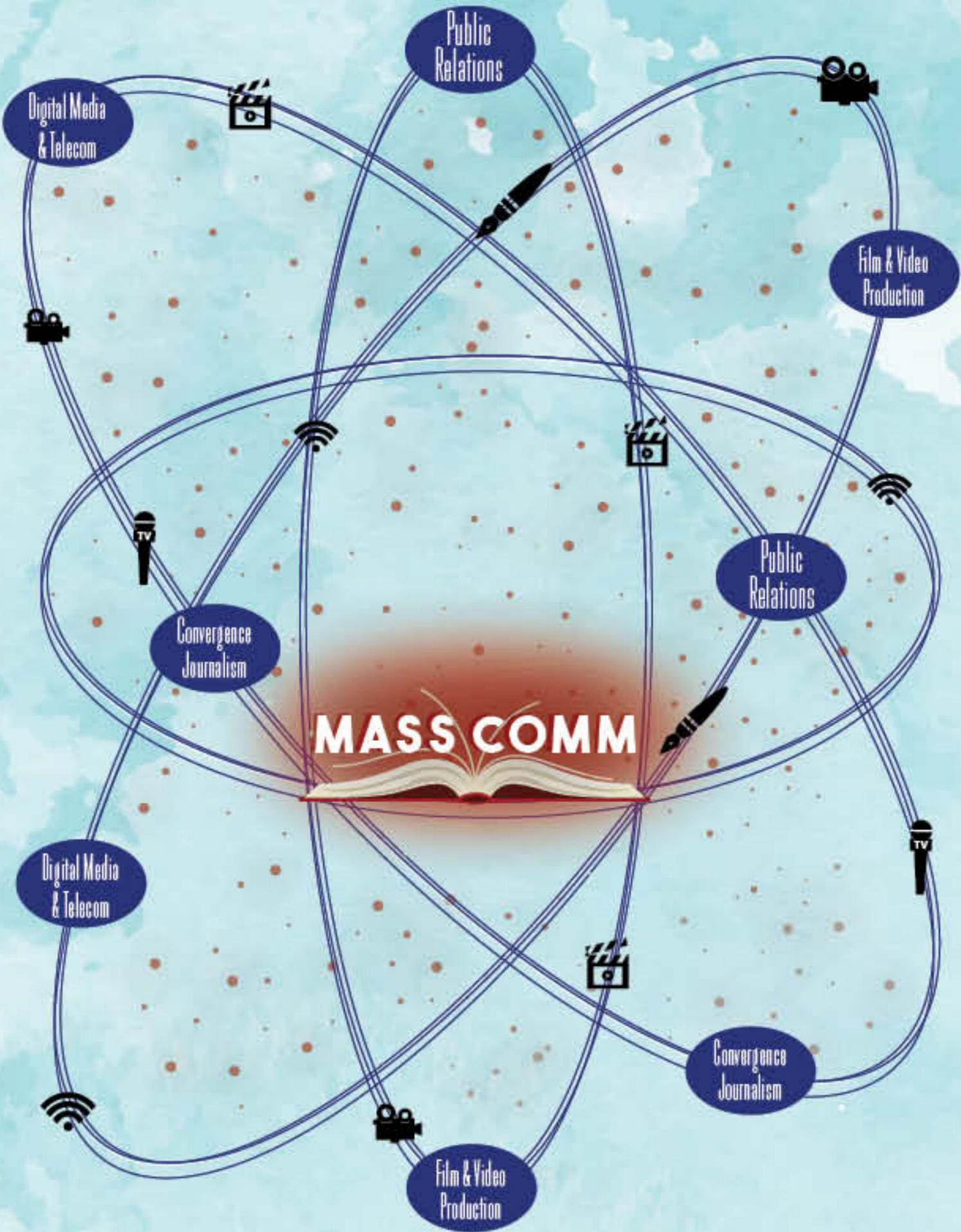


The West Georgian

Est. 1934



MEDIA DAY

2019

The Death of the Newsroom: Adaptation in Mass Communication

Justin Hodges

News Editor

The primary method of success for any industry is the ability to effectively adapt to changes in society to meet the needs of consumers. For the field of journalism, it is adapting to a new era in the way that news and information is spread throughout the world. That is the overhaul of the internet and online media.

The printed newspaper has been a staple of culture in the United States since the first newspaper, *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick*, was printed back in 1690 by Richard Pierce. The field of journalism and news manifested itself through newspapers for centuries afterward. The spreading of news is the gorilla glue that keeps the United States held together. The culture of this country is completely driven through entertainment and communication and masses of public information have always been catacombed in the newsroom. Now, it's all a tweet away, and it's draining the newsroom.

