



The 2005 Class

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The Honorees



Mary Butler

**Reporter,
Managing Editor,
Editor in Chief**

Class of 1985

Perhaps no other Star graduate can better counsel fellow alumni on what to buy – and why – than Mary Butler.

Mary, who graduated in December 1985 after guiding the newspaper through the tumultuous spring semester that year, has devoted her professional career to consumer journalism.

She started at Consumers Digest in Chicago, where she stayed until 1997 and rose to senior Internet editor. She also spent five years learning personal finance while writing for the company's "Your Money" magazine. More recently, she helped to launch cars.com. The job also meant answering – in addition to asking – questions about what shoppers should know when buying cars.

In December, Mary moved to New York City to become autos editor for Forbes.com. The new Web site goes live later this year.

"With the way we're able to deliver information, the feedback is instantaneous," she says. "If you're doing something wrong, you know it immediately."

The Chicago native came to NIU after earning her associate's degree at Moraine Valley Community College. She felt the tug of news-editorial after one semester in the advertising/public relations track, joining the Star in January 1984.

"I always wanted a career as a writer and, also being an inquisitive person, I thought that any job where you can get paid to ask people a lot of questions was attractive," she says. "What really impacted me at the Star was the hands-on approach. I've hired interns from a number of other college newspapers, and I've noted that a lot of those students didn't really have the aggressiveness in terms of reporting and tracking stories down and doing primary research, which I find is key to succeeding at this career."

When part of the Star's staff walked out in fall 1984, Mary was the managing editor. It fell to her that next semester to mend fences and lead the march forward.

"It wasn't enjoyable," she says, "but it was the best preparation in dealing with different people. When you're working in the publishing environment, people tend to be very passionate about what they're doing. This is beyond an 8-to-5 job. This is beyond a paycheck. The conflicts can become quite emotional."

Mary's husband, David Tainer, who teaches in the computer science department at DePaul University, will join her soon in Manhattan. Her move also meant the end of 10 years of dedicated service to the Northern Star as a member of the publication board.

- Mark McGowan, '92

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Shelley Epstein

**Sports Writer /
Editor, News
Editor, Managing
Editor**

Class of 1974

In a profession where people move around a lot, Shelley Epstein found a home and stayed put. And for that, Peoria is a better place.

After reporting and editing for the Peoria Journal Star since 1974, Shelley in 1990 became associate editor for the paper's editorial page – a page readers look to for guidance.

"Because he knows so much about the Peoria area, and because he cares about it, his editorials communicate a sense of interest, concern – and outrage," says Barb Mantz Drake, editorial page editor. "However, his greatest contribution stems from the fact that he is an old-school journalist, an editorial writer who in his heart is still a reporter, who brings an appreciation of hard news and a personal integrity with him to the office every day."

Shelley also writes as one who has put down deep roots in Peoria for three-plus decades.

"They've been pretty good to me," he says. "Peoria is a nice place to raise a family.

My wife (Marianne) got a teaching job here. A few years later she was pregnant and then one kid, two kids, three kids and all of a sudden it's 30 years later."

Journal Star Publisher John McConnell also is glad Shelley elected to stay.

"His interviewing skills, particularly with visiting politicians, are second to none," McConnell says, "and his writing and editing skills have helped make our editorial page one of the best in the region."

The Chicago north-side native looks back on his days at the Northern Star as what instilled his love for journalism. "I think I got into the business, besides liking it, for altruistic reasons," Shelley says. "You want to make an impact. Telling people things they need to know and should know – what the government is doing to them or for them – I believed in that then and I believe in that now."

That outlook germinated at NIU, where Shelley showed up with no idea what he wanted to do with his life. His sophomore year, he tried two classes he thought looked interesting: accounting and intro to mass media. He'd drop accounting, but the media class, taught by Avi Bass, struck a chord. A friend on his dorm floor, Star Sports Editor Gary Benson, offered Shelley a job. He wound up working both sports and news at the Star, and realized he'd found his calling.

