

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

# Meeman Matters

Newsletter of the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media

December 2017

## Atlanta networking trip a success for students

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PHOTO ROXANE COCHE

**Melissa Knowles, a correspondent for “Morning Express with Robin Meade” on HLN, meets with UofM journalism students on their networking trip to Atlanta during the fall break.**

**By HIRA QURESHI**

Fifteen students from the Journalism and Strategic Media Department participated in the fall break networking trip to Atlanta, which gave them a chance to meet media professionals and attend a panel with UofM alumni.

The trip was led by journalism professor Roxane Coche, who set up meetings with the media professionals. The students visited the College Football Hall of Fame, Atlanta Journal Constitution, CNN and Coca-Cola World Headquarters.

“It provided good insight on what the hands-on world of broadcasting and PR was like,” said Saira Sikandar, a creative mass media major in the department.

Students departed from the UofM alumni center at 6 a.m. on Oct. 14, but there was a glitch just before arriving.

The bus broke down about 20 minutes from Atlanta. With the help of the group’s bus driver, Coche arranged for taxis to bring the group to its first stop: The World of Coca-Cola. After the tour, students had some free time to get dinner.

The next day, students visited the College Hall of Fame where they spoke with a representative and toured the building. Students then went to a panel with three UofM alumni at the Wimbish House, an historic home in Midtown Atlanta.

Panelists talked about their experiences at UofM and life after college. After the panel, students networked with alumni at a reception, and the day ended with a dinner at Tap: A Gastropub organized by the department. Also joining the group were department chair David Arant and recent

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# Department working with UofM to mark King 50 events

During the spring 2018 semester, the University of Memphis will host a series of lectures, conferences and presentations in solemn remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

King was killed on April 4, 1968, when he stepped out on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel to go to dinner at the house of the Rev. Billy Kyles.

**ARANT**

Kyles had invited King to Memphis to march in support of the city's sanitation workers, who were striking for a 10-cents-an-hour wage increase, improvements in workplace safety and basic dignity under their "I Am a Man" banner. King was a pivotal figure in the non-violent movement in the Civil Rights struggle for equal protection under the law for black men and women in this nation.

I've led countless out-of-town guests through the National Civil Rights Museum, which retained the Lorraine Hotel's façade with the rooms King's party occupied and the balcony on which King was shot. At a conference I organized in 2007, I was moved by Kyles' eyewitness account of that night, April 4, 1968, as he stood on the stairs just below King when James Earl Ray fired his rifle from his boarding house bathroom window across the street.

Members of a Journalism and Strategic Media spring semester class, taught in partnership with the Civil Rights Museum, will interview still-surviving participants in the sanitation workers strike as well as current social justice activists in preparation of a documentary.

I invite you to join us at 6 p.m., Tuesday, March 13, in the UC River Room for the Norm Brewer lecture by former Washington Post jour-

nalist Dorothy Gilliam. The first African American woman reporter at The Washington Post, Gilliam covered many of the pivotal events of the Civil Rights Movement.

Then, at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, March 31, at the Halloran Center downtown, our College of Communication and Fine Arts will screen "At the River I Stand," a documentary in which UofM professors David Appleby, Allison Graham and Steve Ross recount the two months leading up to the Dr. King's death.

On April 2 and 3, the National Civil Rights Museum and the University of Memphis host their MLK50 Symposium that addresses the state of civil and human rights issues and racial and economic equity 50 years after the death of Dr. King. The symposium will culminate with a commemorative ceremony on April 4 at the Civil Rights Museum.

On April 2, the symposium takes place downtown at the UofM School of Law with panel discussions on topics covering criminal justice, voting rights, persistent poverty and 21st century activism. Eric H. Holder Jr., 82nd attorney general of the United States from 2009 to 2015, speaks at a ticketed luncheon at the Peabody Hotel.