According to journalism.org, the total circulation for U.S. daily newspapers in the year 1940 was just over 41 million. That number would continually rise over the course of nearly five decades, topping at 63.3 million in 1984. Total revenue for U.S. newspapers at that time was approximately \$23.5 million. Circulation saw a slight, yet steady decrease throughout the proceeding two decades, however revenue was at its highest rate ever at just under \$50 million in 2005.

The following decade, in direct correlation with the internet becoming what it is today, the newsroom statistics drastically began to drop. After the total amount of newsroom employees peaked at 68,610 in 2006, the economic crash that occurred a few years after saw that number plummet to 56,230. Only rapid decrease followed over the decade and in 2015 the number dropped to 41,400.

Inevitably in that time, circulation dropped to 34.6 million in 2016,

and revenue was decimated to \$18 million. This has direct implications on students studying to become journalists, particularly ones at the University of West Georgia. The industry is rapidly pulling away from print and as such those aspiring to be in the field need to be exposed to the nature of doing work through online networks and publications. It is vital for our University to emphasize this as the Mass Communications program has become one of the most revered at the campus.

Adaptation is the greatest key to non-abating success in any profession. Writing for *The West Georgian* is a required practicum course for Convergence Journalism majors at UWG. If what we are teaching students is not completely reflective of what is done at the professional level, we are doing a disservice by not fully preparing them to be professionals.

As reliance to online media continues to slash jobs and empty the vault of the journalism industry, it is critical to emphasize that writing is about independence. A veteran of the field will often tell a journalism student to turn back while they can, that half of the country wants to be in this field and a lot of them will do the work for free. One might hope to see the end of the printed newspaper and witness our generation of journalists conquer a new era.

LIVING WEST

Pre-Media Day Workshop: Preparing Students for Media Day

Athea Hutchinson

Contributing Writer

Preparing to speak with mass communication graduates can be nerve-racking but with the Pre-Media Day Workshop you can be fully prepared to show off your best skills.

"Students will learn how to engage with potential employers both at the event and beyond," said Melanie Conrad, Communication Studies Lecturer. "The guest speaker Ian Houston will be there to discuss how to work a career fair."

This workshop will provide students with the necessary skills that are needed when talking with employers. This is an important skill for college students to have.

"This is only the second year having the Pre-Media Day Workshop," said Conrad. "The turnout last year was light mainly because we were on a much shorter timeline. I hope we will have a better turnout this year because we have had more time to advertise."

Even though the workshop has only been around for one year, the workshop seems to prove beneficial. The turnout was light last year because the advertising was done late. Conrad remains hopeful that the turnout will be larger this year.

"I think I speak for a lot of professors when I say how frustrating it can be to see students who are capable and intelligent not achieve their goals because of the way they communicated their message," said Conrad. "To be able to show students how to make a positive first impression is rewarding."

The event helps students by showing them numerous powerpoint

slides of what to say and what not to say when speaking with an employer. Students also are able to ask questions pertaining on how to be professional at a job interview. The professors know that students are capable of communicating but knowing how to communicate effectively is the key. This workshop will provide students with all the tips and pointers that they will need to impress employers and professors.

"Since we have only done this once before and the turnout was low it is hard to measure how it was received," said Conrad. "The people that attended last year seemed to find it helpful."

As far as the positive and negative feedback goes, there were only a few comments. Conrad has only received a few since not a lot of students attended the first year.

"Putting this together has actually been very enjoyable and rewarding. The students really do seem appreciative of it and find it useful," said Conrad. "I also am thankful for the support and assistance of my Comm Studies colleagues who have helped me out with the planning and implementation."

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Media Day Recruitment: Army Sergeant Returns to UWG

Taylor Barton

Contributing Writer

UWG alumnus Stg. Nathan Ploeg is coming to Media Day March 6 to share potential career opportunities in the Armed Forces with Mass Communication students.

Ploeg is a member of the U.S. Army Reserve. He is a Combat Documentation and Production Specialist with the 982nd Signal Company. Ploeg graduated from UWG fall 2018 with a Bachelors of Science Mass Communications and a focus in video production.

Ploeg joined the Army in February 2014 while a freshman at UWG. He attended basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C. and went to Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Mead, Md. where he learned how to operate a camera and edit video. Upon completion of AIT, he attended the U.S. Army Airborne school in Fort Benning, GA. After training was completed, Ploeg returned to school to finish his degree in Mass Communications during the spring of 2016. While Ploeg was in school, he traveled to states across the U.S. and internationally.

