

# the COMmunicator

the department of mass communication, advertising and public relations

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## 60 Years of Public Relations Education at Boston University

by Marianne Koh  
M.S. Public Relations '08



From left to right: Dr. Donald Wright, Harold Burson, Paul Rand, Dr. Otto Lerbinger and Carol Cone.  
*Photograph courtesy of BU Photo Services.*

On April 23, 2008, Harold Burson, founding chairman, Burson-Marsteller, along with nearly 200 practitioners, academics and students helped Boston University's College of Communication celebrate the 60th anniversary of its public relations master's degree program.

The event's highlight was a panel discussion about "Progress and Public Relations: A Look at Where We've Been and Where We're Going." Burson sat on the panel along with Carol Cone, COM '78, chairman and founder, Cone Inc., Dr. Otto Lerbinger, professor emeritus at BU, Dr. Donald Wright, BU professor and Paul Rand, president and CEO of Zóloco Group, part of Omnicom Group. Dr. Wright served as moderator.

The guests provided a diverse range of perspectives on the past and future of public relations. Burson led

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## Where Do Professors Come From? A Profile of Professor Denis Wu

by Jae Lee  
M.S. Applied Communication Research '08

Professor Denis Wu just finished teaching his third semester as professor of communication theory and research methods, at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Born and raised in Taiwan, he graduated from college in his home country, and came to Philadelphia in 1991 to earn his master's degree in communication at the University of Pennsylvania. He went on to the Ph.D. program in Mass Communication Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He then spent nine years teaching communication theory, research methods, and political communication at Louisiana State University. Recently, he sat down with "The COMmunicator" to share his thoughts about his career and his time so far at COM.

### *How did you get interested in your field?*

My interests are different now from where they were at the beginning of my career. In the beginning, my dissertation was about international communication: how different countries get covered in other countries. For example, how and to what extent the countries all over the world get covered by the U.S. media. Some of the countries are bigger, so they are bound to have more coverage. Others (smaller countries

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## Inside the Patriots: An Interview with Christy Berkery

by Ashley Endicott  
CAS '10

Christy Berkery graduated from COM in January of 2009 with a Master of Science in public relations. Christy's internship with the New England Patriots placed her in the role of a media relations practitioner. Recently, she met with the "The COMmunicator" to discuss her experiences and observations as a member of the Patriot's media team.

### *How did you decide sports media relations was the right decision for your internship?*

I have always been a big sports fan. I played basketball and tennis, which were my main sports in high school, but I coached little kids as well. On the journalism side, I was the photo editor and a contributing writer for the BC Heights, the student-run newspaper at Boston College.



Christy Berkery at the Super Bowl helping coach Joel Collier find media table.  
*Photograph courtesy of New England Patriots.*

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## letter from the chairman

This year was again busy and productive, full of faculty and student achievements. Last year we were named #1 in the *Chronicle of Higher Education's Faculty Scholarly Research Productivity Index*. This year we were even more productive, with five books and several journal articles published and numerous papers presented. Certainly the award for best book title goes to Patrice Oppliger for her book, *Girls Gone Skank: The sexualization of girls in American culture*. Joyce Macario's, *Graphic Design Essentials: Skills, Software and Creative Strategies* has received widespread praise. Denis Wu co-authored *Media, Politics, and Asian Americans*. Also in the political arena, Tammy Vigil co-authored *The Third Agenda in U.S. Presidential Debates: Debate Watch and Citizen Reactions, 1996-2004*. Finally, last and probably least, I co-authored a new edition of *The First Amendment and the Fourth Estate*.

I would like to congratulate Don Wright, who received two more awards this year. The first was a Presidential Citation from the Public Relations Society of America. The second was an Honorary

Diploma in Public Relations, presented by the Arman Public Relations Institute in Tehran, Iran, in recognition of lifetime achievement in the field of public relations.

In a bittersweet moment, Jack Falla was awarded this year's Becker Family Teacher of the Year Award. As many of you already know, Jack passed away last fall, a great loss to us all. Jack was an outstanding teacher, whose devotion to his students was unparalleled. Despite the fact his course was an elective that was taught at eight in the morning, it was always full.

This year, we also continued our work on updating and improving our curriculum. After an extensive two-year review of the undergraduate curriculum, the faculty voted a series of changes. In addition to removing some old courses and updating a number of others, the faculty decided to require all students to take communication research.