Through the years, Shelley hasn't forgotten his debt to college media. He's taught at Bradley University and worked with journalists at several student newspapers, including the Star. He even served as the unofficial, long-distance adviser for the newspaper at Emory University in Atlanta when his son, Reid, was editor.

- Jim Killam

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Bruce Gill

**Reporter, Political
Editor, News
Editor, Editorial
Editor,
Investigative
Reporter**

Class of 1973

For most movie fans, 1983's "Wargames" posed merely a fun way to devour two hours and some popcorn.

But for Bruce Gill, a 1973 Star alum and 1972's "Best Damned Reporter," the tale of a teen techie who hacks into federal government computers and triggers a nuclear scare is not science fiction.

"Right around the time the movie was out, we had a real-life example in Milwaukee. A group of teens used their home computer to break into Department of Defense computers in Los Alamos, N.M.," Bruce says. "They didn't cause any damage, but the

very fact that they were able to do so caused international interest. I was interviewed by people all over the world. I was on the CBS Morning News with Diane Sawyer."

Outside that momentary global spotlight, Bruce has concentrated his newspaper career in DeKalb, Decatur and Milwaukee, his home for 25 years. He is senior editor/suburban news at the Journal-Sentinel, leading about 30 reporters and editors.

He enrolled at NIU in 1969, joining the Star in 1971. He was a student of Roy Campbell's when the Star adviser died.

"I really learned what the business was all about: deadlines, deadline pressure, being a watchdog, fighting for page-one stories," Bruce says.

"During the spring of 1972, I traveled with George McGovern through Illinois. It was basically just me and a Washington Post reporter," he adds. "Later that summer, I went to the Democratic National Convention. It was a spectacular experience, and I've not been to a convention since. McGovern gave his acceptance speech at 2 or 3 in the morning, and the Star was probably one of the few papers to have the story the next day."

Bruce also uncovered NIU professors who included books they had written among required texts, pocketing easy royalties.

He later became a teacher himself, grooming Marquette University journalism students for 16 years.

"He has passed along the same lessons of gritty reporting, fairness, accuracy and integrity he learned first from Roy Campbell and later from Jerry Thompson," classmate Rick Davis says. "No journalist with whom I have worked is more dedicated to (those) traditional journalistic principles."

Bruce and his wife, Sue, are the parents of Jennifer (Dave) Stell and Amy (Mark) Arnholt and the grandparents of four.

-- Mark McGowan, '92

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Jim Murphy

**Advertising
Account
Executive,
Advertising
Manager**

Class of 1993

Single male. Enjoys traveling, reading and spending time with his 14 nieces and nephews. Big Cubs fan. Runs the Chicago sales office for the Internet's leading global consumer and business services company.

And yet for some reason, the Northern Star initially didn't want him.

"I was passed over," said Jim Murphy, who today leads the Chicago sales office for Yahoo! Inc. "I got a phone call from the incoming manager, Dave Oliveira, telling me that I was not what they were looking for."

Luckily for Jim, an opportunity to join the Star did eventually open for him during the summer.

Jim was popular and well-known in DeKalb.

"He was 'the mayor' and everyone knew him," Oliveria says. "There wasn't a place he could walk into where they wouldn't shout 'Murph' when he entered the room."

He was also a great friend and boss.

"He is so easygoing and fun to be around both as a friend and manager," says Kelly Kniewel, who worked for Jim as an advertising representative. "Management is almost second nature to him."

After graduating with a B.S. in marketing, Jim got his first job with a small information services company. A year later he landed his dream job with the Chicago Tribune. That was, of course, after his car broke down on the way to the interview. While Jim was able to convince a state trooper to drive him to the Tribune's office and get the dispatcher to contact the interviewer to let her know he would be late, the dispatcher ended up leaving a vague voice mail message saying Jim had been "detained" by the Illinois State Police.

