) and John K. Elder  
Neil Ellman and Evan Ellman  
Ellman Family Foundation  
Robert A. Fishman (COM'69) and Margaret Fishman  
Bonnie S. Hammer (CGS'69, COM'71, Wheelock'75,  
Hon.'17) and Dale Heussner  
Dwight R. Hilson (COM'81)  
and Mindy B. Hilson (Sargent'77/'82)  
Paul H. Imbesi (COM'05)  
Kurt and Tamra Mobley Trust  
David J. Lender and Stacey B. Lender  
Colleen E. Markley (COM'97) and Brian T. Markley  
Tamra J. Mobley (COM'81) and Kurt C. Mobley  
Patriarch Family Foundation  
The Daphne Hoch Cunningham 2012  
Charitable Lead Trust  
WePay Inc.  
Chris M. Williams (CGS'91, COM'93)  
and Carrie F. Williams  
Lee J. Yaffa (COM'69) and Catherine M. Yaffa

## \$5,000–\$9,999

David A. Allen and Elizabeth M. Allen  
Neil Bar-or (COM'96)  
Lewis G. Curtis (COM'55, CGS'53)

## From the Future

David M. Herscott (COM'95)  
Simon P. Jacobs and Eliana Jacobs  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Inc.  
Margaret R. Kelliher  
Daniel R. Lombard (COM'03, CAS'03)  
and Jordana E. Lombard (COM'03)  
Nicole T. Putzel (CGS'91, COM'93) and Steve Putzel  
Timothy A. Schlock (Questrom'03)  
and Mariana Schlock (COM'03)  
Stewart J. Winter (COM'89) and Molly R. Winter

## \$2,500–\$4,999

Arlington Community Foundation  
Bonnie R. Arnold (COM'78)  
Carlos R. Bardasano (Questrom'94, COM'97)  
and Maria Jose Barraza  
Bonnie Arnold 1997 Trust  
Jeanne M. Broyhill (COM'73, CGS'71)  
and Joe M. Ventrone  
Gail J. Cohen (COM'78)  
Samatha Crepeau  
William H. Downey (COM'66)  
and Elizabeth S. Downey (COM'66)  
Eisner Advisory Group LLC  
Bill M. Fine (COM'77) and Gail H. Fine



TEESA MANANDHAR ('24)



**JAZMYN GRAY ('23)**

## WHY I GIVE



Dana J. Quigley Photography (left, above right); courtesy of COM (Shanler)

"It was my first class in public relations where I finally felt everything come together," says Amy Shanler.

**Shanler (CAS'96, COM'96,'04)** is an associate professor of the practice in public relations and codirector of PRLab. She earned degrees in mass communications and psychology in 1996 and—while working full time—earned her master's in 2004. One decade into her career as a PR professional, she also began teaching one class a week at COM. When the college posted a faculty job in 2013, she was torn. Should she stick with a profession that she loved—or plunge into full-time teaching, which she also loved?

"You never sound happier than when you call me after class," her husband advised her. "There's something about teaching that energizes you."

"He was right," says Shanler. "So I threw my hat in, and got the job."

Today, her responsibilities include teaching required public relations courses and overseeing PRLab—the student-run PR agency that services paying clients throughout the semester, giving students a sense of what agency life is all about and helping them assemble a portfolio of professional work.

Shanler supports COM in multiple ways: by plugging students into her networks, by donating her time—she helps run the annual student spring break trip to Manhattan to visit PR agencies—and by making financial gifts. "It's not a ton of money, but I know from my own college days that it doesn't take much to make a big difference in someone's life."

BU and COM changed her life, Shanler says: "I was introduced to my career here. I met my husband here. I soaked up every opportunity that I could—and I'm so happy to be able to give back." —*Jeff Cruikshank*



# WHY I GIVE



David Herscott



Neil Bar-or

**Neil Bar-or ('96) and David Herscott ('95)** both entered digital marketing communications soon after graduating from COM, in the industry's early days—and they've been there, on the front lines, ever since. This past year, they made a generous joint gift to support scholarships at COM.