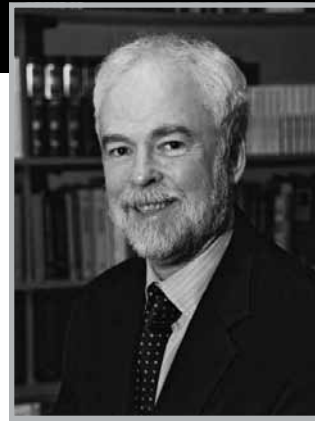
In addition, Dottie Clark spearheaded a major revision of our basic writing courses. After extensive consultation with the other full-time faculty, the part-time writing instructors and professionals in public relations and advertising, she brought those

courses into the 21st century. Various online writing formats are now an integral part of these courses. Early reactions to these changes have been extremely positive from faculty and students alike.

Two longtime faculty have decided to retire. John Schulz was a member of this department for 14 years, including three years as Chair of the department and three years as Dean of the College of Communication. He was also Director of the London Summer Program and Co-Director of the IR/COM joint Master's program. He was an excellent teacher, who received outstanding evaluations despite being one of the most demanding faculty in the department.

Gerry Powers has been teaching on a part-time basis as Professor Emeritus since his retirement in 1999. As anyone who ever took a writing course with Gerry can confirm, his demanding standards improved the quality of thousands of students' writing while he was here. He has now decided to complete his retirement after teaching one last class this summer. We wish both John and Gerry the best.

Also leaving, although not going very far, is Tammy



Vigil. As of July 1 Tammy is assuming the job of Associate Dean of COM. There is no doubt she will do an outstanding job, but she will be missed in the classroom. She is replacing Tobe Berkovitz who, after serving as Dean ad interim and Associate Dean for the past six years, will be returning to the classroom.

We are also adding two new faculty this fall. Actually, James Shanahan is both old and new. He was an assistant professor here in the early 90's. Now, after stints at both Cornell and Fairfield, he is returning to his roots. A renowned scholar, Jim will be teaching theory and research.

Mina Tsay will be a visiting assistant professor here for the next two years. Mina received her Ph.D. from Penn State University and taught at the University of Kentucky. She will be teaching theory and research.

## the COMMunicator

Tom Fiedler  
Dean of the  
College of Communication

Professor T. Barton Carter  
Chairman of the Department of  
Mass Communication, Advertising  
and Public Relations

Dr. Edward Downes  
Faculty Advisor

Matthew Crook  
Editor

Allison Miracco  
Layout and Design

Allison Miracco  
Publication Coordinator

Meredith Dabek & Katie McPadden  
Proofreaders

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please call the Department of Mass  
Communication, Advertising and Public  
Relations office at 617.353.3482.

## The "Scholar Athlete" and His Office of Dreams: A Profile of Professor T. Barton Carter

by Yifei Zhang, CAS '10

Professor Carter's office is a marriage of academia and boyhood dreams. Upon entering, guests are welcomed by the faint sound of sports radio in the background. Autographed baseballs share the desk with revisions for one of his co-authored communication law textbooks. A photograph of him playing second base at Red Sox Fantasy Camp hangs alongside his four diplomas.

About 30 years ago, Prof. Carter left his law practice to attend the Public Communication Institute (PCI), a six week summer program at Boston University, seeking a career that would allow him more intellectual freedom. At the end of the six weeks,



Professor Carter on the pitcher's mound at Fenway Park.  
Photo courtesy of Professor Carter.

BU announced a new master's degree in mass communication. Prof. Carter already had three courses toward the degree he would eventually complete.

Today, he is the chair of the Department of Mass Communication,

Advertising and Public Relations. Few know he also teaches at Boston University's School of Law and is a leading scholar in communication law. His books are published worldwide, and he recently presented a paper at Oxford University proposing changes in defamation law in cyberspace.

His colleagues describe him as a clear-minded and precisely logical man—the exact fit for a good attorney. Students report that he is a challenging teacher whose class is not for the unmotivated, but find him at a Red Sox game or belting out George Thorogood lyrics at a faculty karaoke party and you would never guess his day job.

## Technological Changes and Advertising Intuition: Responding to an Evolving Future with Professor John Verret

by Corinne Fedier, CAS '08

With nearly 40 years of marketing communication experience, Associate Professor of Advertising John Verret's insight concerning the future of advertising is certainly worth examining. In addition to his work at COM, Prof. Verret has worked extensively in agency management.

