

Commotion

The Voice of India Heard at Mary Baldwin College



Lael Adams '08 dons a traditional head scarf while studying in India.

BY LESLIE ALLIGOOD '08

Lael Adams, senior communication major, took a second service trip to India during May Term 2007 to gain further insight into the lives of Indian people for her own cultural competence as well as for her senior thesis.

During her initial adventure in 2006, Adams traveled with her sister, Nena Adams '06, and Anna Barnes

'07, as well as volunteers with Cross Cultural Solutions, a nonprofit volunteer organization founded to promote travel that encourages shared humanity, respect, and integrity. The students volunteered as English teachers in remote elementary schools in Dharmasala.

"The experience is one that affected me, being in a completely different culture," Adams said. In an excerpt from an article in the *Tryon*

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A Senior Thesis Set into Action

BY LESLIE ALLIGOOD '08

As a student, Harriet Blackwell's senior thesis and empowering personality modeled a strong voice for future MBC Squirrels. Blackwell '06 continues to be heard as she pursues a career as relationship banker for Provident Bank in her hometown of Baltimore. Blackwell earned the Senior Communication Student Excellence Award for her articulacy in the field, which was reflected in her thesis and evaluations from MBC communication professors. She was also selected for inclusion in *Who's Who Among Students at American Colleges and Universities*.

After receiving first place in paper presentations at MBC's 2006 Capstone Festival, the recent graduate

accomplished her goal of having her senior thesis, "The Invisible Damsel: The Media's Framing of Missing Black and White Women," presented at an American Studies conference in Texas. She then partnered with Dr. Mia Moody, professor of journalism at Baylor University, and Dr. Bruce Dorries, associate professor of communication at MBC, to present a revised version of the paper at the International Communication Association conference in Montreal in spring 2008. They hope the paper will be published later this year.

As the thesis title suggests, Blackwell gives voice to those that lose that ability in mass media coverage.

Blackwell's advice for MBC students: "Do not take for granted how spoiled one can become at a



Harriet Blackwell '06 continues to refine her senior thesis for presentations and publication.

place like Baldwin, where the faculty and staff make time for your individual needs, and some are willing to sit

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This issue of *Commotion* was compiled by Leslie Alligood '08, communication major. Send your news for next year's newsletter to bdorries@mbc.edu or call 540-887-7112

Voice Echoes Back to MBC

Editor's Note: *Church was one of the first MBC students to graduate with a major in communication. If you have a story to share with Commotion, please send it to bdoorries@mbc.edu.*

BY LAURA CHURCH '82

When I was a junior in high school, I began to search earnestly for the “right” college. My family had all attended University of Alabama, and I expected to follow them. I had been the editor of my high school newspaper, played three sports, was a mascot, served in student government, and liked to dabble in many projects. Because I lived in a rural town in Texas and had good board scores, Ivy League schools recruited me. My family suggested that I might thrive in a small school environment that would let me continue to dabble in many pursuits. They suggested — and I know now that they were correct — that large colleges and universities have so many people who want to be on the newspaper staff, the debate team, the radio station, the TV station, and play sports, that many try out and few are picked.

Mary Baldwin ended up being the right choice for me. Whatever I became interested in, there was a professor or advisor who would fuel my desire to learn and be right there with me as I mastered it. I attended a big university near my hometown as a high school senior; I got a taste of being a number, not a name. I didn't enjoy it.

I learned that you can set up an independent major if you want to learn something outside the parameters of a traditional major. I wanted to be a political journalist at a time when Mary Baldwin had no communication major. Another student and I designed an independent study in communication, and I was an exchange student at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, where I studied under a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. I was also a news anchor on the campus television station, did the weather, and had a radio show.

At Mary Baldwin, I continued my pursuit of communication studies. Each semester, I had at least one internship at a local television station, radio station,

or in a public relations department. I had an internship at ABC in New York. I was a media intern on Capitol Hill and assisted a press secretary. By the time I graduated, I had completed 14 internships and had a letter of recommendation from each employer. I received an offer for every position I applied for after college.

