

The Journalist

October 2004
Issue 2

Journalism Department Newsletter for Majors

Mike Cowling, the newest inductee in the Journalism Alumni Hall of Fame

By Cassie Fifer

Devoting his life to journalism is something that Mike Cowling has never thought twice about; therefore, no one was surprised when Cowling was inducted into the Journalism Alumni Hall of Fame.

According to John Ryan, chair of the selection committee, "He was very good, very conscientious and was very dedicated...." Ryan got to see first hand how devoted Cowling was to journalism because he went to school with him.

Cowling broke into the newspaper business when he was in high school. He worked for his hometown newspaper in Mt. Carmel. "I wrote sports, covering little league games and realized back then that I had a knack for it," he said.

"I was a journalism minor because they didn't actually make this a major until I was a junior or senior. I had enough credit from both that I decided I would double major in history and journalism," he said.

At Eastern, he was editor of The Daily Eastern News for a semester, worked as a sports editor for the Warbler for a year and during his summers, he went back home and worked for the same newspaper in Mt. Carmel that he covered sports for in high school.

After leaving Eastern, he earned his master's in journalism at the University of Illinois, but no school will be as dear to Cowling as his alma mater, Eastern.

"EIU has been very influential in my career and I have a very close relationship with the journalism department still to this day," Cowling said.

Originally, when Cowling was looking at colleges he was unsure if he could come to Eastern because of costs. But Dan Thornburgh solved this problem.

"He took a chance on me, showed



Dr. Les Hyder welcomes Mike Cowling to the Journalism Alumni Hall of Fame on Wednesday Oct. 13. Cowling spoke to a group of alumni, students and faculty about his career in the journalism field at the induction in Buzzard Auditorium.

Photo by Doug Lawhead

confidence in me and helped me get into this program with financial assistance," Cowling said. Since that day many years ago, he has believed that it was people like Thornburgh and this university that made a positive difference in his life.

Cowling has been very helpful in giving back to Eastern. He provided the initial donation for the David Reed scholarship and makes contributions to the Dan Thornburgh endowment. "I owe something to a department like this that gave me chance," Cowling said.

Alumni, faculty members, students or others who have worked with a prospective honoree submit nominations for this annual award. A committee of journalism faculty members makes the selection. The main things the committee consider are the nominees' long-time professional experiences and achievements; as well as, his or her contributions to society.

Lori Miller Drummond, who was also an announced honoree, will be inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame when attending the Student Publication Banquet in the spring. Her mother, Beverly Miller, accepted her plaque in her absence, Oct. 13.

Things to know about Mike Cowling:

- Teaches media ethics and editing, and also has taught news writing, reporting and feature writing for the past ten years as an associate professor in the Department of Journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.
- Was the executive secretary of the Northeastern Wisconsin Scholastic Press Association, an organization for high school journalism students.
- Taught part time at California State University-Fullerton and at Cal Poly-Pomona.

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Cowling (continued from page 1)

- Worked during the summers from 1997 through 2004 as a copy editor on either the National desk or the Foreign desk at The New York Times, and for the past five years, worked as an editor for The New York Times on the Web, reading section fronts five nights a week.
- Worked eight years as a national news editor at the Los Angeles Times, and for three years as a copy editor at the Chicago Sun-Times.
- Has worked as an editor or reporter at five other newspapers in Illinois.
- Cowling has also conducted editing and ethics workshops or served as a writing coach for newspapers and news organizations across the country, including The Boston Globe, the Oklahoman in Oklahoma City, The

Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer, the Wichita Eagle, the Belleville (Ill.) News-Democrat, the Lafayette (La.) Advertiser, the American Press Institute, the Illinois Press Association, the Virginia Press Association and the Wisconsin Press Association.

- His free-lance articles and essays have appeared in the Los Angeles Times, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Editor & Publisher magazine, the Journal of Mass Media Ethics, and Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly. He also has written a column titled "Writing With Precision," for Publishers' Auxiliary, and has done training videos on writing creative headlines and improving lifestyle copy for the Newspaper Satellite Network, based in Dallas.



Mike Cowling and Mrs. Beverly Miller, Lori Miller's mother, show off the awards. Lori will be inducted in the Alumni Hall of Fame this spring.

