



CCI



COLLEGE OF
COMMUNICATION
& INFORMATION

2020 Annual Report



University of Tennessee College of Communication & Information

2020 Annual Report

WELCOME

- 03 Letter from Dean Wirth
- 04 Working from Home

50 YEARS OF CCI

- 05 CCI 50th Anniversary Gala
- 08 Alumni Memories
- 10 CCI Timeline

CCI TODAY

- 12 Diversity & Inclusion
- 14 Building The Library That Dolly Built
- 16 Social Media
- 18 Research & Alumni Awards
- 20 Student Feature: Charli Kerns
- 21 Torchbearer History
- 22 Global Programs
- 24 New Paths
- 26 Alumni
- 30 Giving



UT Today: Now & Then

All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admission without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, and parental status. In accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the University of Tennessee affirmatively states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or disability in its education programs and activities, and this policy extends to employment by the university. Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, and national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), the ADA (disability), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity, 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996-3560, telephone 865-974-2498. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the Office of Equity and Diversity.

A MESSAGE FROM ▼ **Dean Mike Wirth**



The past year was momentous in so many ways. Last fall, we celebrated CCI's 50-year anniversary with many alums, friends and supporters joining us for a wonderful celebration at the Knoxville Convention Center. In the spring, our students and faculty had to pivot to 100 percent remote teaching and learning after Spring Break as a result of COVID-19 including holding virtual Spring Commencements. In summer, thanks to so many of you, we celebrated the end of UT's Join the Journey Campaign during which CCI raised \$22.4 million, 149 percent of our campaign goal of \$15 million.

These milestones serve to highlight the incredible work of CCI's dedicated faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends and administrators and underscore the continued growth and potential of this great College.

Since its inception in 1969, the College has enriched the communication and information professions by fulfilling its mission to educate students, conduct cutting edge research and creative work and serve our communities. We embrace the values of intellectual pursuit, honesty and integrity, diversity and inclusion, international and intercultural awareness, social justice, and other core ideals of the University of Tennessee in the land-grant tradition as we send our graduates into the world.

This special College has had a profound impact on all of us and the Communications Building/Circle Park is "hallowed ground." As you look through this document, you'll see the names of many "CCI greats," both past and present. You'll also see stories about: how our faculty, staff and students rose to the challenge of remote teaching and learning, our outstanding programs (e.g., diversity and inclusion, documentary films, study abroad and social media), our world-class research, our new degree programs, and our outstanding students and alumni. We are an integral part of the Volunteer family and a significant part of the greatness of this 226-year-old institution.

Our alumni have done remarkable things in their professions and epitomize the VOLunteer spirit in their communities. You inspire all of us –students, faculty and staff – to strive for excellence in everything we do.

The work of building a world class college is never done. Thanks to your ongoing help and support, CCI will continue its ascent over the next 50 years as a premiere College of Communication and Information.

I hope you enjoy this commemorative annual report. Please know you have an open invitation to come back to Rocky Top to visit CCI and to share your ideas for helping us become more successful!

Go Vols and Go CCI!

- Mike Wirth, Dean



WFH

In March, the University of Tennessee moved operations online because of coronavirus, leading to creative educational solutions

When classes moved online after spring break, School of Journalism and Electronic Media lecturer Melissa Greene-Blye (PhD '20) was not sure about the future of UT Today.

The student-led weekly TV news program was produced by Greene-Blye's advanced multimedia reporting class. From on-camera roles to operating the teleprompter, the course gives students who want to be anchors and reporters an opportunity to run a full news program in the Communication Building's broadcast studio.

"How do you take an in-studio class virtual?" Greene-Blye asked. "Students in this class receive anchoring experience for their highlight reel. The students were adamant for the show to go on."

Equipped with Zoom meetings and mobile phones, the students converted their traditional show to an entirely online production.

The students were scattered all over the world, from Tennessee all the way to Australia. The geographic spread led the show to explore new perspectives and angles. Grad-

uate student Lou Brown reported on COVID-19 regulations in her home country of Australia, and senior Hailey Gravitt filmed an empty Las Vegas Strip.

Savannah Smith, an aspiring news producer, transitioned from working in a control room with industry-standard production equipment to a computer at her family's home in Chattanooga. After anchors recorded their segments via Zoom and reporters submitted their news packages, she assembled the full show in post-production.

Working on UT Today was a highlight since returning home, and it has confirmed her career path.

"It's definitely given me encouragement that I am passionate about this industry," Smith said. "It's hard to put together a show by yourself. In the studio, I had this adrenaline rush to get things done. I'm starting to feel that again."

Marcella Tocco started the semester as the entertainment anchor and reporter, but she added the title of lead digital producer once the show went online. She worked with School

of Information Sciences technology coordinator Dan Greene to relaunch the show's website, and she ran the UT Today social media accounts.

After Tocco returned to her home in Long Island, New York, she found a feature story in her own house. She produced a news package about her sister, Alessia, who sews masks for the local medical community.

"We've had to be more creative to turn content," Tocco said. "I've learned a lot more about myself as a journalist—what I can do without all that high-tech equipment. It isn't easy to do from home."

The months of online broadcasts were a learning opportunity away from the studio. Greene-Blye said helped students prepare for an evolving broadcast industry where mobile production with phones is relied on more often.

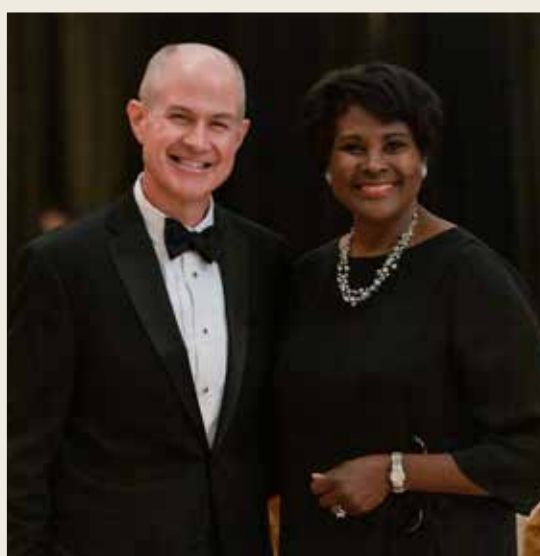
"This is a watershed moment where students learned how to use better lighting and sound through phones," Greene-Blye said. "Student journalists need to be able to use that phone in the highest capacity possible."



1 9 6 9 - 2 0 1 9

On October 11, 2019, the UT College of Communication & Information held its 50th Anniversary Gala at the Knoxville Convention Center to celebrate the past, present, and future of the college.





Longtime Tennessee news anchors Anne Holt Blackburn (JEM '73, WKRN-News 2 in Nashville) and Josh Smith (JEM '94, WJHL-TV News Channel 11 in Johnson City) served as masters of ceremony.



Banquet Award Winners



Judge Nannette Baker (JEM '78), chief magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri in St. Louis, received the Donald G. Hileman Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of her remarkable career in television news as a practicing attorney, and as a judge. It is the highest award given annually by the college.

2019 Faculty Awards

Faculty Teaching Award

Awa Zhu, Associate Professor,
Information Sciences

Faculty Research Award

Barb Kaye, Professor,
Journalism & Electronic Media

Faculty Service/Outreach Award

Vandana Singh, Associate
Professor, Information Sciences

Lecturer Teaching Award

Sharon Toedte, Lecturer,
Advertising & Public Relations

Bud Minkel International/ Intercultural Award

Devendra Potnis, Associate
Professor, Information Sciences



2019 Alumni Awards

Communication Studies

Graham Thomas ('08)

Advertising

Leslie Osborne ('97)

Journalism & Electronic Media

Sharrie Williams

Public Relations

Ed Patterson ('89)

Information Sciences

Zoe Hoyle (MSIS '94)

- not pictured

Professors Who Educated, Challenged, & Inspired Us

"Willis Tucker, head of the journalism department, convinced me that I could earn a living in the field. It was a close call. I could have been a baseball umpire."

— **Marvin West**
JEM, 1955

"Far and away the most influential professor I had was the late Dr. Ben Bates. He was my advisor, and I can't say enough about how he shaped my efforts. I remember fondly the many lunches we had in which we talked about scholarship and all things related. He was a true scholar himself but also a good friend. I miss him dearly."

— **Scott Wells**
PhD C&I, 2013

"Michael Palenchar was one of the most important instructors to me, not just within CCI. As a student, I found him to be approachable and encouraging. He showed us such respect in a way that other instructors did not. After graduation, I stayed in touch with him and found him to be a supportive mentor. His ability to be real with students and never act superior to us was so refreshing. Not to mention, he worked very hard to set us up for success in our careers."