Ploeg plans to continue his career in the Army and looks forward to where it is going to take him. He would like to share his experiences with people like him who could benefit from the same opportunities. UWG's Media Day is the perfect opportunity for that.

"The Army has taught me a lot of valuable lessons, and I have had a lot of experiences," Ploeg said. "I feel like I can relate to these students because the Army gave me an advantage by giving me a job in the field that I wanted."

Ploeg, along with members of his unit and his command, will have a table set up at Media Day to talk to students about opportunities inside the

Army and the Department of Defense.

"I didn't know it when I joined, but there are MOS's that cross different fields," said Ploeg. "There are Public Affairs Mass Communications Specialists who write newspaper stories and shoot broadcast news, along with other MOS's like graphic artists and public affairs officers who supervise public affairs soldiers."

Students can talk to Ploeg and other soldiers about their experiences and the opportunities in the Army for Mass Communication students at Media Day.



Photo Credits: U.S. Army Photo by: Staff Sgt. Austin Berner

Award-Winning Fox News Anchor to Speak at Media Day

Imani Asberry

Contributing Writer

Paul Milliken, Fox 5 news anchor, is coming to UWG for Media Day on March 6, 2019. Milliken will be one of the many media panelists in the Media Day event, offering information to students about the state of the industry and what his career has been like.

Milliken's first job began in Idaho Falls after college. He then moved back to Orlando, FL., his hometown, to become a morning reporter. In 2002, he received the Radio Television Digital News Association Award and the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Award, which he was awarded with again the following year. In 2008, Milliken received the Muscular Dystrophy Association Broadcast Journalism Award.

"When it comes to my career, I have a genuine interest in other people and a genuine interest in what they're interested in," says Milliken. "I like meeting people and knowing what makes people tick. I think that goes for every kind of story, not just features but day to day news. You have to be able to relate to people."

This ability to relate to others was the catalyst that got the ball rolling on Milliken's career. Milliken left Orlando to move to Richmond, VA., where he became a meteorologist and received certifications with the American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association. In 2010, he won an Emmy Award for Best Weather Anchor and Best Weathercast Award from the Virginia Associated Press. After four years in Richmond, he moved to Atlanta, where he received a position at the Fox 5 News Station.

"Getting here to Atlanta, in this job, the key to my career has been versatility. For young people, it's important that you are multi-faceted and you can work on many different platforms," says Milliken. "That's a big reason I got hired here. I've produced, worked the teleprompter, [broadcasted on] the weather, etc. Do every single possible job. It will prepare you for the job you want to do."

What made this willingness to be versatile come so easy to Milliken was his passion for journalism. It was a childhood aspiration, and it runs through his veins.

"As a child, I used to get up and watch the news. There's a lot of people [who influenced me], but if I had to choose, I'd say my grandfather loved journalism," Milliken says. "He lived for journalism. He loved that I was going into that path I think about that a lot in my work."

Though he had a strong love for journalism through the years, being in the business did provide some challenges.

"When I started in TV, there was no social media. The first thing I did in the morning was check the fax machine for press releases, but now I can tweet about it," Milliken says. "The challenge is evolving and keeping up with technology."

With the experiences Milliken has had, both good and bad, he believed that they all shaped him to be the journalist that he is today. He wants to share this with the youth in order to give more life to the young journalists coming after him.

"Technology is giving us opportunities we've never had before. I think this is an exciting time to be a journalist."



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UWG Senior Awarded at Media Day

Conrad Mears

Contributing Writer

Senior Mass Communications major Andy Hendricks will be presented with the Gordon R. Watson Award on March 6 at Media Day.

The Gordon R. Watson award is seen as a symbol of academic achievement for students within the Department of Mass Communications. Hendricks has been a model of consistency in regards to academics. His 3.9 grade point average is the highest in the Department of Mass Communication.

Although many people will watch Hendricks as he receives the Gordon R. Watson award, most are unaware of how many hours of studying he has endured getting to this point.

“I like to plan all my study sessions out ahead of time,” said Hendricks. “That way I know I have enough time to prepare. I used to procrastinate but this stops me from doing that.”

Hendricks does not take any class for granted because he realizes that each one may possibly help him in his future workplace.

“I think my time at UWG has prepared me to step in the media industry,” said Hendricks. “Different classes such as the practicum writing for The West Georgian or getting my hands dirty with software has really prepared me for my next steps.”

In a room surrounded by media professionals, Hendrick’s resume will surely impress a lot of people. Making connections with those in the media industry is crucial for a mass communications student. Although this may seem like a high-pressure situation, Hendricks remains cool.