On April 3, the symposium moves to the UofM Rose Theatre for three panel discussions -- Memphis 50 Years Later, Marching Forward; Poverty & Economic Equity: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow; and The Promise of Education. King biographer Taylor Branch speaks at a ticketed lunch at the University of Memphis Holiday Inn.

I hope you can join us for one or all of these events. If you have not visited the newly renovated National Civil Rights Museum, do so the next time you are in the city. If you let me know when you're visiting, I'll be happy to lead the tour.

**David Arant is chair of Journalism and Strategic Media.**

## Meeman Matters December 2017 Vol. 2, Issue 2

A publication of the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, 300 Meeman, University of Memphis, 3711 Veterans Ave., Memphis, TN, 38152.

### Department Chair

David Arant

### Assistant Chair

Sandra Utt

### Administrative Asst.

Teri Hayslett

### Faculty

Robby Byrd, Roxane Coche, Tori Cliff, Pam Denney, Matt Haught, Joe Hayden, Tom Hrach, Melissa Janoske, Candy Justice, Stephanie Madden, Kim Marks, Otis Sanford, Ruoxu Wang, Bob Willis, Jin Yang.

### Adjunct faculty

Kerry Crawford, Casey Hilder, Megan Mallicoat, Amanda Mauck, Jason Terrell, Bryan Robinson, Andrea Wiley.

### Graduate assistants

Dana Cooper, Jamara Haymore, Addie James, Brittney Gathen, Michael Robinson.

Contact Meeman Matters editor Tom Hrach at [thrach@memphis.edu](mailto:thrach@memphis.edu).

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Professor discusses KKK rise in Germany

Tanjev Schultz, professor of journalism at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, gave an address to about 100 people on Sept. 12 in the UC River Room titled “The Ku Klux Klan and Right-wing terrorism in German.”

Schultz visited the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media for two weeks in early September. The department has an exchange relationship with the Gutenberg University whereby professors and students participate in an exchange every semester.

Schultz is the author of “Kapuzenmänner: Der Ku Klux Klan in Deutschland.” In English, the book title means “Hooded Men: The Ku Klux Klan in Germany.”

### New team named to lead Helmsman

The Student Publications Board on Dec. 12 named the new leadership team for The Daily Helmsman for the spring 2018 semester.

Editor in chief is Mitchell Koch. He will be assisted by managing editors Makayla Boswell and Nick Lingerfelt. The board also thanked outgoing editor in chief Gus Carington for his work.

### Three study abroad trips being planned

Department of Journalism and Strategic Media faculty members are leading three overseas trips in the summer of 2018 for students. Jin Yang is leading a trip to China titled “Food and Culture: A Journey to China” from May 8 to 25. Roxane Coche is leading a trip to England and Germany titled “Football in Europe: Reporting on American Sport Abroad” from July 15 to 30.

Tom Hrach is leading a trip to Mainz Germany titled “Media, Fake News and Right-wing Movements” from May 8 to 30.

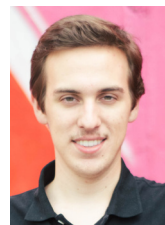


PHOTO DAVID ARANT

**Camille Rose Potter speaks at the Dec. 17 UofM graduation ceremony. Potter, who earned her bachelor of art's degree in public relations, was the first student selected as the commencement speaker in a new effort to highlight top graduates at the commencement exercises.**

## Networking trip to Atlanta put it all in perspective for one student

The fall networking trip to Atlanta opened my eyes to the world of possibilities in journalism, public relations and advertising. It also inspired me to start thinking about my own future and get my act together now and not wait until graduation.



Lingerfelt

At Coca-Cola, we met with Kate Hartman, group director of public relations, who informed us on the ins and outs of her job. She showed us some of the campaigns the company has been working on like one it hopes will shift focus from its main Coca-Cola soft drink to some of the other products such as Dasani, Powerade and Vitamin Water.

Another campaign showed where the company got influ-

encers to share some of their thoughts and memories about Coca-Cola, whether it be good or bad. The latter campaign included an appearance from the late actress Carrie Fisher.