— **Samantha Lane**
PR, 2007

"Dr. Roy Ambrester. I had my 'aha' moment in one of his classes. I was never sure whether I had picked the right department until taking one of his classes. After that, I signed up for everything he taught. He reminded me of my own grandfather a bit, who was also a college professor."

— **Lisa Cyr**
CS, 2005

"Dr. Kelly Leiter was my mentor, sometimes savior, and friend. He was brilliant, witty, a wonderful professor, a sympathetic sounding board, kind, and incredibly thoughtful. I learned

much more than great journalism from him; he gave me good advice for decades. I miss him terribly."

— **Karen Fuson Buchsbaum**
JEM, 1975

"The CCI professor with the biggest impact on my career was Dr. Swan. He genuinely cares about his students and seeing them succeed. If he had not brought a group of us to New York City, I probably would not have my current job or the experiences I have had."

— **Brooke Fraser Drummond**
JEM, 2012

"Professor Don Hileman, first Advertising Department Head and second Dean, who recruited me to become an advertising major ... 'Son, mind if I move around while we talk? I'm all about promotion, and the better part of promotion is motion.' And Prof. Richard Joel, second Advertising Department Head, who made me realize I was a copywriter and always would be. He said this once in a copywriting class, 'Being good at this is tough, and the toughest part is having to murder your own children every day.' I've thought about that quote every time I've written something; and every time I've critiqued or edited something someone else has written. The man was memorable. And accurate. And a mentor and friend until he died in his 90s."

— **Dan Conaway**
AD, 1971

"June Adamson, journalism professor, was a tough, experienced newspaper reporter, who brought journalism alive in the classroom and writing lab. My best course was an elective with her, Feature Writing, where she taught me storytelling. Solid journalism was a great base that served my career very well and allowed me to span a broad range of communication fields."

— **Jim Fitzwater**
JEM/PR, 1977

"Alice Wirth brought me into the Diversity Student Leaders Society my junior year by bribing me with free food. It was a new organization and I immediately got involved. I ended up being the Vice President my senior year and the lessons I learned and friends I made during that time taught me a lot about seeing things from a different view point. They are lessons I carry with me each and every day, especially in the world we live in now it's more important than ever before to think differently."

— **Michael O'Brien**
JEM, 2010

"The CCI professor who had the biggest impact on me was definitely John Haas. I had him for my capstone course and also got to know him on the Comm Studies Club annual trip to Washington, D.C. As a professor, he was inspiring, challenging, and motivating at the same time. He pushed our class to think critically about our majors and the value of our degree."

— **Misha Cooper**
CS, 2012

"Dr. Ed Caudill. He was my thesis chair as well as professor. He gave me some very valuable advice when I was working on my thesis and having difficulty finding the right story angle. He said you should ask yourself two very important questions before diving into the work: 'So what?' and 'Who cares?' If you can answer both of those questions, then you've got yourself a worthwhile story. They are questions I continue to ask myself in any project I undertake."

— **Alison Cook**
MS C&I, 2004

More alumni responses are on our website cci.utk.edu. Stay tuned to our social media @UTCCI for alumni questions. We appreciate your input!

My Proudest Moment ...

Before beginning professional careers, they learned to deliver speeches, meet deadlines, and tell stories.

"If I had to choose one moment, it would be the night of our 2018 Chancellor's Honors Banquet. That year, I was selected as a Torchbearer and (as much of an honor as it was) that very night ... I will never forget. Everyone I cared about personally and professionally was in the audience as remarks were given on my behalf - speaking to everything I had accomplished in my four incredible years at UT. To this day, I am still so extremely proud to not only be in the UT Torchbearer family, but to represent CCI in doing so."

— **Justin Crawford**
JEM, 2017

"I have several proud memories from my time at CCI. My proudest memory was seeing my byline on TNJN for the first time while an undergrad. I had never had a story published before and one of my first stories was actually written about an event hosted in Knoxville for TOMS Shoes. (This event was around 2007 when TOMS was still very new.) I will never forget feeling proud of that accomplishment, and I still have hard copies of my published stories from undergrad and my internship."

— **Kate Spencer Sowrey**
JEM, 2010; MS C&I, 2014

"CCI gave me a love for learning that I had previously never known. More than one professor took the time to encourage and guide me outside of class time. To this day, I call on principles learned in classes such as interpersonal communication, argument & debate, and public speaking. These principles have been invaluable in my day to day relationships & have been passed on to my children and countless others."

— **Cherie Phillips**
CS, 1994

When Dean Rice advised anyone needing commercials made to contact me; this was during an awards ceremony before graduation. It was based



on a project I did in Political Communications where I made an Ad for a fake candidate running for office."

— **Christopher Miller**
CS, 2014

"I wrote for the Beacon and covered Pat Summitt's winning season(s) so I met Pat Summitt, Mickey DeMoss and Holly Warlick while writing stories on the Lady Vols. So glad I got to work with Coach Summitt before her untimely passing."

— **Kelly Christensen**
JEM, 1986

"My proudest moment would have to be the opportunity to cover the 2008 Lady Vols basketball team's national title. My professors worked with my schedule, and I was able to focus on covering the games for the Daily Beacon and learned many valuable lessons."

— **Robert Holder**
JEM, 2008

"My proudest moment in CCI was our work with the Medal of Honor Project

and watching that program, under Dr. Geidner's leadership, transform into what it is today. We took an idea and he turned it into a life-changing opportunity for both students and the Tennessee community by transforming the skills and resources acquired through the Medal of Honor Project into what was needed to develop Land Grant Films.

"Due to our work with the Medal of Honor Project, I was able to secure a full-time job with the Medal of Honor Foundation in Washington, D.C. traveling the country with the recipients for my first year post-grad. I learned so much about life and leadership through my time with the recipients; none of which would have been possible without CCI."

— **Taylor Hathorn**
JEM, 2014

"My proudest moment was being cast in the role of Billie Jean Lilac Lavender Martha in the play "Hot I Baltimore." Love you Dr. (Thomas) Cooke for trusting me with that role and encouraging me every step of the way. I still have the note he wrote me on opening night. His encouragement made all the difference in my life!"

— **Jeanne Chick**
CS, 1979

"It is difficult to pinpoint just one. However, one memory that impacted me the most on multiple levels was receiving three scholarships from CCI. These scholarships provided the additional financial support I needed to continue my education without having to stop to enter the workforce to support my family. Additional memories include winning the J. Paul Blakely science writing award 2 years in a row, working as news editor for the Daily Beacon, and winning second place in the Tennessee Associated Press student awards for specialized topic reporting."

— **Thomas Cruise**
JEM, 2017



Our History

pre-1969

Before the Beginning

The foundations of CCI started well before the founding of the college. Rhetoric, a cornerstone of communication studies, was among the first courses offered at Blount College, the forerunner to the University of Tennessee.

Journalism got its start in 1904 with the founding of *The Orange and White* school newspaper, which later became *The Daily Beacon*. The university began offering journalism courses in 1923, advertising courses in 1924, library science in 1928, and public relations in 1932. Departments and schools emerged as more courses were offered. The Department of Journalism was founded in 1947.



1969

The Beginning

The College of Communications was founded and housed in the newly constructed Communications and University Extension Building. The Department of Advertising was also founded.



1970

We're Live in 5...4...3...2...1

The Department of Broadcasting was established. That year, the college also granted its first Master of Science degree. In 1977, the college awarded its first doctoral degree.

1971-72

Long-Distance Librarians

An independent Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences began in 1971. The next year, the school offered its first distance-education courses, a tradition continuing to this day with its online MSIS degree.

1982

On the Airwaves

WUTK began broadcasting. First known as Album 90, the station later became the first in Knoxville to play music from such bands as U2, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Metallica.

1994

Turning 25

To celebrate its 25th anniversary, the college established the Donald G. Hileman Distinguished Alumni Award, which is given annually.

1997

A Growing College

The Speech Communication Department joined the college, eventually becoming the School of Communication Studies. The school evolved from the Speech and Theatre program in the College of Liberal Arts.



2003

Officially "CCI"

Information Sciences became part of the college, which was renamed the College of Communication and Information with four schools: Advertising & Public Relations, Communication Studies, Information Sciences, and Journalism & Electronic Media. A year later, the college added its fourth undergraduate major: public relations



2007

Research Centered

The CCI-wide research center renamed Center for Information and Communication Studies, originally established by Information Sciences in 1989.



2009-Present

Expanding Services

Thanks to generous gifts, CCI has invested more than \$4 million to upgrade its learning and research spaces since 2009, including the Scripps Convergence Lab, Larry Patrick Auditorium, the Adam Brown Social Media Command Center, the User-eXperience Lab, and the Message Effects Lab.



2013

Documentarians

Land Grant Films, the documentary filmmaking organization, evolved from the 2013-14 Medal of Honor Project. This year, Land Grant Films completed *The Library That Dolly Built*, which tells the story of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The film is scheduled for a nationwide release in December.