Bar-or and Herscott didn't know each other as students; they met through a mutual friend 15 years ago and bonded over their shared interests—and complementary skills. Herscott founded and grew Philadelphia-based From the Future (FTF), a leader in search-engine optimization. At the same time, Bar-or founded Plush Digital, a leading media planning and buying boutique in Los Angeles. Several years ago, when their two companies collaborated on a major project, they saw the potential for joining forces. In 2021, FTF acquired Plush Digital.

Today, FTF employs more than 30 full-time strategists and offers what it calls "full-funnel" marketing. It's a competitive field, but FTF offers an end-to-end cus-

tommer experience, combining strategy, strong storytelling, and media buying supported by proprietary analytics. A recent campaign for Sandals Resorts, for example, helped that company grab the #1 ranking for "all-inclusive resort," a highly competitive search phrase; organic page revenue increased 1,700 percent, while organic page visits increased 1,100 percent.

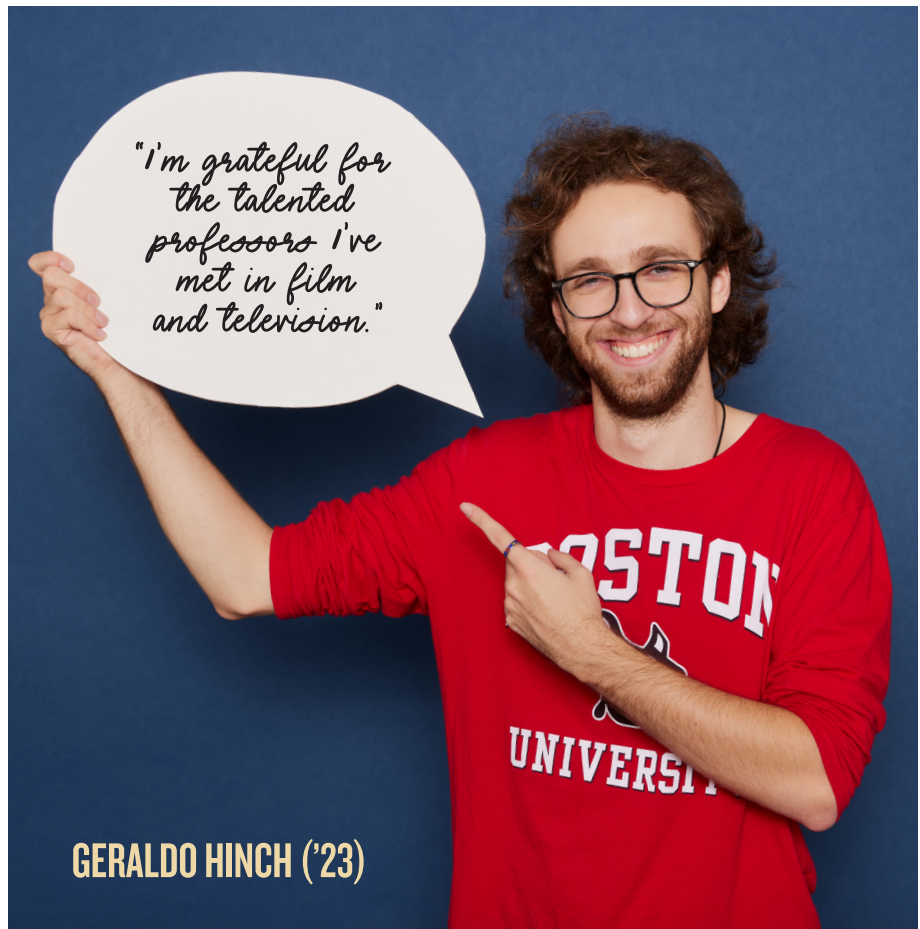
The world has changed a lot since the mid-1990s. Bar-or's class was the first to receive BU email addresses. "I remember thinking, 'What the hell am I going to use this for?'" he says. But both agree that the education they received at COM provided a vital foundation for their careers. "I was a teaching assistant for Dr. [Marilyn] Root," says Herscott. "She was a true mentor."