"When I got there the interviewer was laughing her head off," he said. "She honestly thought I had been arrested for a DUI or for running someone over."

Despite all that, Jim was offered a job that night. He spent his first two years selling entertainment and retail advertising, helping develop products like chicagotribune.com and metromix.com. He also ran a sales team that called on local retailers and classified advertisers.

After five years at Tribune Company, Jim was hired by Yahoo! Inc. in 1999 and has built partnerships with companies like State Farm, Discover Card and Miller Brewing.

"I got in early enough to experience the bubble, the bust and the rebuild," Jim says.

Today, Jim has become a patron saint of the Star advertising department.

"He's always there when we need him"" said Business Adviser Maria Krull. "Jim has a heart of gold."

- Mike Runestad '05

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Chuck Shriver

**Reporter,
News Editor**

Class of 1962

Chuck Shriver rates as a sort of Forrest Gump of the media world. Sure, he's a talented journalist. But this farm kid from Marengo, Ill., also had a knack for being in the right place at the right time.

As an NIU journalism major, Chuck worked first for the yearbook and then as a reporter and later news editor for the Northern Star. He was interested in radio news, too, working for DeKalb's WLBK. The station owner's connections to WLS in Chicago helped Chuck land a summer job there. That boosted him, after graduation, to a full-time news-writing job at WGN Radio. WGN radio and TV shared the same building in those days, so Chuck was in the right place to be offered a spot as producer for the late-night news telecast, "Night Beat."

His biggest break came in 1967, when Chuck was filling in for a WGN-TV sports producer for Cubs broadcast legend and WGN sports director Jack Brickhouse. Brickhouse liked Chuck's work and offered him a permanent job in the sports department. The station's identity with the Cubs helped Chuck build a good reputation with the team's front office. Brickhouse asked him one day if he'd be interested in a new position the Cubs were creating: public relations director.

Thus launched a PR career that included 10 years (1967-76) with the Cubs and seven more in two stints (1977-78, 1980-84) with the White Sox. With the Cubs, Chuck answered for fiery manager Leo Durocher. With the Sox, he reported to legendary baseball showman Bill Veeck.

One Sox promotion worked a little too well: Disco Demolition Night featuring an upstart Chicago deejay named Steve Dahl. Fans rioted, tore up the field and the Sox had to forfeit Game Two of a doubleheader.

"We had no clue how popular Steve Dahl was among teenagers," Chuck says. "It got out of hand and we weren't prepared for the number of people who turned out. ... Maybe if we'd had a teenager working for us..."

Chuck held a couple of other front-office jobs in the 1970s and '80s, with the ABA San Diego Sails, the Women's Pro Basketball League's Chicago Hustle, soccer's Chicago Sting, even associate athletic director for marketing at NIU from 1985-88.

In 1988, Chuck embarked on yet another new career, as a copy editor for the Daily Herald. He'd stay longer there than at any other job before retiring in 2003.

"I was set for a radio journalism career, and this all came kind of by accident," he says. "In a very roundabout way, I wound up working in the field I started out in."

- Jim Killam



Jan Touney

**Copy Editor,
Reporter,
Assistant
Managing Editor,
Editorial Editor,
Editor**

Class of 1975

Jan (Gilarski) Touney got a lot out of her time at the Northern Star – she even found her husband, Tom, there.

“Tom worked in production,” Jan says. “We met sophomore year, started dating, and now we’ve been married 28 years. The Star offers a lot of opportunities, professionally and personally.”

Jan started working as a copy editor her first year of college, eventually moving up through the ranks to become editor in chief her final year.

During that year, the Star filed a lawsuit against the university to open a Budget Advisory Committee meeting that was scheduled to talk about possible cuts to faculty and staff. It eventually succeeded in an out-of-court settlement.

After earning her bachelor’s degree in 1975, Jan started working for the Herald & Review in Decatur, Ill. She covered Pope John Paul’s visit to Denver in 1993 and directed coverage of back-to-back tornadoes that hit Decatur in 1997.