2019-2020

Five Majors

The undergraduate major in Information Sciences was established, increasing CCI's major offerings to five. In 2020, CCI expanded its Communication and Information master's program, adding an online-only concentration in Strategic and Digital Communication.



View an expanded CCI historical timeline online at cci.utk.edu



Diversity Student Leaders Society

The CCI Diversity Student Leaders Society provides an open and accepting community for all students. Its purpose is to provide high quality educational opportunities and to promote understanding by embracing and celebrating the dimensions of diversity within each individual.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- ▶ Student Mentoring Program
- ▶ Social gatherings
- ▶ Student exchanges
- ▶ Diversity Speakers Program

- ▶ Job shadowing
- ▶ Inspiring diverse students to become leaders
- ▶ Inspiring and encouraging diverse students to think about and apply to graduate school
- ▶ Improving the diversity climate within CCI

OUR GOALS

- ▶ Provide an open and accepting community for CCI students
- ▶ Provide tools to help make students marketable for the global work place.

- ▶ Help students learn to stand out and think independently
- ▶ Create a climate that affirms and endorses diversity.
- ▶ Provide underrepresented students with support, programs, and experiences that will keep them in CCI and in college
- ▶ Build a bridge between CCI and existing diversity programs at UT
- ▶ Provide an atmosphere that allows students to discuss ideas and information associated with diversity and conflict

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WEEK

Now in its 12th year, **CCI Diversity and Inclusion Week** is targeted at all members of the CCI community with specific focus on our 1,280 undergraduate students. The four-day event offers participants an opportunity to gain diversity skills and knowledge along with a chance to dialogue about diversity and inclusion issues and to share best practices by bringing together leaders and experts from inside and outside the college and university.

▶ KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Diversity and Inclusion Week brings in experts from around campus and the entire country. In 2019, Dartmouth College filmmakers (*pictured right*) presented "Change the Subject," a documentary about labels, libraries and activism.





CCI EXPERIENCE DIVERSITY AWARD WINNERS

2020	Robert Booker <i>(pictured)</i>
2019	Arnold Cohen
2018	Cylk Cozart
2017	Harold Middlebrook
2016	Lelan Statom
2015	Tom Kim
2014	Robin Wilhoit
2013	Madeline Rogero
2012	Avon W. Rollins Sr.
2011	Jose Aponte
2010	Phyllis Y. Nichols
2009	Theotis Robinson Jr.

CCI EXPERIENCE DIVERSITY BANQUET



► CCI DIVERSITY FESTIVAL

An all-campus barbecue with diverse music, dance, games for all ages, a photo booth and cultural performances; all CCI student organizations participate including: Ad Club, Communication Studies Club, Diversity Student Leaders Society, Public Relations Student Society of America, and Society of Professional Journalists.





Land Grant Films' Imagination Library Documentary Set for National Release

The Library That Dolly Built, a student-driven film and documentary about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, will be live streamed to a global audience on Dec. 9.

The documentary premiere was scheduled for April 2 but was delayed because of COVID-19.

Associate Professor of Journalism and Electronic Media

Nick Geidner is the director and producer of the film, which was crewed by 15 student members of Land Grant Films, an Emmy-nominated documentary production program housed in UT's School of Journalism and Electronic Media. JEM video production specialist Clinton Elmore served as the film's editor.

The film is being distributed by Abramorama, a Los Angeles-based company that has distributed numerous major documentaries including Banksy's Academy Award-nominated *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. The distribution is being supported by the Dollywood Foundation and Dollywood.

Land Grant Films' mission is to provide UT students with real-world documentary production experience while providing local nonprofits with video assets they can use to raise awareness and funds. Headquartered down the road from UT in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, the Imagination Library is one of the largest literacy-focused nonprofit programs in the world. It distributes more than 1.5 million free age-appropriate books each month to children in all 50 states and five countries.

When the project began in fall 2017, Geidner's initial plan was to create an hour-long show that could air on television stations across the state, but the scope of the documentary grew as the crew interviewed people around the country working for the Imagination Library and those benefiting from the service. Two months into filming, the team flew to Washington, D.C., to chronicle Parton and the Imagination Library presenting their 100 millionth book to the US Library of Congress.

Geidner was inspired by Imagination Library when his then-only son, Henry, started receiving the books as an infant. Fast forward to 2020: Geidner and his wife, Shelby, have a second son, 15-month-old Sam, who is now receiving books from the Imagination Library. Henry just celebrated his seventh birthday and continues to be a reader.

"He's reading long books now and reading to his brother," Geidner said. "We recently read the first Harry Potter book together. There are a number of shots of Henry and Sam in the film."

While Geidner has experienced the growth of his own family during the course of filmmaking, he has also witnessed the growth of his student crew. As the film entered its later stages, some of the students earned their degrees and still helped complete the project.

Brock Zych, the film's director of photography, has remained in Knoxville as a digital video associate producer for Discovery after graduating in May 2018 with a degree in journalism. When he joined Land Grant Films as a sophomore, the team had only two documentary-quality cameras. It grew in equipment and potential while he was a student.

"After being attached to this project for so long,



I learned that good documentaries take time," Zych said. "Not only did I get amazing experience with cameras, but I also got to work with an awesome team who knew so much about the organization, Dolly, and the right angle we wanted to approach this film."

Abby Bower, who served as writer and producer on the film, graduated with a journalism degree in May 2019. She had mostly worked on shorter, smaller-scale projects, so the film pushed her storytelling abilities to keep audiences engaged while weaving together narratives of people involved with the Imagination Library.

A lifelong reader, Bower said the journey from watching the Imagination Library's distributors load books on 18-wheelers to meeting with an affiliate program providing children access to books in a remote town in Minnesota—and many steps in between—showed her the enormous scope of Parton's program and reinforced the power of books.

"It was pretty incredible to think of what a gift of a book can mean for somebody and what it can do," said Bower, who is a science writing intern for Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Geidner said the completion and national release of the documentary are a strong argument that students can pitch big ideas and projects, and the School of Journalism and Electronic Media and Land Grant Films can help them.

"I want students who are passionate about what they do and who want to tell stories and be part of their community," Geidner said. "Though this story is of national interest, it's still a local story about one of our organizations. It just happens to involve one of the most recognizable celebrities in the world."



Getting Social

UT SOCIAL MEDIA WEEK



CCI has held UT Social Media Week for the last nine years and features guest experts — many of them alumni — and panel discussions about social media. Topics range from the marketing implications of social media for companies and nonprofit organizations to social media's place in a rapidly evolving journalism landscape.



Adam Brown Social Media Command Center

The Adam Brown Social Media Command Center is one of the only university facilities of its kind with full access to Salesforce's Social Studio for students, faculty and staff to utilize for teaching and research opportunities. Classes have used the facility to monitor election night buzz in addition to major breaking news and sporting events.

The ABMCC is powered by Salesforce Marketing Cloud technology and provides CCI access to the same leading technology that Fortune 100 companies worldwide use to publish, engage, and analyze their social media marketing activities.

Inside the Game...

Running social media in professional sports & esports

ANDY BOWERS (CS '17)



Andy Bowers is the social media manager for the Philadelphia 76ers. A native of Elizabethton, Tennessee, interned with Tennessee Athletic Communications as a senior. He interned with Morris Creative Group and Tombras before working as a digital and social content associate with the Atlanta Hawks.

What does a typical workday look like?

Every day is very different which never makes it boring. Always long and late hours but very rewarding.

Why did you choose the University of Tennessee and CCI as a student?

I went to ETSU for my first two years, and it wasn't for me. I visited a friend here at UT and stayed the weekend where, at that point, I could see myself coming here. Then from meeting people from the school and from the first class I had with Dr. [John] Haas, I saw the potential for my career and where I could see myself going through communications.

How do you plan and strategize social media coverage on game days?

We have a great system and calendar that we use in regard to any game day needs. After having 82 games in a season, you find a rhythm and repetition into what you know can go out throughout the whole day.

What are some skills you learned at UT that have helped you on the job?

I think being open-minded and looking at every opportunity as a learning experience. Whether positive or negative, it's all about learning.

Advice for students interested in going into social media professionally?

Understand what actually goes into it. The time commitment, the effort, and ultimately not putting yourself in a box on a specific location or part of the industry.

SOOKIE PARK (AD '13)



Sookie Park (AD '13) is the Director of Partnership Activation at Complexity Gaming, one of America's premier esports organizations now headquartered in Frisco, Texas. A native of Daegu, South Korea, Park entered the traditional sports and esports industry through the Philadelphia 76ers and Dignitas. At Complexity, she manages all partnerships by growing relationships with clients and executing activations for the team, fans, and partners such as GameStop, US Army, and Miller Lite.

What does a typical workday look like?