Photo by Doug Lawhead

Poulter awarded for excellence in technology

By Ashley Walz

"Technology, when used well, can really enhance the classroom and help students. Technology used well can accomplish a lot," said Professor Brian Poulter.

Poulter was recognized for his "excellence in the use of technology" by the Center for Academic Technology Support (CATS).

According to Dr. Michael Hoadley, assistant vice-president for Academic Affairs for Technology, "Those faculty members utilize technology to help

"Technology, when used well, can really enhance the classroom and help students."

- Brian Poulter

Eastern Illinois University move ahead with its academic mission through instruction, research and service. Ultimately, the benefits are experienced by students, faculty and the university community as a whole."

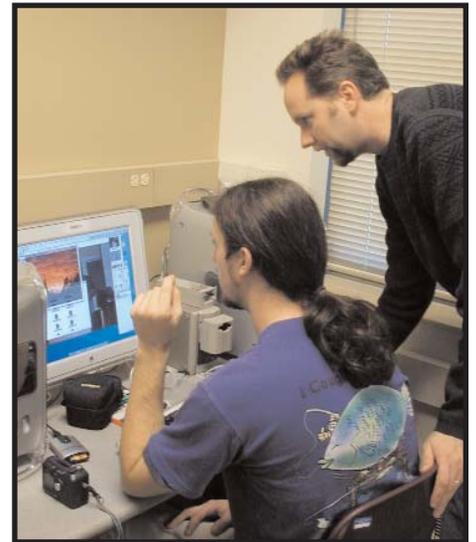
Each of the four colleges established their own criteria and nominated individuals. Once the four finalists were chosen, the names were forwarded to Hoadley and then recognized at the second annual Technology Day on September 23.

"Our goal at CATS is to keep recognizing faculty each year through this award because it sends a very strong message that EIU is committed to providing the best learning environment for our students," Hoadley said.

Poulter integrates technology into his classes by utilizing computers, software and digital cameras. He has recently co-authored news writing simulations in movie form using Quicktime Virtual Reality. This allows students to meet with virtual news sources to practice writing and research skills.

The journalism department doesn't really have a choice when it comes to keeping up-to-date with technology, explains Poulter. "Our industry has to stay current with technology to succeed."

"Technology is just a tool," he adds. Computers, software and digital cameras are all simply tools to be used. "You can't just have technology. You must use it well for it to make a difference," Poulter said.



Professor Brian Poulter helps his students to better understand the technology available.

Agency archive photo

"Brian Poulter is an excellent example of a faculty member who effectively incorporates technology into the journalism curriculum," Hoadley said.

Watch for a profile of new journalism faculty member Dr. Sally Turner in the next issue!

WEIU-TV: A chance for students to work in broadcast

By Jeffrey Tischhauser

Eastern Illinois University offers students a variety of opportunities to establish their ambitious avenue for early success. Students interested in careers in broadcast are no different.

WEIU-TV is open to all students, regardless of their major. WEIU offers students opportunities behind the scenes and in front of the camera. Students interested in working in front of the camera are required to meet some prerequisites. An on-air position is competitive, but can be achieved through work. However, any student can help behind the scenes right away.

"Just show up. The first day we let the students observe, we ask them their interests and fit them in. We are always looking for help," said Jared Brooks, WEIU sports producer.

Students learn how to write for news broadcast, how to use the equipment and all other fine points of broadcasting for news and programs provided by WEIU.

WEIU news is shown Monday through Friday at 5:30 p.m.

"There are strict deadlines. Students must meet them," said Kelly Runyon, WEIU news director. "That is the only catch; students can miss a deadline only once."

"It is vital to the station that all deadlines be met. Working with such deadlines will only enhance a student's experience," Brooks said.

WEIU provides students real world pressure that cannot be found in the classroom. WEIU.net, the station's website, is a valuable resource for students considering media broadcast. The website explains that WEIU is "deeply committed to paraprofessional preparation of students seeking degrees leading to careers in broadcast."

WEIU broadcasts to 12 counties: Champaign, Clark, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Jasper, Moultrie, Piatt and Shelby..



Tiffany Swiderek, senior communications studies major, works for WEIU-TV.

Photo by Jeff Tischhauser

"It's more than the classroom. It prepares you for work better than what you learn in the classroom," Brooks said.