"What I learned in class was great," says Bar-or, "but what really helped me was the connections I made with other students, and with professors I'm still in touch with today. That was my edge in this field, and I'm truly grateful." —Jeff Cruikshank

- Gary R. Fleder (COM'85) ■■■
- Ellen Grogan (COM'87) ■■■
- Anthony A. Harrison (COM'81) ■■■  
and George Harrison ■■■
- Erica H. Hill (COM'98) and David M. Yount ■■■
- Hallie D. Johnston (COM'98) ■■■
- James E. Katz and Kapka Katz ■■■
- Loretta Li and Dominic Tsun ■■■
- Dominick F. Miniaci (COM'69) and Meike Miniaci ■■■
- Scott Rosenberg (COM'85) ■■■
- Alan F. Strong (COM'58, DGE'55) ■■■  
and Prudence F. Strong ■■■
- Margaret A. Sullivan (COM'77) ■■■  
and Joseph Alvarado ■■■
- The Bookbuilders of Boston E. F. Inc. ■■■
- Mark G. Vitek (Wheelock'94,'02) ■■■  
and Julie A. Vitek (COM'91) ■■■
- Caren A. Vondell (COM'92) and Robert Vondell ■■■
- Mark D. Walton (COM'76) and Christine H. Roth ■■■
- Sharon M. Wheeler (COM'90) ■■■
- Donald K. Wright and Victoria G. Sullivan ■■■

## \$1,000–\$2,499

- Dawn S. Adelson (COM'92) ■■■
- Amazon Studios ■■■
- Bryant D. Austin (MET'17) and Irma Austin ■■■
- Paul A. Bankson (COM'57) ■■■  
and Roberta C. Bankson ■■■
- William H. Bohnsack, Jr. ■■■
- Matthew P. Braatz, Jr. (COM'90) ■■■  
and Franca P. Braatz ■■■
- Brett T. Brinker (COM'91) and Heather A. Slay ■■■
- Elizabeth M. Butson (COM'60) ■■■
- Michael S. Canter and Lori E. Rotskoff Canter ■■■
- Donick M. Cary (CGS'88) and Kimberly H. Cary ■■■
- Anthony J. Cerasuolo (Questrom'90) ■■■  
and Jacquelyn Cerasuolo ■■■
- Ya-Wei Chang (COM'96) ■■■



GERALDO HINCH ('23)

*"I'm grateful for the COM community, which helped me grow as a journalist and a person."*



## DEAN'S ADVISORY BOARD

- Bonnie Arnold ('78)**  
Film Producer
- Carlos Bardasano (Questrom'94, COM'97)**  
President, W Studios at Televisa
- Heather Elder ('91)**  
Owner and CEO, Heather Elder Represents
- Maya Ezratti ('98)**  
Chief Dating Officer, Rewarding Relationships, LLC  
Director of Community Affairs, GL Homes of Florida
- Alana Feld Hackel ('02)**  
Executive Vice President, Feld Entertainment

**Bill Fine ('77)**  
Retired President and General Manager, WCVB TV-Channel 5

**Sandra Frazier ('01)**  
Managing Member, Tandem Public Relations

**Bonnie Hammer (CGS'69, COM'71, Wheelock'75, Hon.'17)**  
Vice Chair, NBCUniversal

**Ray Kotcher ('83)**  
Former CEO and Chair, Ketchum  
Retired Professor of the Practice, Public Relations, COM, Boston University