My workday, without exaggeration, is never the same. A lot of my days are spent on internal and external meetings and answering emails as the point of contact for all of our brand partners, and making sure our upcoming events/activations are being prepared for a flawless execution. However, when some of our biggest and most important teams and events are being played, everything stops and the entire office is glued to our big TV in the "living room." Perks of being on an esports team, I guess!

Why did you choose the University of Tennessee and CCI as a student?

I've always wanted to study advertising and sports marketing since I was about 12 years old! When the time came for me to decide on a university, I wanted to go to a school that had a stellar advertising program that was

located somewhere I would've never thought of going to. As a kid who grew up in Minnesota/Korea, Tennessee seemed like a place that would take me out of my comfort zone and would give me the opportunity to experience a new culture that I've never experienced before!

What are some skills you learned at UT that have helped you on the job?

The biggest thing I learned in class was how to prepare pitches and decks! That is such an invaluable skill in account management, and as tough as that campaigns class was, it gave me so much experience in a short amount of time.

Advice for students interested in going into social media professionally?

I think not just in social media, but in general, you need to figure out your brand and be active with that voice on social media, just like any brand should be doing on social media. It can be an extension of your personality, or it can literally just be about a specific topic that you are passionate about! But developing that persona is super important. Also, know what social media you should focus on for the industry that you want to be in. For the esports industry for example, Twitter is probably the biggest platform - so I'm literally on it every waking moment, catching up on news, interacting with industry folk, and excessively tweeting.

RESEARCH

Studying Russian Disinformation Campaigns

An interdisciplinary research team from communications, anthropology, and political science will study Russian disinformation campaigns in three former Soviet republics as part of a \$1.6 million Minerva research grant awarded through the United States Department of Defense.

UT researchers were one of only 12 academic groups nationwide selected for the prestigious Minerva Research Initiative awards this year.

The research team for the project consists of faculty members from five departments: Catherine Luther (journalism and electronic media), Suzie Allard (information sciences), Maureen Taylor (advertising and public relations), Michael Fitzgerald and Brandon Prins (political science), and Alex Bentley (anthropology). Also closely involved in the project are Natalie Rice, research associate for the CCI Center for Information and Communication Studies, and Oleg Manaev, global security fellow at the UT Institute of Nuclear Security.

“The study will monitor and analyze the content of Russian information warfare and measure the effectiveness the tactics have in shaping opinion in Eastern European nations Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus,” said Taylor, former director of the School of Advertising and Public Relations.

The research includes a close inspection of both traditional media and popular social media platforms, including Russian-language local news media in the Baltics, Facebook, Twitter, and V Kontakte, a Russian online social media and social networking service.

“The project is significant because it not only measures Russian propaganda, but also assesses how this propaganda shapes public opinion,” Prins said. “We want to model the relationships between propaganda and opinion and evaluate how disinformation campaigns upset democratic institutions.”

The three countries selected for the project are increasingly the targets of propaganda campaigns.

“There is evidence that the selected countries



are serving as testing grounds for Russian media tactics designed to influence public opinion and collective behavior with the goal of employing them against Russia's political rivals such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany,” said Luther, director of the School of Journalism and Electronic Media and principal investigator for the study.

The vision for the research project grew out of Rice's doctoral dissertation. Rice studies Russian propaganda, and the project extends this work by adding social media tracking and creating a mechanism to measure the effects of both traditional and social media.

The project began in April 2019 and will last through March 2024. After the project concludes, researchers plan to study foreign disinformation campaigns in Asia and Oceania.

The Minerva Research Initiative was started in 2008 by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and is a Department of Defense-sponsored, university-based social science research program. The goal of Minerva is to “improve the department's understanding of the social, cultural, behavioral, and political forces that shape the regions of the world.” The results of the research are unclassified and intended to be of widespread importance.



2019 MACEBEARER Carol Tenopir

The Macebearer is the university's highest faculty award, which celebrates and honors a distinguished career and a solid commitment to students, scholarship, and society. Tenopir, a Chancellor's Professor in the School of Information Sciences, is a world-renowned researcher whose work focuses on the tools and behaviors that scientists and engineers use to communicate with each other and with nonexpert audiences. Her work has been cited more than 10,000 times and garnered more than \$10 million in funding. She has received numerous honors, including being named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and becoming the first woman to hold the Fulbright-Nokia Distinguished Chair in Information and Communication Technologies.

Celebrating 50

History of CCI Faculty Awards

FACULTY RESEARCH AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Awa Zhu
2018	Moonhee Cho
2017	Beth Foster
2016	Wade Bishop
2015	Amber Roessner
2014	Jin Seong Park
2013	Courtney Wright
2012	Erin Whiteside
2010	Beth Foster
2009	Mariea G. Hoy
2008	Michael J. Palenchar
2007	Lisa T. Fall
2007	Dania Bilal
2006	Catherine A. Luther
2005	Dwight L. Teeter, Jr.
2004	Barbara K. Kaye
2003	Michael Hoefges
2003	Dania Bilal
2002	Mark D. Harmon
2001	Sally J. McMillan
2000	Mark E. Littmann
2000	Daniel J. Foley
1999	Ronald E. Taylor
1998	Charles E. Caudill
1997	Mariea G. Hoy
1996	Benjamin J. Bates
1995	Ronald E. Taylor
1994	Mariea G. Hoy
1993	Dorothy A. Bowles
1992	Dhyana Ziegler
1991	Susan M. Caudill
1990	Charles E. Caudill
1989	Herbert H. Howard
1988	Charles E. Caudill
1987	Herbert H. Howard
1986	Paul G. Ashdown
1985	M. Mark Miller
1984	Herbert H. Howard

FACULTY TEACHING AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Barb Kaye
2018	Nick Geidner
2017	Rachel Fleming-May
2016	Carolyn Hank
2015	Robyn Blakeman
2014	Abbey Levenshus
2013	Laura Miller
2012	Rachel Fleming-May
2011	Elizabeth Hendrickson
2010	Courtney C. Childers
2009	Mark E. Littmann
2008	Kenneth J. Levine
2007	Carolyn R. Lepre
2007	Daniel M. Haygood
2006	William C. Robinson
2006	John W. Haas
2005	Suzanne L. Allard
2004	Lisa T. Fall
2003	Margie Morrison
2002	Candace L. White
2001	Bonnie P. Riechert
2000	Mark D. Harmon
1999	J. Eric Haley
1999	Margie Morrison
1998	Candace L. White
1997	Mariea G. Hoy
1996	Margie Morrison
1995	Bonnie L. Hufford
1994	Jerry L. Morrow
1993	J. Eric Haley
1992	Paul G. Ashdown
1991	Robert B. Heller
1990	Michael J. Stankey
1989	Herbert H. Howard
1988	Dhyana Ziegler
1988	George C. Johnson
1987	Bonnie L. Hufford
1986	DeForrest Jackson
1985	Jerry L. Morrow
1985	Ronald E. Taylor
1984	DeForrest Jackson
1983	Paul G. Ashdown

FACULTY SERVICE/ OUTREACH AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Vandana Singh
2018	Courtney Childers
2017	Candace White
2016	Lisa Fall
2015	Rob Heller
2014	Michael J. Palenchar
2013	Bharat Mehra
2011	Michael J. Palenchar
2010	Mark D. Harmon
2009	Michael J. Palenchar
2008	Lisa T. Fall
2007	Bharat Mehra
2007	J. Eric Haley
2006	Naeemah Clark
2005	Candace L. White

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY TEACHING AWARD

Year	Recipient
2017	Courtney Childers
2015	Kimberly Douglass
2013	Elizabeth Hendrickson
2012	Peiling Wang
2010	Vandana Singh
2006	Bharat Mehra
2005	Kendra S. Albright
2004	Dorothy A. Bowles
2003	Gretchen Whitney
2002	Robert B. Heller
2001	Sally J. McMillan
2000	Benjamin J. Bates
1999	Dorothy A. Bowles

LECTURER AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Sharon Toedte
2018	Megan Fields
2017	Stephen Bales
2016	Lisa Gary
2015	Pete Finch
2014	Melanie Faizer
2013	Suzy Prentiss
2010	Michelle E. Garland
	Sharon Toedte

2009	Lisa B. Gary
2008	Thomasena F. Shaw
2007	Andrew C. Tollison
2005	Laura Arnett Smith
2005	Thomasena F. Shaw
2005	Lisa B. Gary

C.W. (BUD) MINKEL INTERNATIONAL/ INTERCULTURAL AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Devendra Potnis
2018	Laura Miller
2017	Mark Harmon
2016	Candace White
2015	Sam Swan
2013	Kenneth Levine
2009	Edwin M. Cortez
2008	Catherine A. Luther
2007	Robert B. Heller
2002	C.W. (Bud) Minkel

EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE AWARD

Year	Recipient
2013	Dwight Teeter
2010	Sally J. McMillan
2009	Edward A. Spray
2006	Gregory D. Reed
2005	Douglas Raber
2005	James A. Crook
2004	Barbara A. Moore
2003	Patricia L. Fisher
2003	M. Mark Miller
2003	Michael Singletary
2002	J. Eric Haley
2001	Robert W. Glenn
2001	James A. Crook
2000	M. Mark Miller
1999	Herbert H. Howard
1998	Roxanne Hovland
1997	Dorothy A. Bowles
1996	George A. Everett



After Whitewater Canoeing, Kerns Finds Grad School Smooth Sailing

CCI PhD student Charli Kerns has fought her way through whitewater rapids and cascaded over waterfalls in her canoe. Knowing that adrenaline rush, she doesn't get too stressed out over research, writing, or teaching a class.