Dave Dawson, the managing editor for the Herald & Review, says Jan always had the respect of not only the people she directly supervised, but also the people who worked over her and with her.

“She has a real spirit of getting things done, and not letting things get in her way,” Dawson says. “And she can be driven without being overbearing. I’m not sure I’ve worked with anyone I respected more or enjoyed working with more.”

Jan left the Herald & Review as associate editor, and moved to Iowa to become managing editor of the Quad-City Times in Davenport. Despite her ascension through the ranks, she hasn’t lost touch with the foundations of journalism.

“I will drop anything if a reporter wants to come in my office and talk stories,” she says.

She coordinated a project, “From Iraq to Iowa,” which looked at the impact of the Iraq war on communities across Iowa in March 2004. Jan also has trained and developed curriculum for assignment editors.

Jan said her time at the Northern Star is what stands out in her mind when thinking

about college. In addition to her husband, she remains in contact with 20 to 25 people she met while working at the college paper. Bruce Gill's daughter was the flower girl in Jan and Tom's wedding.

"The Star is more than a newspaper," she said. "What stands out the most is the teamwork and good journalism."

- Jessica King '06

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H. Dean White

**Circulation
Manager**

Class of 1988

Where can one learn to appreciate newspapers, make a career out of it and gain a profound respect for the First Amendment? Dean White got all of that from his first job at the Star — delivering newspapers.

Dean always has enjoyed being associated with a recognizable organization, one that is part of people's lives. That's why in 1985, while at NIU, he joined the Northern Star and quickly became the circulation manager. "I loved it," he says. "It was a terrific experience. I learned a lot."

Jim Harty, Dean's friend since college, still can picture Dean on the job:

"I vividly remember one early morning in downtown DeKalb seeing the Star van flying around the corner on two wheels, stopping suddenly and two guys laughing, getting out in unison carrying bundles of papers and delivering them to businesses, getting back in the van and repeating the sequence with almost military precision. That was Dean's managing style at work - organization, fun and efficiency."

Dean learned to understand and appreciate the First Amendment and the importance of press freedom during the Northern Star struggle with then-NIU president Clyde Wingfield.

After graduating from NIU in 1988 with a degree in management, Dean joined the Chicago Tribune circulation department. During his five years there, he held eight positions and was promoted approximately every nine months. He was Single Copy Manager before relocating to Las Vegas in 1993. Dean started at the Las Vegas Review-Journal as the Home Delivery Manager, was promoted to Circulation Manager and, in 2004, became the Director of Marketing and Promotions.

His friends think he is "major" fun loving, constantly on a learning mode and hard working to improve his and other peoples' lives. He describes himself "tenacious"

although mellowing with maturity.

Dean holds an MBA from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and is a 2003 graduate of the Advanced Executive Program for Media Executives at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. He has started and is active in the NIU Alumni Las Vegas Chapter. Dean loves bicycling and has participated in many fundraising rides for organizations like AIDS and MS.

In his friend Jim Harty's words, "Deano has a tremendous amount of energy, is intense, very outgoing, absolutely loyal and unbelievable as it sounds never drank while in college."

- Maria Krull

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Tom Woodstrup

**Proof Reader,
Copy Reader,
Editor**

Class of 1949

1948 was the year NIU's fourth president, Karl Adams, died in office, and Thomas Woodstrup was invited to a reception with the family after the funeral service.

"It was quite an honor," said Woodstrup, who wrote a poem about Adams for a special issue of the Northern Illinois that commemorated his life.

Woodstrup's sensitivity aided him again during his term as editor in chief of the Northern Illinois, the predecessor to the Northern Star.

When a football player's wife gave birth, the staff offered its congratulations in a 1.5-inch story. After the paper was sent to the printer, the baby died during the night.

"I took the staff and we ran to the printer to block out the story," Woodstrup said. "You could still read it through the marker, but people understood and appreciated what we did."