When asked about recent advertising roadblocks, Prof. Verret says, "the audiences that advertisers are dealing with are becoming more and more sophisticated. Audiences are able to see effective advertising and tune out that which is not."

According to Prof. Verret, advertisers understand audiences don't have time

for advertisements and actively avoid them. They buy devices such as TiVo to skip through commercials, and set up pop-up blockers when browsing the Internet. These technological innovations push advertisers to become more creative.

For a period of 10 years, advertising had the task of keeping pace with abrupt changes in technology. Instead of giving up the battle, advertising agencies have continued to adapt to this ever-changing environment, knowing that this was the only option. "It is one of the most exciting times," says Prof. Verret. "It is like having 75 years of technological information jammed into 10 years."



Professor John Verret.  
Photograph courtesy of BU Photo Services.

# Departments' Students Raise More Than \$2,000 in Local Donations - For A "Makeover Success"

by Amanda Sabatelle, COM '09

Children of the West End House Boys and Girls Club in Allston waited anxiously for a first glimpse of their new recreation room. This room, one of the most popular facilities for the children, needed a makeover.

Public relations students from the community relations class at COM and Best Buy employees spent hours giving the recreation room a whole new look. BU students raised over \$2,500 in monetary and in-kind donations, collecting everything from board games to sporting equipment.

At 3 p.m., the children gathered outside their room for the big surprise.

On the other side of the doors, BU students and volunteers started an energetic chant, "West End House! West End House! West End House!"

As the children of the West End House poured into the room, their faces filled with excitement. The once-sparse recreation room was now colorful. New shelving units revealed dozens of new books, and tables were stocked with art supplies and crafts.

"This is great," said Jonathan Sanchez, a young member of the West End House. "We needed new games because the ones we had were broken."

For the rest of the day, the children



A group of West End House members enjoy playing a new game of Clue. Photo courtesy of Nicole Falvey.

explored their new recreation room made possible by the COM students in concert with donations from local Boston companies.

# I Know I Left That Degree Somewhere?!

by Christy Berkery, M.S. Public Relations '09

It started as a search for closure. Shirley Frucht had been a naval aviator, a tennis coach, an archeologist in Cyprus, a model, a navy ensign, an opera house docent, a medal-winning swimmer in the senior regional Olympics, an algebra teacher and a devoted wife and mother, but something was missing.

"Out of nowhere, one day she says to me, 'Why didn't I ever finish my master's degree?'" says Shirley's youngest daughter, Debby.

In 1950, Frucht began her master's degree in public relations at the Boston University School of Public Relations and Communication. However, just before she completed her final semester, she and her husband moved to Wisconsin for a job offer he had received.

Frucht proceeded to have an incredibly vibrant life, traveling the world for various work endeavors and raising three children. But on her 88th birthday last November, she reflected that one of her biggest regrets was not receiving her Master of Science in



Professor Carter presented a diploma to Shirley Frucht (second from right), accompanied by her daughters Michele Levy and Debbie Malizia (far right). Photo courtesy of BU Photo Services.

public relations.

Her two daughters began to investigate on behalf of their mother. They obtained a handwritten copy of her transcript and lobbied BU for information about why she had not completed the program, hoping to find out why she did not graduate.

Thanks to Professor Steve Quigley, the transcript made its way into the hands of Associate Dean Micha Sabovik, who embarked on a search of the bowels of the communications building, eventually

emerging with compelling evidence. She realized Frucht had fulfilled her degree requirements, but had never applied to graduate.

"I asked the registrar's office to officially graduate her and produce the diploma," said Sabovik. "Given all that she had done since leaving us in the early 50s, it was fantastic to be able to reward someone who has been such a stellar COM alumna."

"It's a minor miracle. How many years from 1953 to 2008? I thought it was a wonderful idea, but I had no hopes of it actually happening," said a thrilled Frucht.

On April 23, 2008, 58 years after entering the program, Shirley Frucht received her Master of Science in public relations. The diploma was awarded by Professor Quigley during the 60th anniversary celebration of the Boston University public relations master's program.

"Miraculous," she says. "What else can I say?"

# A Profile on Dr. Patrice Oppliger

by Anna Kreischer, CAS '08



Dr. Patrice Oppliger. Photograph courtesy of BU Photo Services.

Dr. Patrice Oppliger comes to COM's Department of Mass Communication, Advertising and Public Relations with 12 years of teaching experience. Dr. Oppliger received her undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney, her master's degree from the University of Maine, and her Ph.D. from the University of Alabama.