At the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, we sat in on one of their afternoon newsroom meetings and got a fly-on-the-wall perspective on what it looks like to work in a newsroom. We got to speak to reporters and editors. We picked their brains on various topics from career advice to how they do their jobs.

We also visited CNN, and I was surprised at the size of the operation. People know CNN is one of the media giants, but knowing it and seeing it are different things.

We got to see some of its operation for Spanish-speaking populations and meet renowned journalists such as Lynda Kinkade, a CNN anchor from Australia, and

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# Journalism alumni club honors seven for service, performance

By **HIRA QURESHI**

The Journalism Alumni Club Outstanding Awards dinner on Oct. 12 honored three outstanding alumni of the Journalism and Strategic Media department along with three faculty members and one current student.

The event was at the UofM Holiday Inn, and it attracted more than 100 people.

Recognized were:

**Sandra Utt**, assistant chairman and head of the Advertising major, who received the Herbert Lee Williams Award.

"It was a great honor and very nice to be recognized among your colleagues," Utt said.

**Brittney Adu**, senior Public Relations major, who received the Emerging Media Professional Award.

**Jerome Wright**, a 1972 graduate and director of communications at LeMoyne-Owen College, who received the Charles E. Thornton Award.

"This is quite an honor, as I said earlier I helped plan a lot of these when I was in the alumni committee but I never ever thought that I would be actually receiving an award," Wright said. "So it's very special. UofM and the journalism department have a very special place in my heart."

**Michelle Collis**, a 1976 and 1995 graduate and vice president of Patient and Family Centered Care at Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare, who also received the Charles E. Thornton Award.

"I am so grateful and honored," Collis said. "I got the most incredible education in the journalism programs. You know I have two degrees from University of Memphis, both from the journalism department. And it prepared me so much for the fabulous career that I've had."

**Elle Perry**, a 2007 and 2012 grad-



PHOTO TREY CLARK

**The Journalism Alumni Club recognized Jerome Wright, Michelle Collis, Sandra Utt, Brittney Adu and Elle Perry at its award dinner on Oct. 12 at the UofM Holiday Inn.**

uate and digital producer and social engagement manager at the Memphis Business Journal, who received the Outstanding Young Alumna Award.

"I'm pretty excited about it, pretty flattered," Perry said. "I think it (the award) means a lot because it means somebody thought enough of my work that I've done so far that they would invite me because I won this."

**Tori Cliff**, professor and academic adviser for journalism students at the UofM's Lambuth campus, who received the D. Mike Pennington Award for Outstanding Mentoring.

"I'm elated," Cliff said. "I'm an alum and so to be working with the same people that taught me is enough of an award already, but then to be recognized in this fashion — like I can't even explain it. I'm bubbly and giddy and euphoric. It's amazing."

**Pamela Denney**, professor and author of "The Food Lovers' Guide to Memphis," who also received the D. Mike Pennington Award for Outstanding Mentoring.

"I'm thrilled," Denney said. "Driving over here I was thinking about my first editor I ever had many many years ago, many decades ago and he told me there are three things I had to remember as a journalist. And that was to be curious about everything, to assume nothing and to leave your ego at the door, and that has guided me through a lot of work."



PHOTO TREY CLARK

**Professor Tori Cliff with her award.**

# From Penn State to the Pyramid

## New faculty member brings experience, research to UofM

Ruoxu Wang joined the faculty of the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media in August. After completing her bachelor's and master's degrees at North Dakota State University in 2010 and 2013, respectively, Wang completed her doctorate at Penn State University this year.

Melding her love of research with her interest in improving user experiences with interactive web design, Wang also worked as a research intern for Samsung Research America in California's Silicon Valley.

Originally from Hefei, the capital of China's Anhui Province, Wang and her husband moved to Memphis from Pennsylvania prior to the start of the fall 2017 semester.

