

# SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION YOUNG ALUMNI

By Michael Stencel

Hofstra's School of Communication boasts a nationally recognized, award-winning faculty and one of the largest state-of-the-art, non-commercial broadcast facilities on the East Coast. Degree programs are offered in audio, video, film studies and production; broadcast or print journalism; mass media studies; public relations; and speech communication and rhetorical studies. Upon graduation, students are equipped with the knowledge and hands-on experience so highly valued in the professional market. Of course our location (30 minutes from Manhattan) is an added bonus for both student internship and employment opportunities.

In the Department of Audio/Video/Film, veteran producers from all fields of video production, including commercial, non-commercial, advertising and corporate, are there to assist students. The facilities are highlighted by the largest non-commercial television sound stage on Long Island, and the program is affiliated with WRHU (88.7 FM), which broadcasts 22 hours a day, year-round, commercial free, and reaches a potential audience of four million people throughout Long Island and New York City.

The Department of Speech Communication and Rhetorical Studies focuses not only on the spoken word's role in expression, but also on language's role in everyday life. Of the 16 qualities for superior job performance identified by the U.S. Department of Labor, 10 are commonly studied in Hofstra's Speech Communication discipline.

At the Department of Journalism and Mass Media Studies, students learn the real power of the written word. The Print and Broadcast Journalism program prepares students for careers in news writing, reporting and broadcasting. Courses in magazine writing and desktop publishing also open doors to almost any area of journalism. A student of Mass Media Studies learns all the intricacies of the mass media and its relationship to society.

Though the School of Communication is still relatively new, it has produced many alumni who are clearly "making their mark" in the industry. *Hofstra Update* has chosen six young alumni to feature in this issue.

## HEATHER COHEN '98

Have you ever wondered what is the best vacuum cleaner to buy? Or what is the best chateau to eat at while visiting France? Or maybe you wanted to hear reviews of the latest movie to hit the box office. Well sit back and listen to WOR 710 AM, Monday through Friday, for the *Joan Hamburg Show*, which airs between 10 a.m. and noon. Its producer is Hofstra alumna Heather Cohen '98.

Heather, who majored in audio/radio while attending Hofstra, has been the executive producer of the *Joan Hamburg Show* for the past three and a half years. A typical day at work includes meeting and interacting with politicians, doctors and authors from all over the country, followed by a night at the theater, reviewing various shows. "This job exposed me to a different culture, and Joan is a wonderful person to work with — sort of like a second mother to me."

While at Hofstra, she was a station manager for WRHU and an active member of the forensics team. It was at Hofstra that she was introduced to the two loves in her life, her profession and her husband, Michael Waxman '96, whom she met as a member of Hillel. According to Heather, "Hofstra offered me a tremendous opportunity, and I always want to stay involved with the University."

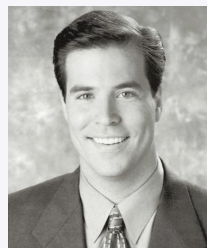
## JOHN DISCEPOLO '94

Dining with Troy Aikman and Emmitt Smith of the Dallas Cowboys, talking to sports legends Wayne Gretzky and Michael Jordan, and traveling to sporting events all over the country are only some of the many perks involved in the life of Hofstra graduate John Discepolo '94.

John, who majored in communication arts at Hofstra, is the lead sports anchor at WNYW Fox 5, in New York.



Heather Cohen



John Discepolo

Prior to WNYW, John was the pregame show host and weekend sports anchor for KDFW Fox 4, in Dallas, Texas, where he focused primarily on the Texas Rangers, Dallas Stars, Dallas Mavericks and the Cowboys, as well as local college teams in the Dallas area. So how was this former Flying Dutchman football player fortunate enough to land this prestigious job watching sports for a living? "There's no such thing as luck, only opportunity meeting up with preparation," said John. "Grab life by the horns and see wherever it takes you."

Before joining KDFW in 1999, John worked with WRGB, a CBS affiliate in Albany, New York, as the weekend sports anchor. He credits Hofstra University Professor Nancy Kaplan with providing him "confidence and an opportunity" to succeed in life. While at Hofstra, he was the Sports Director of WRHU for two years. Initially, he had planned to become a sports radio disc jockey, but his feelings changed the day he hopped into the anchor's chair for H-TV and immediately felt a rush of adrenaline flow through his body. He knew that this was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

"My advice for young people trying to make it in the real world is that timing is everything and just wait your turn," said John. "Also, the most important aspect is to have fun with whatever you do, and don't let your profession conquer or control your life."

## FARA JELSON '00

Fara Jelson '00 has accomplished so much since graduating from Hofstra University. In the past year and a half Fara has been promoted from a sales assistant at YM magazine to the assistant to the publisher for this popular female teen publication. Acting as liaison between the magazine and the corporate publishing office is only one of many tasks that Fara performs daily. As liaison, her responsibilities also include scheduling meetings and organizing appointments.