After several jobs, including working part time at BU, Dr. Oppliger accepted a position teaching

communication at LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Oppliger, however, missed Boston where she felt at home. She had enjoyed the size, diversity and reputation of BU and was excited for the opportunity to return. She currently teaches Theory and Process of Communication and Mass Communication Research.

Dr. Oppliger studies gender, popular culture, humor and the effects of mass media. She has published two books, *Wrestling and Hypermasculinity* (McFarland 2004), and the newly released *Girls Gone Skank: The Sexualization of Girls in American Culture* (McFarland 2008).

In *Wrestling and Hypermasculinity* she analyzed professional wrestling. She examined the link between viewing the highly-charged masculine event and verbal aggression, rebellion and violence. Dr. Oppliger explored why this controversial entertainment has such a large audience. She sees the idea of wrestling as a fantasy world for adult males, where inappropriate actions are acted out by the characters.

She also studied how this fantasy world influences the everyday lives

of adolescent viewers. In addition, the book explored how violent media attract a growing audience, leading to an increase in masculinity and bullying among young males.

Dr. Oppliger continued her assessment of society's impact on gender in *Girls Gone Skank: The Sexualization of Girls in American Culture*. In it, she explored the dichotomy between women as equals in society and as objects in current fashions, television shows, music videos and beauty pageants.

In the book, she examined how popular media content and celebrities influence today's youth. Dr. Oppliger gave examples such as pre-teenagers with inappropriate slogans such as "juicy" across the back of their shorts or getting breast implants as high school graduation gifts. She also drew several examples from girls' YouTube and MySpace pages.

Currently, Dr. Oppliger is researching the public's fascination with celebrities. She is studying the popularity behind 24/7 celebrity news outlets. Furthermore, she is looking at the influence celebrity personalities have on the body image and self esteem of girls and women.

[ 60 Years — continued from page one ]

the discussion with an optimistic outlook. He highlighted the positive progression concerning the recognition and appreciation of the public relations function.

Despite Burson's optimism, Prof. Rand cautioned these are "challenging and confusing times for public relations," as the use of traditional and new media channels become more fragmented than before.

Panel members emphasized the important factors shaping the direction

of public relations. New media behavior, particularly search engine use and the increasing need for immediacy, were emphasized as important factors shaping the direction of public relations. They also noted that economic developments, such as an increasingly integrated global economy, are guiding the field's evolution.

The animated Dr. Lerbinger, who taught public relations at Boston University for 50 years, provoked laughter and applause throughout

the session. He commented on the increasing inclusion of public relations as a management function and stressed how the field ultimately is an applied social science.

The sentiment among the distinguished panel and guests was that public relations is entering a new frontier, but the panel members advised all public relations professionals to look at the history of the field before planning their next move.

[ Professor Wu — continued from page one ]



Professor Denis Wu.  
Photograph courtesy of BU Photo Services.

and some African countries) don't lead to a lot of media coverage in the U.S. I was intrigued by that and wanted to explore what the underpinning factors are that contribute to their presence in the media world. Gradually, partly due to my teaching, my research program moved toward political communication. I explored how the public uses the media to form their opinion, to learn about important issues and to assess political candidates. I'm also interested in investigating how mass media help form various public opinions - not just toward political issues, but also toward economic issues. For example, I explored how the news may affect people's economic evaluations and decisions, such as those related to investments and consumption.

**When you look at how you grew up, was there ever a time when you imagined that this was what you wanted to do?**

No, I never imagined that [laughs]. I am the first one in my family to go to college and to get a master's and a Ph.D., so I never thought that this was something I wanted to do. This career path truly happened accidentally. In college, I was more interested in media products, like movies, music and news media. I was involved in magazine and newspaper editing when I was in college, and I even made short films. I didn't know that I would study media

later because I majored in sociology. There was no communication major at my college, so I didn't have a chance to study it. But sociology has a lot to do with media, actually. If you look at the classical communication theories, a lot of them are related to sociology, such as the ideas of the public and mass culture and especially sociology of culture - that has a lot to do with mass media.

**What are your thoughts on your time at Louisiana State University?**

It was a culture shock at first [laughs]. But it turned out to be an interesting experience. Even though Chapel Hill, North Carolina is in the south, people call it "shallow south," as opposed to "deep south." North Carolina gives you a feel of what southern culture is like, but Louisiana is a totally different kind of southern culture. It's combined with a French flair, especially in the southern part of the state. They are a Cajun culture and many people have a French heritage, so it is unique. They have Cajun cuisine, music and so forth; further, people are very friendly if you get to know them better. Of course, football is big there. LSU's football has been strong, so that's the major social activity there. Whenever the team plays, people either go to the stadium or are at home watching the game, so the streets are abandoned - and that's the time to go shopping because no one is at the market [laughs].