**Kevin Lilly (Questrom'90,'97, COM'97)**  
President, Lilly Broadcasting, LLC

**Colleen Wheeler McCreary ('95)**  
Chief People, Places and Publicity Officer, Credit Karma

**Jay Roewe ('79)**  
Senior Vice President, HBO

**Hugo Shong ('87)**  
Co-chair, IDG Capital

**Mark Walton ('76)**  
Visiting Associate Professor of Media Management, The New School

**Erica (Hill) Yount ('98)**  
Anchor and National Correspondent, CNN

- Anne McGrath Condon (COM'80) and Thomas J. Condon
- Monica S. De Fera-Cooper (COM'98, Pardee'98) and Robert B. Cooper
- Mark A. Dicristofaro (COM'08,'09, CGS'06)
- Marquetta E. Drakes (COM'93)
- Kirsten S. Durocher (COM'05, CGS'03)
- Alex Eckstein
- Pamela L. Endreny and Raymond M. Endreny
- Thomas E. Fiedler (COM'71) and Sue B. Fiedler
- Katherine M. Fuller (CGS'81, Questrom'83) and Peter D. Fuller, Jr.
- Carol A. Gately (COM'88)
- Tara B. Glicksman (COM'87) and Eric E. Glicksman
- William D. Hall (COM'59, CGS'57) and Phyllis D. Hall
- Osborn Howes (COM'52)
- Kathleen E. Imbesi (COM'96) and Anthony M. Imbesi
- Jason P. Isralowitz (COM'90) and Jennifer L. Isralowitz
- David C. Jacobson (CGS'89, COM'91)
- Julie K. Johnson and Nicholas P. Mencinger
- Yale D. Johnson (CGS'08, COM'10) and Veronica Ocasio Johnson (CGS'08, Questrom'10)
- Dana Kirchman
- Paul A. La Camera (COM'66, MET'74) and Mimi La Camera (Wheelock'68)
- Marcia N. Lachman and Carl W. Lachman
- Joseph Loughnane and Lori-Ann Loughnane
- K. Robertson MacColl (COM'67) and Marsha D. MacColl
- Kathleen M. McGovern Kearns (COM'87) and Richard Kearns
- Robert McNeil III and Jane A. McNeil
- Graciela C. Meltzer (COM'90) and Neal D. Meltzer

- Walter T. Middlebrook, Jr. (COM'76)
- Kathy M. Morehouse
- James W. Moyer (COM'97) and Tracy Evans-Moyer (LAW'98)
- Stuart Newman (COM'74) and Katherine Newman
- John W. Nurkin and Suzanne S. Nurkin
- Stephen H. Padre (COM'95)
- Melissa G. Peterman (COM'83) and Steven M. Peterman
- Junko Saeki (COM'71)
- Karen K. Safrit and Jeffrey T. Safrit
- Edgardo Santiago and Gloria M. Santiago
- Michele M. Schiele (COM'89) and Christopher J. Iannuccilli
- Thomas R. Schoenberger (COM'72) and Helen Blake
- Rachel M. Schurz (COM'00) and John D. Schurz
- Craig C. Sculos (COM'85)
- Aimee Segal (COM'94) and Allen Segal
- Paul M. Serafini (CGS'87, COM'89) and Teri J. Serafini
- Gina H. Sohn (COM'91) and Gregory Lee
- Michelle A. Sullivan (COM'95)
- Ken Sweezey (COM'67,'69) and Joyce Sweezey
- Jolinda K. Taylor (COM'94) and William Taylor
- UBS Financial Services Inc.
- Laura A. Ushijima (COM'07, CAS'07) and Dean Ushijima
- Alessandro F. Uzielli (CGS'87, COM'89)
- Allison L. Van Houten (COM'06)
- William O. Wheatley (COM'70) and Carolyn C. Wheatley
- MaryJane Wilkinson (COM'75)
- Cassandra R. Young (COM'93) and Randall C. Young
- Jeffrey R. Zuccaro (ENG'05) and Rebecca K. Zuccaro (COM'05)

A complete list of contributors for fiscal year 2022 can be found at [bu.edu/com/donors](http://bu.edu/com/donors).

Dana J. Quigley Photography (left, above right); Bill Wadman (Bar-or); courtesy of David Herscott



# COM/365

**Boston University** College of Communication

640 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215

**WE BUILD UNDERSTANDING  
THROUGH COMMUNICATION  
EDUCATION, PRACTICE  
AND DISCOVERY.**

WE PREPARE STUDENTS TO ADAPT TO CHANGE AND SHARE THEIR VOICES IN A TRANSFORMATIONAL MEDIA WORLD.

WE GENERATE KNOWLEDGE THROUGH RESEARCH AND THEORY BUILDING.

WE INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES ACROSS COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINES.

WE NURTURE A CULTURE RICH IN DIVERSITY, CRITICAL THINKING AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION.

WE CHAMPION COMMUNICATION GROUNDED IN AUTHENTICITY, EFFECTIVENESS AND PURPOSE.

[bu.edu/com](http://bu.edu/com)