Kerns has been an action sports enthusiast since being introduced to kayaking through UT's Outdoor Pursuits during her undergraduate days on Rocky Top. She later picked up canoeing and now considers whitewater canoeing her main sport. She's traversed waterways across the United States as well as in Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico, Germany, France, and India.

She's managed to translate her love for action sports—the preferred term for what some people call “extreme sports”—into a career and now into her doctoral studies in the School of Journalism and Electronic Media in the College of Communication and Information. Her research focuses on how action sports media can help reimagine issues of gender in sport and culture.

For her dissertation, Kerns is looking at how female athletes are represented in Red Bull Media House, a global multiplatform media company that's a leader in action sports news. Red Bull's You-

Tube channel has 8.5 million subscribers.

Kerns is looking at why sports media so often downplay women's sport—whether they consider it less interesting or less of a moneymaker for them—and the ramifications that has on society: “If a sports news outlet says women aren't worth covering, what does that say . . . and does that lead to girls not being able to imagine themselves as big athletes?”

In addition to completing her own studies, she's teaching multimedia reporting.

Kerns said the pure exhilaration of whitewater canoeing, stemming from fear, risk, and physical exertion, has given her a different perspective on the stress of everyday life.

“It's so much easier to deal with deadlines and social expectations when you know, as close to firsthand as you're going to get, how precious and short life is.”

Kerns said “scary” is when you almost drown—or when you're unable to save a friend from drowning. That's what happened to her in an accident on the Little River.

“If you've been paddling long enough, you know someone that's died,” she said.

To overcome her grief, she forced herself to go

back out on the Little River and conquer the same rapids that claimed her friend's life.

"Absolutely nothing holds focus better than whitewater paddling," Kerns said. "It reminds me how small I am in the grand scheme of things. It's taught me that the little things in life are not that big a deal."

Born in Wyoming, Kerns moved with her family to South Knoxville after her dad retired from the military. She graduated from South Doyle High School. Kerns earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from UT in 2011 and her master's degree in science and medical journalism from Boston University in 2012.

Once she was job hunting, she realized that most science and medical writing jobs would require living in a big city.

"I'm a mountain person," she said.

So when she saw a job posted for an online editor for Canoe and Kayak magazine, she jumped at it. She was hired and relocated to San Clemente, California, where she began writing for Canoe and Kayak and other publications in the Adventure Sports Network.

After about two years on the job, writing about everything from epic fishing trips to Grand Canyon rafting to motocross, she was sent on assignment to western North Carolina to do a story about whitewater paddling on the Green River. She fell in love with the place and the river.

She gave notice to the magazine, moved to Asheville, North Carolina, and landed a job with the *Hendersonville Times-News*.

"I'd always had zero desire to work in newspapers, but I absolutely loved it," she said. "Breaking news is one of the biggest highs you can get as a journalist."

Kerns spent two years at the newspaper and another year teaching at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. All along, she continued to do contract writing and editing for a variety of outdoor and sport publications.

"I had always wanted to get a PhD and teach and study journalism," she said. "I really want to do research and teach at a top-level university."

Kerns applied to several schools but chose to come back home.

"I'm so very happy I chose UT," she said, adding that the support of faculty has allowed her to meld two things she loves, journalism and action sports.

And getting to do it in Knoxville—which is close to some of the best whitewater paddling locales in the country—doesn't hurt either.

"I can take a lunch break and paddle the Little River," she said.



Celebrating 50

The Torchbearer



The Torchbearer is the highest student honor conferred by the University of Tennessee. The Torchbearer is awarded for academic achievement and outstanding commitment to others. Students chosen for this award embody the Volunteer spirit, displaying initiative and service in the best interests of both the university and their fellow students.

CCI TORCHBEARERS

2019	Elizabeth Longmire
2018	Justin Crawford
2015	Cierra Burdick Kelsey Keny Rilwan Balogun
2014	Diane Tate Kristen Barnett
2012	Courtney Vick
2010	Jamil Price
2009	Rachel Edwards
2008	Blake Brown
2007	Ashley Yeager
2006	Lauren Binkley
2005	Rachel Parsons Nall
2004	Brandon Long Jessica Hinch
2002	Tiffani Saxton Bradford Bricken
2001	Laura Lefler Herzog
1996	Leah Sparks Amanda Biggers Leach
1993	Levita Mondie
1991	Molly Lee Eddins
1989	Melanie Woods
1988	Janette Benson
1985	Brian Gregory
1984	William McCaskill Jr.
1982	Melissa Mashburn Parker
1982	Ed Ingle
1980	Monica Langley
1978	Barbara Ward Nancy Sharp Voith
1975	Mae Jean Go Martin Covert Marilyn Denney Blankenship
1973	Karen Welch Bohr
1965	Lynda Leftwich Newton
1964	E. Wallene Threadgill Leek
1961	B. Dwayne Summar
1958	Sammie Lynn Puett

Explore *the* World

CCI GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Goals of Studying Abroad:

- Understanding communications from an international perspective
- Expanding career opportunities
Advancing cross-cultural and problem solving skills
- Improving foreign language abilities
- Fulfilling major, minor, and general education requirements
- Developing a Global Professional Network

Experiences like these change lives and enhance career options in many ways. With today's increasingly interdependent world, the significant cross-cultural experience is often what employers and graduate schools seek.



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
CCI



SIENA, ITALY
Public Relations



DUBLIN, IRELAND
Communication Studies



ROME, ITALY
Advertising



PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
Journalism and Electronic Media



In Her Own Words: *Liza Cunningham*



New alumna Liza Cunningham (AD '20) participated in two CCI Global Programs: Sydney and Rome. Both journeys provided education about advertising, culture, and herself.

Early in my freshman year, I was eagerly sitting in my Advertising 250 class when an unexpected guest came to speak about the CCI Global Scholars Program in Sydney, Australia. Little did I know that Dr. Sam Swan's presentation would be the ini-

tial start of a journey that would forever change my life.

Not only did I gain valuable insight into the communications field through coursework, but I was also given the chance to intern at a full-service communications agency for eight weeks. Cardinal Spin, my internship placement, allowed me to gain a new sense of independence and skills that are sure to translate into a workplace setting for any future career.

Cardinal Spin specializes in public relations and VIP/celebrity engagement, which allowed me to be part of large-scale events such as the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival with over 400,000 attendees, the New South Wales Premier's (comparable to a governor in America) Harmony Dinner, and the Sydney Film Festival.

I learned much more about myself than I ever expected. When I am placed outside of my comfort zone, I have come to realize that I am my favorite version of myself: happy, hard-working, outgoing, goofy, and most importantly I am self-aware of my emotions, my values, and my behaviors.

With confidence, I can state that I gained a new sense of self-worth. I tried vegemite, petted kangaroos, and learned to surf. My experience in Sydney, Australia, helped me uncov-

er skills I never knew I had, grow the skills I already possessed, and obtain relationships I didn't know I needed.

As a junior, I really started to miss studying abroad. It was a break from my normal routine. It was exciting, fun, and — at times — terrifying, but I loved the thrill of it all.

After hearing Dr. Sally McMillan speak about a summer 2019 advertising issues class in Rome, I knew another opportunity for growth had come my way. Thankfully, I was able to obtain a CCI scholarship that allowed me to make this dream possible.

I was challenged to critically think from a global standpoint, work in various groups, and give presentations nearly every single class period. As a class, we were able to utilize our observations of Italian lifestyles and apply them to what we know in the advertising industry. This kind of coursework made me certain that Advertising is the perfect major for me.

Words cannot describe how much I value my two study abroad experiences. Although they were both very different from each other, they both will forever hold a special place in my heart. I have matured, learned to laugh at my mistakes, handled uncomfortable situations, and grown in my relationships with others.