**What attracted you to BU?**

Boston is one of the great cities I've visited; I first came out here in '91, and I loved it. Although I heard that the cost of living is very high and there are other downsides such as the cold winter and old infrastructure, there are so many good things about the city including the resources and the culture. You have the Boston Symphony Orchestra, lots of museums and colleges, great sports teams and lots of activities going on, so you don't get bored. Secondly, it's more diverse in terms of the people here. In Louisiana, probably only one percent of the population is Asian, but here you see more different ethnicities and cultures. I

think the people here are more tolerant. Here you can also get all kinds of foods. In Brookline, where I live, you can have Texas grill, Tibetan, Japanese and Chinese, all on the same street.

**What about Boston University, the institution?**

BU has a great reputation overall, across the nation and around the world. The College of Communication includes programs in almost every field of communication, so it is very comprehensive. Also, the faculty of COM is strong in both academic and professional areas. Although mass communication research productivity is now ranked number one by the Chronicle of Higher Education, there is no Ph.D. program, which is behind most other peer universities. That is an area we can work on. Overall, I think the undergraduate programs are excellent, and the undergraduate students are remarkable - I am impressed with the student body. I believe we can do a lot here in the College of Communication.

**In what ways are you impressed with the students here?**

On average, they are very hardworking, smart, intelligent and willing to be challenged in classes. The majority of the students I have encountered so far are like that, so I am very pleased with my students. They make teaching fulfilling and rewarding.

**So, are those the qualities that you look for in students?**

Yes, hardworking, intelligent and willing to take on new tasks and challenges. I think these are the exact qualities that will lead students to succeed in the job market. These are, I believe, the qualities that employers and professionals look for in students.

**What about teaching attracts you to it?**

Teaching is rewarding in itself. If the students are responsive, then teaching becomes even more rewarding. You don't want to talk to people who don't have any interest whatsoever in what

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# Fascinating Perspectives of Everyday Objects A Profile of Dr. Hyun-Yeul Lee

by Caitlin Sullivan, COM '09

Resident dreamer, Dr. Hyun-Yeul Lee, formerly of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab, is a Rhode Island School of Design and Carnegie Mellon graduate with two master's degrees in design and science. She aims to understand life through extending the provenance of objects, because she believes they retain the world's history.

Dr. Lee comes to Boston University to advance her life's work and spread a message - students must trust themselves and their creativity. The resulting innovation will astound them.

At MIT, where she earned her Master of Science and Ph.D., Dr. Lee audibly recorded a day in a bench's life by revealing its story while hoping to provoke thought about objects. She captured the bench's existence through



Dr. Hyun-Yeul Lee.  
Photograph courtesy of BU Photo Services.

a three-channeled microphone and an audio story construction method which she created to play back its life story. Furthermore, she intends to relate the idea of an object's life to its sustainability and perhaps people

will keep objects longer if they acknowledge their life. "What if a Picasso painting can reveal how it came about through Picasso?" she asks.

Dr. Lee's two communication classes are Computers in Communication and Designing Interactive Communication, both of which intertwine with her work. She teaches students about interaction, controlling it, and the accountability of those who design systems and images.

"People who design have a large responsibility for what they make for the masses," she elaborates. "Let's rethink objects. Maybe they can be more than what we use them for."

Her forward-thinking philosophies regarding the planet's objects can inspire awe and contemplation today, and may soon define the way people view the world.

[ Professor Wu — continued from page six ]

you are talking about. Through teaching, I also can learn about students' new perspectives on various topics, so I benefit from the process as well. Since students are never the same, you face different situations and backgrounds, and need to come up with different ways to help them learn, which makes teaching interesting.

**Did you always want to teach?**

I didn't think about teaching when I was in the graduate school -- but after getting my Ph.D., I realized there are two paths: one is toward industry, and the other is toward working in colleges and universities. I thought about the industry route, but for some reason the academic jobs came first, so that became my career. Industry jobs didn't seem promising to me; they didn't provide the opportunities that I wanted and the freedom to work on different projects that interest me. In industry, they don't give you that leeway; they assign you a project, and you get it

done. That's the side I don't enjoy that much [laughs].