“This Media Day will be my last one because I graduate in December so I’m hoping to reach out and network some more,” said Hendricks. “From my previous experiences I think Media Day is a really valuable opportunity to talk to professional people. I don’t think of every interaction I have as an interview but instead I like to look at it as a conversation.”

For Hendricks, it will take more than simple conversation to reach the career goals he has set for himself. Following graduation, Hendricks plans

to enter the marketing field. His previous marketing internships have left a lasting impression on him.

“I think I want to go into marketing because I have done some internships in that field before,” said Hendricks. “There are also some more internships that I am interviewing for right now, so I definitely just feel drawn to marketing.”

Marketing has his attention now, but Hendricks has also taken up another form of media.

Ever the opportunist, Hendricks created his own sports content based website when he realized the passion he had for professional sports teams based in Atlanta. Hendricks does not intend to have a career in the journalism field, but his academic talent will surely continue to provide him with plenty of options.

“I’m really into professional sports teams who play in Atlanta,” said Hendricks. “I used to freelance write and edit articles about them on my own website as one of my hobbies.”

If he stays on his current trajectory, Hendricks will be able to turn his hobbies into lucrative opportunities.

As a young man hungry for success, Hendricks will be looking to make an impact in the media industry soon. Receiving the Gordon R. Watson award is only the smallest of steps in this long process. With the importance of the media at an all-time high, Andy Hendricks will be a name to remember.

NBS: Helping Students Make Professional Connections

Ariana Carter

Contributing Writer

The National Broadcasting Society-National Electronic Media Association (NBS-AERho) is an organization that helps students make professional connections by provides an opportunity to build their skills in video, writing, and production.

Each year, NBS-AERho has bridged the gap between students and alumni by finding ways to engage with alumni through the use of social media. NBS-AERho has become the mainstay for offering tips to students on how to maintain professionalism and establishing connections with major professionals.

“We did workshops in the past. I remember when I was just a member they had workshops on how to do a resume and how to do a business card,” said Destinee Berry, newly appointed NBS-AERho President. “That really helped me for Media Day because I felt like from a freshman to sophomore I didn’t have a reason to go, but by the time I went through the workshops NBS was having, I felt more confident in going to Media Day.”

Alumni have benefitted from the foundation NBS-AERho has built between students and media professionals.

“Over the course of my involvement with NBS, not only did I learn how to connect with Mass Communications students, but students across majors and organizations,” said Anisa Breneè, Radio Personality and Entertainment Host. “NBS prepared me for days like Media Day where I was in environments with people from various career backgrounds, specifically media. NBS taught all of us involved how to utilize one another’s strengths in order to curate great events, produce amazing content and bridge the gap between students and alumni. Today, I am forever grateful

for the learnings I’ve gotten from NBS and still apply them to my everyday work and personal life.”

NBS-AERho has the pleasure of hosting notable alumni at this year’s Media Day, but the real stars of the show are the students showcasing amazing work right now. The National Undergraduate Student Electronic Media Competition has named seven finalists from UWG student produced media in categories such as Audio News Package, Video Feature Segment and Student Academic Paper.

“I have to give props to the professors who helped teach and train the students who presented this work, as well as the professional staff,” said Dr. Bradford Yates, Interim Chair and Professor of Mass Communications. “And to the students obviously for doing work that is on a national level, competing against Miami and Oklahoma and Nebraska. It’s great that we’re able to have that many submissions this year.”

NBS-AERho is working towards more accomplishments on a national level and getting more students involved in the organization.

“With the National Competition the hope is that we get more and more entries, we want members to submit and as many productions that we can put forth,” said Yates. “NBS-AERho as a whole is looking to expand and help others gain the opportunity to maintain connections with professionals and be a helping hand to freshmen and sophomores coming in hoping to accomplish the same.”

With new leadership in place, NBS-AERho hopes to have a lasting impression on current students and first time Media Day attendees.

UWG WELCOMES PRESIDENT OF WALKER COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO MEDIA DAY

Matthew Harvey

Editor-In-Chief

UWG alumna and recipient of the 30 Under 30 Alumni Recognition Award, Lacy Wilson, will be speaking as a panelist at Media Day to provide students with insight about how she was able to gain the success that she has in her career.

Wilson got her bachelors degree in mass communications with a concentration in public relations and a minor in marketing. After she graduated UWG, Wilson began her masters degree in public relations 100 percent online at Kent State University in conjunction with working full time.