The WEIU-TV office is located in Buzzard Hall. Any interested students are welcome to walk right in.

WEIU-TV wins Silver Dome Award second year in a row

By Sara Wagoner

For the second straight year, WEIU Newswatch has won first place at the Illinois Broadcasters Association Conference. Eastern won first place for best student newscast in the state, as well as first place for best website.

The conference, which was held in Bloomington, featured keynote speaker Larry Smith of CNN Headline News. Smith is also an Eastern alumnus.

News Director Kelly Runyon said the awards are fantastic. "Fantastic for the station and fantastic for the students who work so hard," Runyon said.

Although this is the second straight year Eastern has won the Silver Dome award, Runyon said that winning is not the goal, "Our goal isn't to win awards; it is to produce a topnotch broadcast each night."

Eastern defeated Southern and



The WEIU-TV news team: (from left) Patrick Comerford, Whitney Self, Jared Brooks, Lea Erwin, Blake Wood, Amanda Zeman, Brandi McDonnald and Brian Hajik. WEIU-TV photo

Northern Illinois Universities, Bradley, Illinois State and others.

Whitney Self, who has worked at the station for three years now, says it is quite

an accomplishment to beat SIU two years in a row because SIU is the station's biggest competition.

Webcast in Buzzard focuses on new technologies

By Jeffrey Tischauser

The webcast in the Buzzard auditorium, Oct. 5, focused on the impact of new technologies and media on the November 2 presidential elections.

Journalism professor Sally Turner was the coordinator of the webcast for Eastern. Her diligent work allowed students to witness the height of media technology.

Jason McCabe, co-founder of Weblogs Inc. hosted the webcast. The featured discussion leaders came from a variety of backgrounds. Mediacycenter.org gave background information regarding the panel and the purpose of the webcast.

The website suggested that political parties, advocacy groups and others are empowered to get their message out—to motivate action, debate, fund raising and voting through the Internet.

The panel discussed the positives and negatives of using the Internet for that purpose.

In addition, the panel discussed how user attitudes and behaviors, combined with technology, create new avenues for sharing information. The panel, led by Dan Froomkin, WashingtonPost.com, responded saying that blogs (web logs) are one way people are getting additional first-hand information. A blog is an online log that can be created by anyone and can cover any topic. For example, Senator John Kerry and President George W. Bush employ bloggers to follow their respective campaign trails. However, Froomkin asserted that readers must be leary of blogs because they are often one-sided.

A debate then emerged. Jehmu Greene, president of Rock the Vote, insisted that mass media's checkered relationship to their viewers have driven the demand for these additional sources of news. Greene stated that, "If Americans

trusted mass media, they wouldn't go searching for news on the Internet." A debate ensued regarding the truthfulness of the mass media. Froomkin responded awkwardly. He stated that as a columnist he is able to express his opinions, "In that sense, I am similar to a blogger," he said. Questions of why he would support his competition by comparing his work to bloggers were left unanswered.

Retha Hill, vice president of content development for BET.com, assailed the mass media for not being fair to the American public. She stated that media companies were competing with each other, which cause companies to try and outdo each other, sometimes using exaggerated or bad reports to create shock value. She cited Dan Rather's ordeal as an example. Hill asserted that such practices must cease or media companies would forever lose their viewers to the Internet or newspapers.

"People are becoming disenfranchised with main stream media. Blogs are taking advantage of that," said Jonathan Bullington, junior journalism major.

Stephen Bromberg, executive editor of FoxNews.com, who attended the webcast, answered questions regarding the conservative nature of Fox News. "I represent FoxNews.com...we strive to bring balance to our news," said Bromberg. Fox News is frequently attacked for being unfair and filling its station with conservative propaganda.

Mediacycenter.org affirms that the Internet allows voters to react to current events, to report and distribute new information and to share and debate their opinions as never before. The panel maintained that because voters have the additional resource of the Internet, the presidential election of 2004 should have the most informed voters of any election.

During the webcast, McCabe posed

survey questions to his audience and the results were answered and posted quickly. McCabe asked the audience whether or not they felt informed enough to make a good selection for president. Almost ninety percent said that they felt they could make an informed decision.

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The Agency is a student-run public relations organization. Anyone is welcome to join. Meetings are held every Wednesday from 4-6 p.m. in Buzzard Hall, room 2436