**Q:** What was it like moving to Memphis?

**A:** It's a lot of change, I think, because I was doing my Ph.D. at Penn State and living in State College. It's a college town, so not as big as Memphis, but I feel like life in Memphis is quite convenient. Compared to my hometown in China, Memphis is not that big, but it's still a big city. I like it so far, and the weather here is really hot. I have been experiencing a lot of interesting attractions, too. We saw the Pyramid, and the sightseeing is magnificent.

**Q:** What led you to study this?

**A:** When I was an undergraduate student, my major was in communication and journalism: Broadcasting and Mass Communication Technology. Communication can incorporate knowledge from many other fields, too. Since my research area is in media facts and persuasion in the context of strategic communication and communication technology, you can see that what you learn here is not just communication research methods or communication theory. Communication in itself is really broad and that's why I wanted to learn it.

**Q:** You were the first presenter

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**“Compared to my hometown in China, Memphis is not that big, but it's still a big city. I like it so far, and the weather here is really hot. I have been experiencing a lot of interesting attractions, too. We saw the Pyramid, and the sightseeing is magnificent.”**

- Ruoxu Wang, assistant professor Journalism and Strategic Media.

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for the department's colloquia series on Sept. 22. Could you describe the research you presented there?

**A:** I did an experiment to examine the effects of parallax scrolling, which is a technique that is used in product presentation websites. Basically, the object that is placed on the foreground is moving faster than the objects in the background, so it creates a 3D effect. In our study, we found that if people don't perceive the parallax scrolling technique as vivid, cool, natural or easy to use, they don't have high user engagement with the website. However, if people think the technique is cool, vivid and easy and natural to use, they will be highly engaged with the website and more likely to initiate action with the product, like buy it or recommend it to their friends.

**Q:** You've also done research on social media effects. What are some takeaways from your selfie study that people might find interesting?

**A:** We explored the behaviors of sharing selfies and groupies - group selfies - to social media. What's interesting is that we found that viewing selfies and groupies can actually influence people's self-esteem, which is a major take away from the study. "Think before you post" is our conclusion. Your behavior on



PHOTO DANA COOPER

**Ruoxu Wang leads her Creative Strategy class through a lesson.**

social media can probably influence other people's self-esteem and life satisfaction, so you should be cautious before you post something.

**Q:** What are some of your favorite things about teaching?

**A:** The most interesting thing I like to do with the students is to let them do in-class activities where they can really apply what they have learned in the lecture to real life. This past week, I asked my Creative Strategy students to draw thumbnails for one of their creative projects. Some students are afraid of drawing and they will tell me, "No, I can't draw!" But eventually, they start to draw something on the paper, and they start to treat it seriously. They find that they're actually pretty good artists, and that's the

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# Metro columnist urges journalists to get out of their comfort zones

BY ALICIA DAVIDSON

Commercial Appeal metro columnist Tonyaa Weathersbee told student journalists to “get out of your comfort zone” when she spoke at the University of Memphis chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists’ 36th Annual Freedom of Information Congress

Weathersbee, a seasoned reporter both in and outside of Memphis with prior experience at The Florida Times Union in Jacksonville, Florida, has traveled extensively in her journalism career, mostly in the Latin American nation of Cuba. Weathersbee spoke on Nov. 15 in the UC River Room.

“This lecture will be particularly beneficial to you if you have a passion for journalism and telling stories,” Weathersbee said. “I know that there are people who sometimes question why they are still doing journalism, and my goal is to reinforce to you the reasons why good journalists are still needed in spite what’s happening in the digital age— why we still need good storytellers. We still need people to be able to come out and tell people’s stories and get to the heart of what makes everybody human— what makes some things work, and what makes some things not work.”

Weathersbee said that as a journalist or aspiring journalist, one must make a commitment to get beyond their own experiences. With the click of a mouse at the presentation that attracted about 75 people, Weathersbee displayed two rather intriguing images onto the projector.

“As journalists, we have a responsibility to get out of our comfort zone and look at the lives that surround us,” Weathersbee said. “The first image is me on a Jacksonville beach with a homeless man— that was one of my first instances of getting out of my comfort zone by living at the homeless shelter.