Her first job right out of college was in a marketing role for a for-profit university that had recently opened in Chattanooga. She stayed there for around a year and a half before she went on to Blood Assurance, a regional non-profit blood bank based in Chattanooga. Here, she spent the majority of her career, which totaled over seven years.

Currently, Wilson is the president of the Walker County Chamber of Commerce, the same county she grew up in. Working and giving back to the community that she came from is something Wilson greatly values and says it would not have been possible without the opportunities she gained in school.

"It has been a very fulfilling job to be able to go to work every day in my own community, my hometown, and do business," said Wilson. "That is something I probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to pursue without some of the volunteer opportunities offered through the school.

"One of the first jobs that I had was actually interning at the PR department on campus for West Georgia," continued Wilson. "So, without the staff in the communication department none of those opportunities would have ever happened for me."

As a former student in the Department of Mass Communications, Wilson has attended Media Day, but this will be her first time doing so as a panelist. It is a moment she sees as not only an honor, but also bittersweet.

"It's amazing and it's an honor, but it flies by," said Wilson. "I remember when I worked Media Day in 2006, so to fast forward and to be back as a

panelist is crazy to think how fast time really does go. It's a little bittersweet because I know these students are right on the cusp of this great adventure.

"It's a whirlwind experience and then you look back and you're like 'where did this time go?'" continued Wilson. "It really is bittersweet because you will never again have all of your immediate close friends in the same town again. It's a great time and obviously, the education and the academics are important but the broader picture of what's going in their life right now is something they really need to soak in and cherish because it will be gone before they know it."

Having experienced Media Day as a student and now looking back, Wilson is able to see just how beneficial it was for her and can be for students today.

"Having that real award experience in the room and actually ask them questions," said Wilson. "They are not necessarily interviewing you for a job that day so you can ask them a question and they'll give you straight up honest feedback about this industry and what to expect. I think that really helps the students understand what's to come down the road."

After many years in the field and several years since graduation, Wilson says that continuous learning is the best skill to possess. In a field that is constantly changing, the ability to learn and adapt is what she says is most important.

"Never stop learning. This is an industry where your skill sets don't necessarily change but the tactics change so much as far as how do you employ all of this information to your audience," said Wilson. "That is constantly changing. It might be podcasts and Instagram today but it might be something completely different three-four years down the road."

Remembering the panel speakers she saw at her Media Day as a student and the lasting impact that they had on her, Wilson will certainly relish the opportunity to be on the other side of that experience.



Photo Credits: Walker County Chamber of Commerce

ATOMIC FILMS CEO HEADLINES AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tiffany Maynard

Feature Editor

Dave Lang, CEO and director of Atomic Films, will serve as the keynote speaker of UWG's 38th Media Day on March 6.

Lang is an alumnus of UWG. He graduated in 1983 with a bachelors degree in Mass Communications, and now has his own production company, Atomic Films, based out of Chattanooga.

Lang's success did not happen overnight. He started at a radio station right after college in Warner Robins, GA. It was a friend from his college days that got him to Chattanooga.

"Hold on to the relationships that you've established in college," said Lang. "They take dividend so much. My second job was because of the fact that I stayed in touch with a fellow alumnus, and we've become lifelong friends since then."

Lang's time in radio was short lived. Within nine months of working at the station in Chattanooga, all employees were fired and the station went in another direction. Though Lang's heart was in radio, he transitioned smoothly into TV production.

"I was able to move over into television production quickly because of the fact that I had done internships at WSB and CNN," said Lang. "They looked at my transcripts and they looked at my grades, but the reason I got the job was because I had done those internships. You just can't put a value on that."

Lang's job at the TV station allowed him to make connections that would lead to a life of successful business

relationships.

"We were the ones doing the work back then," said Lang. "You really can't say enough about established relationships. We were very lucky we did not have to sell very much. Word of mouth got out and people found us. People found us, and we were very fortunate in those regards."

When Lang moved there in the '80s, Chattanooga was not known for its tourist attractions. Now, the city brings in more than one billion dollars worth of tourist revenue a year, and Lang and his company are producing for some of the top performers in the tourist industry.

"I just feel blessed and fortunate to be in Chattanooga and be a part of the renaissance there," said Lang. "Now, we are doing a billion dollars in tourist business every year, and we feel like we were a part of that."

"I'm very proud of my city, and I'm very proud of West Georgia," continued Lang. "If it were not for West Georgia, I guarantee I would not be doing what I love."

Lang says he feels events like Media Day are important, and he looks forward to attending every year.

"After I leave, I don't know if anything that we said or that we shared helped," said Lang. "But it means a lot to me, and I hope it means a lot to the students."



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