New Paths >

In 2019 and 2020, CCI introduced two new degree options: the state's first bachelor of science in Information Sciences and a fully online master's degree concentration in Strategic and Digital Communication

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE: Information Sciences

OVERVIEW

Started in fall 2019, the the University of Tennessee Bachelor of Science in Information Sciences is the state's first undergraduate program in Information Sciences and prepares students to effectively manage, navigate, analyze, and turn information into action in the public and private sector. Organizations produce enormous amounts of data, and individuals with an IS skill set are in high demand to analyze this data, turn it into information, and use it to advise about the future. From corporate data analysis to app interface design, our degree prepares students for an enriching IS career in a variety of settings and positions.

Information Sciences majors can choose from three concentrations: a User Experience Design (UXD) concentration; a Data, Information Management, and Analytics (DIMA) concentration; or a General concentration, which is a customized course plan not in either of the concentrations.

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN?

Upon satisfactory completion of the Bachelor of Science in Information Sciences program, the student will:

► **Understand** and communicate information ethics and interdisciplinary approaches to information.



► **Demonstrate** a combination of technical and professional skills for a variety of application domains.

► **Apply** socio-technical, and humanistic perspectives to implement/create information science artifacts for diverse settings.

► **Evaluate, implement and manage** information technologies, systems, sources, and services to enhance user experiences.

► **Plan** life-long learning skills to respond to challenges facing information professionals in a culturally diverse and dynamic global society.

CAREERS

There are a wide variety of jobs that can be pursued with the degree, which include UX Designer/

Researcher, Data Analyst, Metadata Specialist, IT Analyst, Information Manager, Web Content Analyst, and more! Information science is a broad field which can be taken in a variety of directions and settings; often the only limit is your imagination and willingness to try out a new role.

SALARIES & JOB GROWTH

Many information science careers have above-average salaries due to the need for skilled individuals that use information to investigate complex issues, connect people and data, track down and solve problems, and help organizations make better decisions.

Information sciences related careers also can expect a job growth rate much faster than the national average.



MASTER OF SCIENCE:

Strategic & Digital Communication

OVERVIEW

CCI launched an asynchronous online concentration in strategic and digital communication in Fall 2020. This master's degree has an interdisciplinary focus for those who are looking for a flexible degree that prepares students for dynamic roles in the workplace.

The Strategic and Digital Communication program is one of the only graduate online concentrations in the country that cuts across the College of Communication and Information's disciplinary areas and courses build upon what all of CCI's Schools—Advertising & Public Relations, Communication Studies, Information Sciences, and Journalism & Electronic Media—bring to the competitive job market.

ALL ONLINE

The strategic and digital communication concentration is practitioner focused and provides stand-alone courses that are asynchronous and fully online, so students can fit lessons into a busy work schedule.

COURSES OFFERED

The program requires 30 graduate credit hours. Two courses are offered in Fall 2020 and at two courses a semester, including summer session, students can complete the degree program in two years.

Wherever you are in your career, the Online Master's coursework provides training in strategic communications, management and workplace leadership, and digital platform tools and research. For career starters, the

classes in Strategic Communications Management to Social Influence, Persuasion, and Compliance-Gaining and Digital Content Creation Basics provide valuable skills to launch a career in almost any field. Each of CCI's schools offers three courses that focus on communication strategies and the digital marketplace.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students are admitted every semester, so they can enroll when they are ready. All undergraduate degrees are welcome. The GRE Test is NOT required for this online concentration, but all applicants must meet UT Graduate School academic requirements.

For more information about the program, contact Alexis Anderson at aande135@utk.edu.

CCI Programs

Undergraduate Majors

- ▶ Advertising
- ▶ Communication Studies
- ▶ Information Sciences
- ▶ Journalism & Electronic Media
- ▶ Public Relations

Master's Degree Programs

- ▶ Residential: Communication & Information
- ▶ Residential or Online: Information Sciences
- ▶ Online: Strategic & Digital Communication

PhD Program

- ▶ Communication & Information



STAR REPORTER

After graduating from the University of Tennessee where he served as editor of *The Daily Beacon*, John Jackson Miller (JEM '90) set his sights on the stars. Specifically, the stars in a galaxy far, far away and the ones in the far-flung future where no man has gone before. He turned his life-long passion for comic books and science fiction into a career, evolving from a trade publication editor to a creator.

Today, Miller is a New York Times bestselling novelist and comic writer for Star Wars, Star Trek, and many other fantasy licenses and original works in between. His characters have made it to the big screen, and fans have even named pets (and at least one human child) after his creations.

His latest full-length novel, *Star Trek: Discovery – Die Standing*, was released in July.

The Early Editor

Miller started writing his own comics when he was six years old. His mother was a grade-school librarian and fully supported his obsession with comics as a child.

“While other people’s mothers threw their

comics away, mine encouraged me to put my comics in order,” Miller said. “I still have everything I ever bought.”

His ability to distribute his comics writing changed radically when the Miller family brought home a photocopier while he was in junior high. Suddenly, he could start sharing his work with others on a much larger stage.

The fanzine industry was going strong in the 1980s with fans of pop culture, science fiction, and hobbies circulating their own publications full of articles, art, and original stories. Miller produced his own content, and some of his writing was picked up in national fan groups.

Miller then served as his high school’s news-

paper editor. He already knew how to paste up a newspaper; after all, he'd been making his magazines at home for years.

'You Majored in Beacon'

When he drove from Memphis to Knoxville to start college, Miller set his sights on the more practical outer space: engineering and a job building spacecraft. His father owned an electronics firm and had always encouraged him to learn about science. Miller even took a trip to Cape Canaveral over his final spring break as a high school senior.

After his first semester, however, Miller walked over to Circle Park to become a news editorial journalism major. He said he tried to find his place on the Daily Beacon staff as a sophomore but was not sparking his own interest while reporting on some of the drier aspects of student life.

Finally, his big break felt like something out of a movie.

"I was there in the Beacon office with my notebook waiting for something to happen when the editor ran in and said we need someone to go upstairs and interview the governor," Miller said. "He looked around and there was no one else in the room. He said, 'You kid, Go!'"

Minutes later, Miller was interviewing former Tennessee governor and current Senator Lamar Alexander, whose appointment and run as UT's systems president was a focus of the Beacon's news coverage for the next year and a half.

Miller jumped from someone struggling to get bylines to the head of the administration beat a few weeks later. He was quickly promoted to managing editor, a role he held until becoming editor-in-chief as a senior in 1989-90.

As editor, he wrote more breaking news articles to build his clip file; he and the Beacon staff were in Washington, D.C., at an investigative reporters' conference when the Berlin Wall fell. He also explored writing movie and comic book reviews.

"In your final year, the joke was you majored in Beacon," Miller said. "That is kind of what I did."

Miller graduated from UT with his degree in journalism in 1990. He went on to earn his master's degree in Soviet Studies at Louisiana State University, and in a strike of poor timing, completed a Russian language immersion camp just as the Soviet Union collapsed.

While the Soviet research suddenly seemed unnecessary, his knowledge proved valuable at the start of his comics writing career.

From Lumber to Marvel

Miller briefly edited for a line of lumber industry trade magazines, but after years of covering breaking news and studying Russian, he found this line of work a bit dull. While reading Comic Buyers Guide, the leading comic collector magazine of the day, he saw an advertisement for an editor for comic trade magazines. Within a month, he moved to Wisconsin, where he still lives today, writing and editing for industry publications alongside comic fandom legends Don and Maggie Thompson, editors of Comic Buyers Guide.

After a dozen years of editing comic, video game, and Star Wars magazines, Miller knew pretty much everyone at Marvel comics. They eventually asked him to pitch a story of his own.

Remember all that Russian study in graduate school? Miller used his education to add lore and details for a new series of Crimson Dynamo, a long-running character that is more-or-less a Soviet version of Iron Man.

Doors started opening. The Crimson Dynamo opportunity in 2003 led to a run on Iron Man which led to writing on Star Wars: Empire. He wrote the script for the popular Star Wars' Knights of the Old Republic series that ran from 2006-10.

"The way these tie-in licenses work, they look at your past work," Miller said. "If you've worked for one famous brand or character and you haven't ruined it, that's a stamp on your passport. Star Wars opened every door after that."

After a decade of writing comic book scripts and short stories, Miller published his first full-length novel in the Star Wars galaxy. Star Wars: Kenobi debuted at No. 12 on the New York Times Bestseller List when it was released in 2013. He dedicated the book to his sister, who made sure he got to see the first Star Wars movie before it left theaters.

Walking Red Carpets

Miller has written more than 3 million words in his professional career, all but 100,000 belonging to someone else's sandbox or creative



JOHN JACKSON MILLER

universe. His five-year run on the Knights of the Old Republic comic series spanned nearly 1,300 comic pages.

While writing in an established fantasy and licensed work has presented Miller with a ready-made fan base ready to devour his next book or comic, a downside is he has not had as many opportunities to pitch original ideas for television or movie treatments.