Many who served under Woodstrup learned many valuable lessons from him.

"Not only was he a creative and expert editor in those early days, but he taught me all the ins and outs of editing and led me into the field of journalism," said Gordon Dahlgren, who served on the Northern Illinois staff under Woodstrup and later became an editor of the paper.

After graduating, Woodstrup had a long career that brought him back to NIU in 1966 as Director of Alumni Relations. In this new role, he oversaw the quarterly alumni

magazine and published a monthly newsletter to keep alumni informed of campus news. He also began the first national alumni clubs and created the first commercially published alumni directory.

Woodstrup also had the experience of being on the other side of the reporting process and was occasionally interviewed by the newspaper he once led.

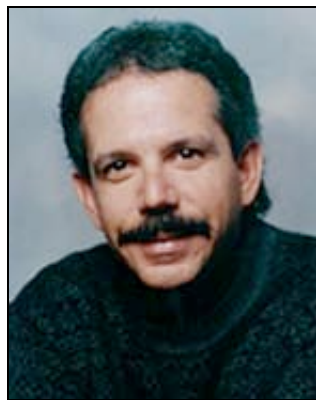
"I always gave them more information than they wanted," said Woodstrup, after commenting that the more information he gave a reporter, the shorter the stories appeared to be.

After leaving NIU, Woodstrup stayed involved in the DeKalb community. He is a past president of the DeKalb County Historical Society and has just completed four years as president of the Sycamore Historical Society and Museum, an organization he founded.

"He is still very much active in the community," said Jerry Smith, fellow Hall of Fame member. "Tom has a long record of service to NIU."

- Mike Runestad '05

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Allan Zullo

**Sports Reporter,
News Editor,
Managing Editor,
Editor**

Class of 1969

Allan Zullo lives the writer's dream. He resides on a North Carolina mountain, travels the world and works about 10 months a year writing books.

Not bad for a shy kid from Rockford who once dreamed of being a sports writer. He chose NIU because of the Northern Star, and quickly caught on with the sports department, working for fellow Rockfordian Gary Watson.

After graduation, Allan spent three years reporting for the Rockford Register Republic, then did free-lance magazine writing. In 1973 he answered a blind ad in Editor & Publisher, and soon was contacted about a writing position in south Florida that paid twice what he'd made in Rockford.

"I didn't even know what the National Enquirer was. And then I said, Oh, my God ..."

Despite the tabloid's less-than-stellar reputation, Allan saw potential for it to become a cutting-edge, credible newspaper. So he entered the world of UFOs, ghost hunters, Elvis and head-transplant operations.

"Did we push the envelope?" he asks. "Absolutely. But I never once saw anyone make up a story. ... Everything you see today in the mainstream press is a direct result of what the Enquirer did in the '70s and '80s. Journalism back then was kind of stuck up. But we were writing what people wanted to read and not forcing anything on them."

The Enquirer transformation he had expected – "to become USA Today, before USA Today" – never quite happened. So, he took his interest in offbeat news to a new medium: books. In 1985, he struck gold with "The Baseball Hall of Shame," which would become an 11- book series. Seventeen publishers had rejected the idea before Simon and Schuster said yes. The series sold more than 2 million copies.

"It opened doors for me and I never looked back," Allan says. "If you believe in something, you don't let others say no." Today he's written more than 70 books, ranging from the Hall of Shame series to a kids' ghost-stories series to titles like "World's Dumbest Crooks." Lately, he's even done books for Scholastic about Holocaust children.

Much of his confidence, and passion for writing, was born at NIU and at the Northern Star. "Instructors told me, 'Write to the reader.' I took that to heart," he says. "Most of my books are light-hearted, but they are geared to a specific market – whether for golf or fishermen or grandparents or whatever. I write to them, and that's why they work."

Allan and his wife, Kathy, have been married 37 years. They have two daughters and two grandchildren.

- *Jim Killam*

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