Each year, about 35 college graduates from around the country are admitted into a special graduate program for political journalists on Capitol Hill. In 1982, I was accepted into that program and returned to Washington DC. I joined an elite group that counts

“Though I was a young pup, I had a taste of the real world, thanks to that liberal arts education I received at Mary Baldwin College.”

people such as television commentator and author Ann Coulter among its graduates. I wrote papers for the Heritage Foundation, and my editors were well-known journalists.

I was chosen for a postgraduate internship with the Washington Bureau of *Reader's Digest* and continued writing and being edited by some of the nation's finest journalists. After graduate school, I landed a job as editorial assistant for Robert Novak and Rowland Evans, political journalists. Later, Novak revealed to me that they received 350 resumes for the job I was offered. What made me stand out was that by age 23 I had been challenged with opportunities rarely afforded those who attend a huge college or university. I had edited my own stories, taken and developed my own photos, interviewed criminals, chased with police behind accidents, covered

political races, met candidates (including presidential candidates), operated camera equipment, laid out newspaper pages, designed a newsletter, spoken to large groups, produced dozens of articles and press releases, and had demo tapes of my voice on radio clips and my face on TV. Though I was a young pup, I had a taste of the real world, thanks to that liberal arts education I received at Mary Baldwin College.

From Evans and Novak, I moved into media and advertising as an account executive, then manager. My love of writing and politics persisted. My last position, before choosing to stay home with children for the last 10 years, was as a federal and state lobbyist for a national health insurance company. I combined my love of marketing and politics.

My most recent involvement with politics has been as a majority clerk of elections and lobbying our state's governor as a private citizen and member of the Junior League in my area. A few years ago, I saw Robert Novak at CNN studios and he introduced me to his colleagues in the “Capitol Gang.” He asked me, while in front of them, to “make me your first call when you are ready to go back to work.” I was thrilled!

A month ago, I called one of my former employers, a magazine owner, to congratulate him on a great-looking publication. He said, “When you are ready to go back to work, just let me know.” The next day, someone from his human resources department called to offer me a job where I could set my own hours and work out of a home office. With three children, it was too good to turn down, so I started back to work. I will still work as a freelance journalist, to keep my hand in the field.

I write this because I chose a small, private, liberal arts college over a large institution. I wanted to be me. A liberal arts education teaches you to think, to reason, to pull yourself back from the situation, to view the options, and to choose the most effective and efficient way to do something. That — not my personality or wit — is the reason I've been fortunate in my career. My employers know that I wouldn't mind switching gears in my job, would gladly learn a new task, and would have a good time doing it. ▲

Lessons in Leadership

BY ROSEMARY PANTALEO '07

With her hair slicked back in a precise bun, green and brown camouflage Battle Dress Uniform (BDU), and black combat boots, Jenn Wilde '07, now serving in the Army, was an imposing figure on Mary Baldwin's campus. As the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership (VWIL) commanding officer in spring 2007, Wilde brought a no-nonsense attitude to the corps.

VWIL cadets have a strict daily schedule that includes regular attendance and leadership in parades, physical training exercises, inspections, early rises, and late bedtimes. In addition to their regular class schedules, many take honors classes and overload their credit hours.

Wilde was no exception.

The communication major led the VWIL corps while also serving as a member of Omicron Delta Kappa and Lambda Pi Eta, the Student Alumnae/i Relations Society, and the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Aviation Club. Wilde was an Honor Scholar and she was selected for *Who's Who* recognition.

The corps' commanding officer also attended, and sometimes ran, weekly VWIL staff meetings and took

classes at VMI. She was in uniform five days a week during the spring 2007 semester. That summer, Wilde traveled to Washington and Korea for Army Camp training; both of which she had been looking forward to for months. "I love traveling. I heard everything is really cheap in Korea so I took an empty suitcase with me!" she said.

Despite her rigorous schedule, Wilde found time to have fun.

She loves to run and exercise — which she did plenty of as a cadet in VWIL and now the Army. Her ability to enjoy herself and stay positive under tough circumstances earned her the admiration of many on campus, noted Dr. Bruce Dorries, chair of the communication department.

As a student, Wilde is most interested in organizational communication.