Some of his original ideas and characters from the comics, however, have made it to the big screen.

During his run on Iron Man, he created Sonny Birch, a villainous business executive and weapons dealer. The character appeared in the 2018 Marvel film, *Ant Man and the Wasp*, played by Walton Scoggins.

Miller and his wife, Meredith, were flown to Los Angeles for the premiere. While there, he finally met Jorge Lucas, the artist from Argentina with whom he had collaborated on the Iron Man comics years earlier but had never seen in person. They were both credited in the film.

‘There’s a Zayne Out There’

When it comes to writing for a Star Wars or Star Trek project, Miller has thousands of hours of built-in research from watching movies and TV shows growing up. In his licensing work, he

strives for in-universe accuracy while veering away from a temptation to excessively namedrop characters or lore.

Ultimately for fans, telling a good story is most important.

“Readers can tell if you’re faking it,” Miller said.

While novel writing itself can be more of a solitary experience, Miller has been able to experience the effects of his creativity firsthand at fan conventions all over the country. He has come to understand how his books and stories can inspire or benefit people who might be struggling in their day-to-day lives.

He said it was an eye-opening experience seeing two people dressed up as characters from his Knights of the Old Republic series for the first time at the 2007 Star Wars Celebration (“I might have been the only person who recognized what they’d dressed up as!”). Another group of fans constructed a life-sized puppet of one of his alien characters for one of his book readings.

What took the cake for Miller was meeting parents who had named their son after Zayne Carrick, a Jedi protagonist from Knights of the Old Republic.

“There’s a Zayne out there,” Miller said. “He’s probably eight or nine right now. It’s flattering, but it also shows how seriously people take this. As writers, we have to take it seriously as well.”



Bunny Shaw (CS '19): From Graduation to World Cup Stage

Wins and losses have always been a part of the game for Tennessee women's soccer forward Khadija “Bunny” Shaw (CS '19), whether on the field or in life.

She graduated in 2019 with a degree in communication studies, and shortly afterward led Jamaica to its first-ever appearance in a FIFA Women's World Cup.

From Spanish Town, Jamaica, a former capital city less than an hour to the west of the current capital, Kingston, Shaw has spent the past two years in Knoxville. She has emerged among the top female collegiate athletes in the country, leading UT in goals scored in 2017 and 2018 and contributing to the team's appearance in the NCAA tournament quarterfinals for the first time since the program's inception in 2016.

But the path that led her to UT and success as a soon-to-be professional athlete has also been filled with tragedy. When Shaw was a girl, three of her brothers were killed in gang-related gun violence and another brother was killed in a car accident. In 2016 she lost two nephews, one to a gunshot and the other after he was electrocuted on a soccer field.

Shaw carried the memories of all of these family members with her when she walked across the commencement stage.

The academic achievement for Shaw comes on top of a long list of athletic achievements in 2018. After playing a key role in leading UT women's soccer to the best season in its history, she was selected an NCAA All-American, named the SEC Offensive Player of the Year, and finished second for CONCACAF Female Player of the Year.

Shaw was also named by the Guardian as its Footballer of the Year for her on-field performances for Jamaica, which she helped lead to third place in the CONCACAF women's championship—the regional qualifying tournament for the World Cup—with three goals in five games. With Shaw's key contribution, Jamaica became the first women's team from the Caribbean to participate in the world's largest soccer tournament.

Shaw became the first female soccer player from the Caribbean to sign a sponsorship deal with Nike and now plays professionally in France for Girondins de Bordeaux.

UT Knoxville Annual Alumni Awards

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Year	Recipient
2018	Chris Grabenstein (JEM '77)
2017	Peyton Manning (CS '97)
2016	Sharon Price John (AD '86)
2015	Alan Wilson (JEM '80)
2014	Alan Greenberg (AD '72)
2012	Larry Patrick (MS C&I '73)
2010	John Cullum (BA CS '53)

ALUMNI PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Marshall Ramsey (Marketing '91)
2017	Charlie Tombras (AD '64)
2016	Nannette Baker (JEM '78)
2014	David Bohan (Marketing '70)
2011	Karen Brown Dunlap (PhD C&I)

ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Ed Ingle (PR '83)
2018	Greg Cox (MS '96; BS '95 Acct.)
2017	Martha "Missy" Wallen (CS '74)
2014	Anne Holt Blackburn (JEM '73)



ALUMNI PROMISE AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Monica Abbott (CS '08)
	Dane Bradshaw (JEM '06)
2018	Erin Hauck (AD '07)

2017	Sharrie Williams (JEM '01)
2016	Shannon Driver (JEM '99)
2015	Rachel Ramsey Cruze (CS '10)
	Rich Middlemas (JEM '97)
2014	Dan Hellie (JEM '97)

CCI Annual Alumni Awards

DONALD G. HILEMAN AWARD

Year	Recipient
2019	Judge Nannette Baker
2018	Stephen Land
2017	Martha Rogers
2016	Cathy Ackermann
2015	Mark McNeely
2014	Sharon Price John
2013	Charlie Tombras
2012	Alexia Poe
2011	Alan D. Wilson
2010	Alan Greenberg
2009	Faye Julian
2008	John Noble Wilford
2007	Peyton Manning
2006	Judge John J. Duncan Jr.
2005	Karen Brown Dunlap
2004	H. Wayne Hudson
2002	Monica J. Langley
2001	Thomas B. Ballard
2000	Susan G. Barnes
1999	Richard Marius
1998	Gill Duff
1997	Gordon A. Glover Robert E. Selwyn M.J. Wyatt
1996	Steven A. Holland Stephen D. Reese Danny Wendell
1995	Sarah Booth Conroy, W. Lawrence Patrick
1994	Anne Holt Dwayne Summar Bruce Vanden Bergh

ADVERTISING

Year	Recipient
2019	Leslie Osborne ('97)
2018	Curtis Rose ('03)
2017	Erin Hauck ('07)
2016	Erik Izo ('87)
2015	Adam Brown ('94)
2014	Dana McCullough ('95)
2013	Kevin Kirksey ('98)

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Year	Recipient
2019	Graham Thomas ('08)
2018	Heather Fasano (MS '15, BA '12)
2017	Amy Harp Donahue (MS '11, BA '09)
2016	Tiffany M. Haverly ('08)
2015	Elizabeth Clement Webb ('03)
2014	Tyler Summitt ('13)
2013	Dean Rice ('94)

INFORMATION SCIENCES

Year	Recipient
2019	Zoe Hoyle (MS '94)
2018	Sandra Treadway, PhD (MS '07)
2017	Kendra Albright (PhD '02, MS '85)
2016	Gloria Sharrar (MS '82)
2015	Danuta Nitecki, PhD (MS '76)
2014	Marcellus Turner (MS '88)
2013	Shali Zhang, PhD (MS '88)

JOURNALISM & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Year	Recipient
2019	Sharrie Williams
2018	Frank Gibson ('76)
2017	Steve Dean ('74)
2016	Knight Stivender ('99)
2015	Tori Blase ('93)
2014	Viola Gienger ('84)
2013	Dean Littleton ('92)

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Year	Recipient
2019	Ed Patterson ('89)
2018	Rebecca Huckaby (MS '03)
2017	Kellie Davie ('11)
2016	Tiffany Utsman Carpenter ('96)
2015	Ellen Liston ('84)
2014	Isaac Wright ('03)
2013	Mary Beth West ('94)

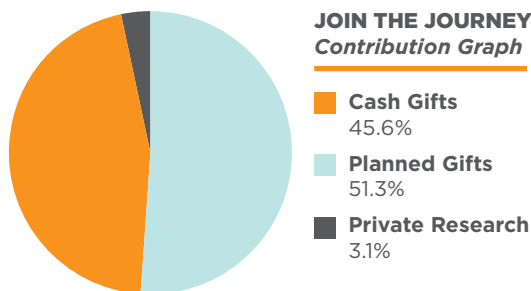
Thank you!

On behalf of the College of Communication and Information and Dean Wirth, we would like to thank all of CCI's generous supporters during the Join the Journey campaign. We started the campaign with a goal of \$15 million. Thanks to the support of over 4,000 of our great CCI alumni and friends, we were able to raise \$22.4 million to support our students, faculty and staff. Not only will the Join the Journey Campaign have a lasting effect on the University of Tennessee, the impact will be felt by CCI for many years to come.

Thank you to all current and former Board of Visitors members and a special thank you to the CCI campaign committee: David Bohan (Co-Chair), Missy Wallen (Co-Chair), Larry Patrick (Honorary Chair), Bonnie Carroll, Mark Geller, John Haas, Ed Ingle, Hilda Murray, Mark McNeely, James Obear, Ed Patterson, Phenise Poole, Carol Poston, Patrick Powell, John T. Williams and Dean Mike Wirth.