PHOTO TOM HRACH

**Commercial Appeal metro columnist Tonyaa Weathersbee speaks to about 75 people Nov. 15 at the Freedom of Information Congress at the UC River Room.**

The second image is a picture of a transsexual I photographed at a bar in Cuba. One wouldn’t normally associate Cuba with gay bars, but Cuba has all kinds of things— but we don’t see that portrayed in the American media.”

Weathersbee then showed a quote on the projector by The Hutchins Commission on a Free and Responsible Press, circa 1947, which read: “It is no longer enough to report the fact truthfully. It is now necessary to report the truth about the fact.”

That quote is important for journalists to know.

“Many times in our history the press has failed to do just that— they have failed to produce the truth about the fact,” Weathersbee said.

Weathersbee said one of the best examples was in the summer of 1967 when riots broke out in Detroit toward the end of the Civil Rights movement. Then President Lyndon Johnson appointed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disor-

der (also known as the Kerner Commission) to determine the cause of these riots.

“The Kerner Commission determined that the media failed to communicate to both black and white audiences a sense of the problems America was facing, and potential solutions to those problems,” Weathersbee said.

Weathersbee said that the Kerner Commission’s findings suggested that due to the media remaining in their comfort zone during the riots, many things that “blew up” in the cities could have been prevented— had the media not remained firmly in their comfort zone.

“Your ‘comfort zone’ is an easy place to watch things from afar. But that is in no way a good place for a journalist to be,” Weathersbee said. “During the Detroit riots, reporters merely relied on police reports to compile pieces for local media stories— they weren’t stepping out of their comfort zones, they weren’t

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# Tell the facts behind the truth, says columnist

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interviewing the protesters. As a result, journalists were telling the technical ‘truth,’ but they weren’t reporting the facts behind the truth—that yes, there were riots, but there was also systemic racism, rampant unemployment, and negative things of that nature being experienced by many African-Americans at the time.”

The event started in 1982 with the goal to bring an inspiration and prominent speaker to campus to discuss important issues in journalism, said Tom Hrach, associate professor of the Journalism and Strategic Media Department and also the advisor for the Society of Professional Journalists chapter.

“When we were first deciding who was going to be our guest at this event way back in the summer our goal was to bring someone to campus who could be an inspiration to young people getting into journalism, advertising, and public relations,” Hrach said. “We most certainly met that goal.”



PHOTO TOM HRACH

**Commercial Appeal metro columnist Tonyaa Weathersbee meets with students after her presentation on Nov. 15 in the UC River Room.**

## Previous FOI Congress speakers were top names

1984 Bernard Kalb, CNN; 1985 Steve Bell; 1986 Bob Schieffer, CBS; 1987 Helen Thomas, United Press International; 1988 Douglas Kiker, NBC; 1989 Judy Woodruff, CNN.

1990 Hodding Carter III, Knight Foundation CEO; 1991 Daniel Schorr, NPR; 1992 Peter Arnett, CNN and NBC; 1993 Nina Totenberg, NPR; 1994 William Raspberry, Washington Post; 1995 Bob Simon, CBS; 1996 Carl Bernstein, Washington Post; 1997 Bettina Gregory, ABC; 1998 Barrie Dunsmore, ABC; 1999 Jack Anderson, columnist.

2000 Bob Love, Rolling Stone; 2001 Michael Hill, Washington Post;

2002 Robin Wright, Los Angeles Times; 2003 Rick Bragg, New York Times; 2004 Anderson Cooper, CNN; 2005 Thomas French, St. Petersburg Times; 2007 David Broder, Washington Post; 2008 Betty Nguyen, CNN; 2009 Media and race panel.

2010 Clarence Page, Chicago Tribune; 2011 Mara Leveritt, author, & West Memphis 3 panel; 2012 Brian Stelter, New York Times; 2013 Michael Koretzky, journoterrorist; 2014 Hampton Sides, author; 2015 Jan Schaffer, executive director J-Lab; 2016 Frank LoMonte, Student Press Law Center; 2016 Mark Tatge, business journalist.