"Being in VWIL, I realized that the way that organizations are structured has a lot to do with how they communicate," Wilde noted. "VWIL is a great example of this." In keeping with this interest, Wilde wanted to study gang communication for her senior thesis project, but modified her project to look at gangster rap. Wilde continues to want to study the phenomenon of gang symbolism in



PHOTO BY BRUCE DORRIES

Jenn Wilde '07 poses in VWIL uniform in front of Kable Residence Hall.

mainstream rap and hip hop music. "I had a friend who was in a gang, and the secrecy needed for their communication is so interesting to me. It reminds me of the military in a way," she said.

After graduating in December 2007 with a BA in communication and a minor in leadership studies, Wilde said that her three-and-half years at Mary Baldwin and in VWIL proved a valuable asset to her career in the U.S. Army. "Being at Mary Baldwin, especially as a communication major, really enhanced my ability to read people and assess situations," she said. ▲



MBC communication students take a minute for a photo at NBC studios in New York City.

From MBC to NBC

BY LESLIE ALLIGOOD '08

The hills of MBC do not constrain the voices of communication students. Production students Brianna McCollum '08, Jessica Erwin '09, Ashley Fish '10, Hunter Moyé, and Nile Norris-Allen traveled to New York with the art department to experience the fast-paced environment and excitement of a major media market at NBC studios. The four-day trip was led by Communication Instructor Allan Moyé, MBC-TV faculty advisor and director of the college's communication lab.

McCollum, a teaching assistant, described the experience by saying, "The trip captured my love for television and production, and I could truly experience the reality of mass media by observing and volunteering backstage."

Students visited Times Square, Fox's *The Morning Show with Mike and Juliet*, and *Saturday Night Live* studios. They worked together to film their trip with plans to create a documentary to share the skills and talents they saw in action. ▲

ALUMNAE/I UPDATES

Lynnette Barrett '02 is an admissions representative at Florida Metropolitan University Online in Tampa, FL.

Ann Brander '06 is an environmental services supervisor at Rockingham Memorial Hospital in Harrisonburg, VA. Brander is working on a home-based business and fixing up her house. She is also planning her wedding with fiancé, Ben.

Sarah Brewer '06 plans to attend George Mason University to work on a master's degree in the areas of English, literature, and critical feminist media studies.

Antoinette Chase '04 works as a sales representative for *USA Today* in new business development advertising where she previously worked as advertising coordinator. As an MBC student, Chase earned the Hammock Award, named for former MBC Professor of Business Gordon Hammock, for mentoring and guiding fellow students. She plans to earn an MBA.

Sherry Cox '99 works in marketing for James Madison University dining services, a position she prepared for as a former employee in the MBC

Communication, Marketing, and Public Affairs office.

Marisol Euceda '04 is a media relations specialist for Project HOPE as the organization enters its 50th year. Her responsibilities include writing, learning design software, and participating in media outreach programs which include recent trips to Liberia and Nicaragua. As a student, Euceda exercised her voice through her involvement with Student Alumnae/i Relations Society, student government, *Campus Comments*, and writing for *The Mary Baldwin College Magazine* as an intern. She spoke on campus during spring semester 2008.

Laurie Frye '04 is pursuing a doctorate in instructional technology at University of Virginia. She is taking classes in instructional design, educational video production, and technology leadership. Frye continues to research digital storytelling as a literacy instructional tool, creating gender-friendly technology, and adaptive and assistive technologies.

Holly Fuqua '07 is master control operator at WCWG, a television station in Greensboro, NC. Her early career was foreshadowed by her involvement in MBC-TV as a student.

Drisana Garlington '04 and her husband, Juan, reside in Philadelphia where she worked at Villanova University as a financial assistance counselor. Garlington-Rodriguez jokes that her current "job" is studying for and taking the GRE so she can pursue a master's in counseling and human relations. She has a two-year-old daughter, Daniella.

Tierra Johnson '06 is an enrollment advisor at Walden University and lives in Baltimore.

Kathleen Leishear '05 works as a paralegal for Schlachman Belsky and Weiner, a law firm in downtown Baltimore.