Fara Jelson

"I absolutely love the entertainment industry, and I always wanted to work in New York City," said Fara. She also loves the people she works with and the new people she is introduced to every day, as well as the fun parties she gets invited to. Hofstra's proximity to Manhattan was one of the many reasons Fara decided to enroll at Hofstra. She also loved the campus as a whole, and the programs it offered. "I took an array of different courses at Hofstra and since my job is so broad, the classes that I took helped out greatly in my career," said Fara.

While at Hofstra, she was an active member of both the Speech Communication Club and the Advertising Club, and was a sister of Alpha Epsilon Phi Sorority, of which she has many fond memories. Fara mentions Professor Carol Drummer as the person who had the greatest influence on her. "I took the School of Communication 1 class she taught freshman year, and she left a huge impact on me."

## ROBERT NG '91

Alumnus and current assistant news editor for the *New York Daily News*, Robert Ng '91 had no initial intentions of entering into the field of communication when he was applying to Hofstra.



Robert Ng

"A few friends recommended Hofstra to me, and I knew I could receive a great education in liberal arts there," said Robert. "But I became more interested in communication and eventually everything turned out for the better."

Robert, who admits that while attending Hofstra he "had the best years of his life and made many close friends," was a writer for the campus magazine *The New Voice* (now called *The Communicator*). Although he only submitted three articles for the publication, it was all the exposure he needed to land a successful internship at *Baseball Update* magazine. This internship opened up doors for Robert, as former Hofstra Professor Fred Rosen recommended him to *Newsday* for a part-time position.

In September of 1992, he was hired full time by *Newsday* and spent four years as a copy editor in the sports section, focusing on the scoreboard and horse racing pages. After a brief stint at the *New York Post*, he was hired by the *Daily News* as an assistant news editor for the then "Global Edition," a

32-page section highlighting the day's events.

When the "Global Edition" was discontinued, Robert became one of nine assistant news editors for the *Daily News*, his current job. Although he admits that an assistant news editor isn't a "glamorous job," Robert is still responsible for each page in the newspaper, and credits that working on the "Global Edition" helped set him up for his current position. A typical day for Robert includes laying out all the pages, overseeing and editing captions, selecting pictures for the articles and determining story lengths. "Growing up I was really interested in and drawn to newspapers," said Robert.

Robert feels that being a student of former University faculty members Greg Goldstein and Fred Rosen really taught him how to become a professional, and encouraged him to make mistakes so he could learn from the experience.

## PENELOPE OWENS '90

Have you ever watched an educational program or pledge drive on Channel 13 WNET, New York, and wondered who's behind the scenes making sure things are running smoothly? Well look no further



Penelope Owens

than associate producer in the scheduling and acquisitions department, and Hofstra graduate Penelope Owens '90.

Penelope, who was the chief announcer and member of WRHU for two and a half years, says she "learned teamwork and office politics that came with the profession."

She has worked for WNET for the past 10 years, first in the publicity department before being promoted to her current position. In 1996 Penelope acquired a movie about Joe Franklin to be aired on WNET. She single-handedly managed to get front-page coverage on the *Daily News T.V. Guide* for that week. In her spare time, Penelope is an afternoon disc jockey at WTHE 1520 AM, spinning the best gospel music.

According to Penelope, graduating from Hofstra University "has helped me become better equipped in the communication world."

## SCOTT SMOLEV '95

Scott Smolev '95 gained a strong sense of maturity when he graduated from Hofstra University, and for the past two years has been a producer of the nationally syndicated game show *To Tell the Truth*. "I really grew up while I was at Hofstra and matured by doing internships," said Scott.



Scott Smolev

Scott's daily responsibilities include researching show ideas and finding potential guests, pitching those ideas to the executive producer, and coaching guests and contestants on what to say and when to say it. He also gets to write scripts for the announcer and host, John O'Hurley. Some of you may know O'Hurley as Elaine's boss, Mr. Peterman, on the hit TV sitcom *Seinfeld*.

While at Hofstra, Scott, a huge music enthusiast, was an active member of WRHU for four years. During his time at the station, Scott was the airwave producer and music director. One of his accomplishments at WRHU was originating "The Dead Zone," with fellow Hofstra student and friend Bill Kaplan. "The Dead Zone," which plays all live Grateful Dead music, is still on the air today.

It was at Hofstra that Scott had the opportunity to intern with the producers and audience department on the *Ricki Lake Show* in Manhattan. Scott also interned at WLIW, New York, where he was an associate producer. Upon graduating from Hofstra, he returned to the entertainment field and to the *Ricki Lake Show* full time as the assistant audience coordinator and later as the post-production coordinator.

Scott credits Professor Nancy Kaplan, whom he had for the Communications 11 class, with helping him decide to go into television instead of radio. Prior to working at *To Tell the Truth*, he was an associate producer for the talk show *Leeza* for one year. He was also previously an assignment editor for *News 12 Long Island* for two years. In the future Scott hopes to be an executive producer of his own television show.