# New faculty brings experience to department

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part I enjoy the most.

**Q:** What have your proudest moments been as a researcher and an instructor?

**A:** As a researcher, the proudest moment is probably when your paper is recognized as the top paper in a conference, or when your paper has been cited by well-known schol-

ars and researchers in your field. That selfie study was actually cited by a well-known scholar in psychology. As a teacher, the proudest moment is when you see your students become successful. When they get a good internship. When they get a great job. And they come to you and they tell you this news. I actually had a student come to me at the end of the semester and he shook my hand. He said, “Thank you for doing this for us.” It was a rewarding mo-

ment.

**Q:** What is your most memorable Memphis experience so far?

**A:** Visiting the Pyramid would be one of them. We also went to some other places, like the casinos here, and the buffets are very relaxing. But I guess the Pyramid tour would be the most exciting one, because you don’t usually see a pyramid in a city right in the United States. It’s very unique.

**Interview by Dana Cooper**

# CNN, Coke, local newspaper all on agenda for three-day Atlanta trip

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UofM journalism graduate Janika Bates, who had just started a position working at Turner Sports.

On the third day of the trip, students visited CNN where they met with Melissa Knowles, correspondent on the “Morning Express with Robin Meade” on HLN, and Mike Galanos, HLN host. After lunch, the students visited the Atlanta Journal Constitution newsroom where Senior Editor Ken Foskett spoke about the newspaper and his career. Students also attended an editors’ meeting.

The last visit was the Coca-Cola Headquarters where they met Kate Hartman, the group director of brand public relations. She talked about public relations, her career and Coca-Cola’s public relations efforts.

Students arrived back at the UofM alumni center at just before midnight on Oct. 16.

“Being able to sit at a round table at AJC and take a look at the behind the scenes of Coca-Cola allowed us to see what our individual fields of study were really like,” Sikandar said. “Sitting in a classroom and being lectured can only go so far compared to a hands-on experience.”

## Journalism, strategic media all about stories

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Melissa Knowles, a CNN correspondent for “Morning Express with Robin Meade” on HLN. It was such a privilege to receive advice from people who have attained such success.

All of these people, from public relations specialists to CNN anchors, are storytellers. They tell the story of people affected by devastating natural disasters, local and national elections or even just their



PHOTO ROXANE COCHE

**UofM journalism students enjoy some of the samples on the tour of the World of Coca-Cola while on the fall break networking trip on Oct. 14 to 16.**

Coche said the three-day experience was a success.

“It was a good first effort for a networking trip,” Coche said “We had some challenges – for instance the bus breaking down. But the students enjoyed themselves, and they were able to meet media professionals in several areas, which was the goal.”

As for the future, students said that the trip opened their eyes to the possibilities that a degree in

journalism and strategic media could offer.

Students who were on the trip were Jon Morgan Bell, Lauren Benton, Makayla Boswell, Raven Copeland, Brittany Cousin, Shayne Dotson, Brittney Gathen, Kevin Johnson, Nick Lingerfelt, Jenna Mehmed, Rachel Patterson, Hira Qureshi, Jailenn Scott, Saira Sikandar and Jurnee Taylor.

**Tom Hrach contributed to this article.**

brand and what it means to people. I have always wondered why journalism, public relations, advertising and now creative mass media get grouped together in the same department, and it is because they all tell stories — large and small — about people and their lives.

This trip made me realize it is time to get serious about what I want to do with my life. I plan to graduate in the spring of 2019. After that, what? For the longest time, I did not know.

I chose journalism on the first day of orientation because I decided I needed to pursue this degree.

This trip opened my eyes to life after college. Students may be struggling right now with assignments and tests and cannot even think about two weeks from now much less two years, but sometimes you have to take a step back and see if choices you are making in this moment are the ones leading you to where you want to be.

**Nick Lingerfelt is a journalism**