Starling Crabtree Nowell '01 lives in Nashville, TN where she is employed by Regions Bank as a mortgage specialist. Nowell, her husband, Brad, and daughters Starling and Currie, look forward to a Disney family cruise.

Emily Oehler '93 joined the international consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton in its strategic communications division. Her current client is Army Long-Term Family Case Management which provides assistance to families of fallen soldiers. She oversees brand development, stakeholder relations, Web site development, public relations, and marketing. She is also president of the Junior League of northern Virginia.

Shoko Ono '07 works for Dentsu, Inc., the biggest advertising agency in Japan. As an account executive, she maintains accounts for Reckit Benckiser Japan, a consumer product company, and Calbee, a food company. Her position includes managing budgets and devising strategies based on trends and other data.

Mariana Parreiras '02 maintains a growing personal training business and writes a health column for Veet® (shaving cream). Parreiras lives in northern Virginia.

Shannon Baylis Sarino '99 is supervising editor for *The View from Ellicott City*, a newspaper in Maryland. She was a member of VWIL's first corps of cadets, served on Honor Council, and worked on *Campus Comments* and *Bluestocking*. **Cori Kasura '10** participated in a summer internship under the supervision of Sarino, where she edited and wrote for the weekly publication.

Kirsten Shields '01 is pursuing a master's degree from University of Missouri. She also works for a marketing business-to-business company.

Samantha Sprole '06 is a full time member of Twin Oaks Intentional Community in Louisa, VA. She describes it as the oldest, most successful, fully income-sharing commune in America. Sprole participated in the National Conference for Organized Resistance.

Ashlee Thomas '06 is a sales development coordinator at G&K Services in Portsmouth, VA. She plans to attend Old Dominion University to earn a master's in public administration. She also is a Girl Scout troop leader.

Lambda Pi Eta

HONOR SOCIETY FOR COMMUNICATION
2006/2007 INDUCTEES



Lambda Pi Eta inductees (l-r): Julia Cochran '07 and Rosemary Pantaleo '07

Lael Adams '08
Jessica Burley '07
Julia Cochran '07
Elizabeth Geris Sacco '09
Shoko Ono '07
Rosemary Pantaleo '07
Jennifer Wilde '08
Katherine Wood (ADP)

(NC) *Daily Bulletin* about her first trip to India, Adams wrote, "Not only did I learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of cultures in which my fellow global citizens live, but I was able to put my own Western culture into perspective."

Adams conducted interviews with dozens of Indian natives for her thesis, both at home and abroad. Her first interview was with Dr. Geeti Sen, a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at MBC. She continued her research while on her second trip to India, interviewing students age seven to 17 at a school in the southern part of the country. To add depth to her project, Adams interviewed Cross Cultural Solutions founder Steven Rosenthal and other staff at the organization. In addition to her interviews, the Lambda Pi Eta inductee shot footage in India with plans to create a documentary to encourage other students' commitment to civic and global engagement.

Adams used her communication skills to immerse herself in the understanding of cultural differences and similarities. She inquired about arranged marriages and caste systems and discovered emerging patterns and trends of the collectivistic Indian culture. Adams hopes Indians will hear their voices in her thesis, which is part of the reason she chose to collect data through interviews.

"It is important to think of ourselves as global citizens, especially as Americans who have the resources and opportunities to essentially change the world," Adams said.

Adams' passion for learning is evident in her involvement and achievements at MBC.

In 2007 she received MBC's first Global Citizenship Award and recognition in *Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities*. Adams rounds out her credentials with stints as editor and writer for the communication department newsletter *Commotion*, internships at *Filter* magazine and at Covert PR music promotions in London, and as a contributor to *Campus Comments*, the MBC student newspaper. Adams strives to make her voice heard and reminds others that MBC is "part of a bigger puzzle." ▲

CLASS of 2008

thesis titles, internships, & post-graduation plans

LAEL ADAMS

As a student, Adams was a marketing and editorial intern at *Filter* magazine in Los Angeles and at Covert PR music promotions in London. She performed community service in India in 2006 and 2007, and plans to attend graduate school.