JOIN THE JOURNEY CAMPAIGN IMPACT

- ▶ 4,000+ donors to the campaign
- ▶ \$22.4 million raised
- ▶ 40+ endowments created
- ▶ Doubled CCI's endowment value



Manning Donates \$1 Million to Honor Haas



Legendary quarterback Peyton Manning (BA/CS '97 and an honorary member of CCI's Board of Visitors) donated \$1 million to UT to establish the John Haas Student Experiential Learning Endowment.

The gift honors John Haas, longtime director and associate professor in the School of Communication Studies. As one of Manning's professors and his UT faculty advisor, Haas played an instrumental role in Manning's college education.

"Exceptional teachers transform your way of learning by challenging and motivating you while teaching more than just a subject," said Manning. "For me and so many

others, that teacher was Dr. John Haas.

"Dr. Haas' passion for his students and their success makes him one of those remarkable teachers who change how you experience the classroom. I'm very proud to establish the John Haas Student Experiential Learning Endowment in his honor."

The endowment supports student trips, study abroad learning, internships, and other opportunities for students in the Communication Studies program to grow and develop outside the classroom.

Following the announcement of the endowment, Haas was both surprised and honored by Manning's gift as it was given to him during a faculty retreat.

"Students learn so much outside the classroom and the experiences they have change their views of the world," said Haas. "These experiences are key to getting them ready for success and this gift reflects Peyton's commitment to educational experiences for our students. His pursuit of excellence has also inspired me. He's served as an example for all of us."

Haas joined UT in 1989 and his research has appeared in many academic journals. In addition, Haas has served as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on research grants from agencies such as the US Department of Energy, the US Department of Agriculture, and the Engineering Information Foundation.

Manning, who graduated from UT in 1997 after leading the Vols to an SEC championship and enjoyed a storied NFL career, remains steadfast in his dedication to the Volunteer community, providing opportunities for the next generation of students.



CIRCLE PARK SOCIETY

\$100K+ Lifetime Giving

Cathy Ackermann
Frank Ahlgren
BB&T
Tom and Diane Ballard
Dr. Ben Bates
Karl & Madira Bickel
Karl A. Bickel Charitable Trust
David & Linda Bohan
Kenneth & Francis Bomar
Tutt & Elizabeth Bradford
Adam Brown
Bonnie Carroll & Roy Cooper
Amy Corn
Jacqueline & Steven Cavnar
Myron & Josephine Chambers
Frank & Betsy Costa
Dialog Corporation
Elsevier
Judy Flanagan
Stephanie Frazier & Ruth Heyd
Chris & Jennifer Grabenstein

Drs. John & Cynthia Haas
Kenneth & Dianne Hamrick
Tom & Julia Hill
Mary & Raymond Holton
Hugh Hefner Foundation
Iavo Research and Scientific
Ed & Arezu Ingle
Barbara Goddard Johnstone
Chuck & Aprill Jones
Drs. Faye & WJ Julian
Stephen & Nancy Land
Wallene & Thomas Leek
Leslie Linebaugh
Peyton Manning
Suzanne Masters
Edward Meeman
Hilda & Lee Murray
Nashville Banner
Randy & Glenda Neely
Richard & Suzanne Ott
Dr. Larry & Susan Patrick

Carol Poston
Jane & Richard Ray
Janis & Dr. Bruce Robinson
Salesforce Foundation
Scripps Howard Foundation
Gloria & Dave Sharrar
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Ed & Donna Spray
Dwayne Summar
Tennessee Press Association Foundation
Drs. Carol Tenopir & Gerald Lundeen
Tombras Advertising
Jana Meagher Von Bramer
Missy & Joe Wallen
Whittle Communications
John & Patty Williams
Alan & Wendy Wilson
WIVK AM-FM
Deb Woolley

BICKEL SOCIETY

\$25K - \$99K Lifetime Giving

Dr. Neil Adamson
AEJMC Publications
James Armistead
Susan & John Barnes
Anne Holt & Kenny Blackburn
William & Martha Boals
Karen & Fred Buchsbaum
Alan Carmichael & Cynthia Moxley
Melissa Carter
Justin Clark
Coca-Cola Foundation
Jeff & Lissa Copeskey
Danny Dance
Phil Dance
Kay Dempsey
Educational Media Group
Dr. Mickie Edwardson
Ethics & Excellence Journalism Fdn.
ExxonMobil Foundation
Dr. Mark & Sherry Finchum
Freedom Forum
Alan & Joy Greenberg
Roger Harb
Alisa Harrison
Tonya & Charles Holmes
Information Access Company
Karen Isaac
Sharon Price John

Kellogg Company
Don King & Dr. Jose-Marie Griffiths
Knoxville Ad Federation
Knoxville News Sentinel
Austin Whitfield Lee III
Paul Lyle
Karen Maier
McCormick Foundation
Shelley McCoy
Wanda McMahan
Drs. Sally McMillan & James Fields
Mark & Janis McNeely
Memphis Commercial Appeal
Microsoft Corporation
Suzanne Molley
Jim & Wendy Norvelle
Dr. Danuta Nitecki
Edward Parker
Travis Parman
Patrick Communications
Ed Patterson
Sandra Plant
Alexia & Charley Poe
Phenise Poole
Eva Posner
Cecelia Prewett & Will Nuckols
Sammie Lynn & Eugene Puett
Betty & John Randt

Claude & Mary Reeder
Rex & Theresa Repass
Kathryn Rouse
Scripps Financial Service Ctr.
Scripps Networks Interactive
Tim & Carri Sellers
Susan & Paul Siler
Steve Slagle
Laura Arnett & Jeffrey Smith
Society of Professional Journalists
Avron & Daisy Spiro
Steve & Shelley Spiro
Sylvia & Col. Harvey Sproul
Drs. Maureen Taylor & Michael Kent
Charlie Tombras
Willis Tucker
Georgiana Vines
WBIR-TV
Mary Beth & Charles West
Jerry and Sandra Whitener
John Noble Wilford
H. W. Wilson Foundation, Inc.
Estate of John C. Winslow
Dr. Mike & Alice Wirth
Christopher Wohlwend
Isaac Wright



FRANK ALGREN SOCIETY

\$5K - ABOVE (July 1, 2019 - July 30, 2020)

American Library Association
Bandit Lites
David & Linda Bohan
Jeff & Monica Boyd
Adam Brown
Bonnie Carroll & Roy Cooper
Jeff & Lissa Copeskey
Patricia Edmonds
ExxonMobil Foundation
Stephanie Frazier & Ruth Heyd
Drs. John & Cynthia Haas
Tonya & Charles Holmes

Ed & Arezu Ingle
Karen Isaac
Chuck & Aprill Jones
Stephen & Nancy Land
Wallene & Thomas Leek
Karen Maier & Delane Starliper
Hilda & Lee Murray
Randy & Glenda Neely
New York Life Foundation
Danuta Nitecki
Daniel & Melanie Peterson
Alexia & Charley Poe

Cecelia Prewett & Will Nuckols
Rex & Theresa Repass
Salesforce Foundation
Tim & Carri Sellers
Drs. Carol Tenopir & Gerald Lundeen
Tombras Advertising
John & Patty Williams
Estate of John C. Winslow
Dr. Mike & Alice Wirth
Deb Woolley

1969 SOCIETY

\$2.5K - \$4.9K (July 1, 2019 - July 30, 2020)

Neil & Lisa Adamson
Jerry & Karen Ehrlich
James & Charlene Fitzwater
Chris & Jennifer Grabenstein

Jim & Natalie Haslam
Dr. Diane Kelly
Leslie & Charles Osborne
Phenise Poole

Jeffrey & Sherri Robinson
Suzanne Shelton
Sylvia & Col. Harvey Sproul

CCI LEADERSHIP SOCIETY

\$1K - \$2.4K (July 1, 2019 - July 30, 2020)

Anne & Kenny Blackburn
Alan Carmichael & Cynthia Moxley
Dan & Nora Conaway
Frank & Betsy Costa
Dominion Foundation
Kathy Goldstein
Alisa Harrison
Alexandria Gabrell
Clay & Debbie Jones

Dr. Mark & Peggy Littmann
Dr. Robert & Kate Lochte
David & Lisa Mould
Whitney Nicely
Jim & Wendy Norvelle
Julia & Michael Rafter
Jimmy Rayburn
Donald Reynolds Jr.
Kathryn Rouse

Tiffani Saxton
Gloria & Dave Sharrar
Nadeem Siddiqi
Mahasti Vafaie & Scott Partin
Dr. Pat Wirth
Isaac Wright
Dr. Shali Zhang

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION**

1345 Circle Park Drive
Knoxville, TN 37996-0332
Phone: 865-974-3031

Email: cci@utk.edu
Website: cci.utk.edu
Twitter & Instagram: @utccci