Thesis: *Voices from India: Identity Negotiation in Cross-Cultural Adaptation*

LESLIE ALLIGOOD

Alligood edited and wrote several pieces for the communication department newsletter, *Commotion*, for 2007-08, and engaged in community service as a small group communication leader at University of Virginia Children's Hospital. She plans to pursue a career in public relations, marketing, or advertising in northern or central Virginia.

Thesis: *In Sync with Pink: A Thematic Analysis of the Persuasive Strategies in the Pink Ribbon Challenge Campaign Against Breast Cancer.*

JESSICA JARRELL

Jarrell completed an internship with MBC residence life in 2006-07 where her responsibilities included creating bulletin boards, doing paperwork, and writing articles for the department. An assistant community coordinator and peer

mentor at MBC, Jarrell hopes to work in corporate event planning or public relations in central Virginia.

Thesis: *Moms in the News: An In-Depth Analysis of Tabloid News Coverage of Celebrity Pregnancy and Motherhood.*

BRIANNA MCCOLLUM

In addition to serving as production manager for MBC-TV, McCollum worked in public relations at a 5,000-member church to create radio scripts, air live broadcasts, edit videos for ministries, and create a 10-minute segment for youth ministry. She also contacted performers and hosted an anti-violence event in Philadelphia.

Thesis: *Hip Hopera: A Thematic Analysis of the Portrayal of Black Masculinity in Hip Hop Videos and Women's Perceptions of Messages That Portray Black Masculinity.*

KARINA K. C. NGAIZA

Ngaiza interned as broadcast manager for MBC-TV and is applying for an internship in event planning at Wolf Trap, a center for performing arts in Vienna, VA.

Thesis: *Black Is Beautiful ... Just As Long As You Are Light Enough: Messages of Skin Complexion and Identity Among African-American Women.*

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down to discuss a four-year plan for your guidance. In the 'real world' it is up to you to plan out the years to come."

"I learned to multitask with leadership roles and coursework deadlines," she said of her time at Baldwin. "I was advised and encouraged to strive for more than the minimal

requirements. Ultimately, I had a successful undergraduate experience," she added.

Blackwell is pleased to have fulfilled her initial goal of finding work in a communications or public relations position, but she continues to reach for more. "I hope to achieve my Class of 2006 superlative, 'Most Likely To Be A Millionaire,' and fully expect to be a future asset to the college," she said. ▲

VWIL Grad to Nuclear Analyst

BY LESLIE ALLIGOOD '08

Recent graduate and winner of VWIL's Pancake Award (for leadership, academics, and demonstrating the attributes of a citizen soldier), Julia Cochran '07 continues to motivate and inspire those she leads in her budding career, a talent that came naturally to her at MBC.

The former Squirrel models the kind of post-graduation persistence that MBC faculty and staff encourage in their students. Last spring she started a career with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

As management analyst in the office of new reactors, Cochran describes her workplace as the "central station for the nuclear renaissance taking place in this country."

"I believe public service is a vital part of being a U.S. citizen. I did not commission into the military after my tenure in VWIL, so I wanted to put

that passion for public service into my occupation," she said.

The former communication major works in an environment that is all-female, socially and ethnically diverse, and encourages open communication — a parallel of the MBC environment that enabled her to transition from college to employment smoothly and with excitement. Cochran commends the communication department for nurturing and challenging her. Her ease with speaking professionally and effectively hardly goes unnoticed by her superiors.

"The skills I developed in VWIL and through my work as a communication major have proven invaluable in my career," she noted. They help with my networking ability, meeting deadlines, and simply transmitting messages quickly and efficiently," said Cochran, a Lambda Pi Eta member.

Senior communication major Jessica Jarrell said, "Julia always presented herself professionally and confidently.



PHOTO BY BRUCE DORRIES

Recent graduate Julia Cochran '07 performed community service as a cadet in VWIL. Cochran now works for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

She inspired me as a junior to challenge myself and use my talents in the field of communication to the fullest."

Cochran's early career follows the college's 2007-08 Voices theme as she strikes out a path guided by her individual talents and skills. Her advice? "By working hard, communicating clearly, and looking ahead, advancing in a first job is an attainable goal." ▲

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