**Looking back at your career, what accomplishments are you the most proud of?**

I was lucky to work with great mentors and colleagues of mine on different projects, and those experiences are really beneficial. That's the joy of doing research with greatly talented scholars. I think working with other people can really ignite new intellectual sparks, and it can be very interesting and rewarding that you get to explore different facets of communication issues, and that's what interests me. I don't know how to answer your question. I don't exactly know what I should be proud of [laughs]. But I guess being the first one in my family to get graduate degrees and to get to teach in a great college is something, I think, that counts [laughs].

**What about things in your career that you would like to have changed?**

I've never thought about that. I've probably never thought about what I could or should have changed, or what I could have done differently. I usually look at the present and focus on what I'm going to do next, or what should be pursued in the future. What's done is done, and you can't do anything about it.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I'd like to stay here for a while and try to succeed. I have been enjoying teaching here at BU, as I told you. I'm impressed with students here. I'd like to start new research projects and get involved in BU. I'm still adjusting, trying to figure out what resources are available, what area I can work on and how I can contribute. Once my adjustment phase is finished, I should be able to launch new projects. I hope another book and several research papers are on the horizon for the next few years.

[ Christy Berkery — continued from page one ]



Christy Berkery M.S. Public Relations '09  
Photograph courtesy of Mike Hollis.

**How did you go about attaining the media relations internship with the New England Patriots?**

A friend of a friend, who was a reporter for Metro West Daily News put me in touch with Stacey James, director of media relations for the Patriots. He had me come in for an informational interview, which ultimately led to the internship offer.

**What is the difference between an informational interview and a regular interview?**

I went into the meeting just wanting to ask questions to understand the field better to see if it was really for me. There wasn't a job opening at that time so the pressure was off.

**So how did the informational interview lead to this position?**

We kept in touch and I was offered a working interview during the NFL draft last April. I helped transcribe interviews as well as anything else they needed. Then they offered me an internship for the following season.

**Have you had another internship with a sports team before?**

I had worked at a small public relations firm, but not for a team. A lot of my sports work experience came through being the photo editor of the BC newspaper and being involved with the teams there.

**An article I previously read said that you wanted to continue working for the NFL. Why?**

I would like to stay in professional sports, and for now the NFL, because I already have my foot in the door and I really like the league. Most other professional sports have pretty tough travel schedules, and with the NFL, I work a lot of hours but it's minimal travel and only one game a week.

**Did you see much difference between the way the players conveyed ideas to the media and the way the media conveyed those ideas to the public?**

I think everything players say is open to interpretation, and each media outlet handles those statements differently. Every outlet has one or two beat reporters who follow the team, giving them a relationship and a rapport with the players. It's in the reporters' best interest to be fair to the player, so the reporters can maintain these relationships. Plus, the players know how to deal and interact with the media. The coaches and the organization are there for them and prepare them for these situations.

**Was there a specific instance you most enjoyed on the job?**

Well, I was able to go to the Super Bowl which was pretty amazing in itself. I was there for nine days, and got to see how ESPN filmed a shot and then how it looked later on Sports Center. The behind-the-scenes action was exciting and made all the hard work worth it.

**How often did you get to interact with the players themselves and not just the fans and media?**

I helped coordinate interviews, but when major events were going on, I got more hands-on interaction with them. Overall though, I mainly dealt with the media.

**What types of things did you learn with the Patriots that you had not learned before?**

I learned that even the most mundane tasks, such as finding who and what the reporters need, are not things you can really learn in a

classroom. It's more experience-related.

**Were your experiences in the industry consistent with what you learned in your communication classes?**

The general ideas are consistent, but I think it's hard to really teach human interaction between the media and public relations practitioners. Regarding crisis communication in particular, one can really see how people react in the heat of the moment. Although classroom learning can complement those reactions, they are too subjective to be taught.

**Is there any class that specifically helped you with the tasks you had during this internship?**

Any of the writing classes, because I did get to do some writing for the GameDay publication [game program that fans can buy each game]. I edited once and did some background writing. The grammatical stuff really helped.

**What did you do on weekly basis?**

After every game I reviewed the 3,000 photos taken and had to select the best ones, label them and put them in the database. I also dealt with photo requests from coaches and players. In general, I did what the industry calls "media babysitting," meaning I responded to the media's needs. I spent a good chunk of time doing "stand ups" where I hung out with the ESPN reporters while they were filming. All three interns got to edit one GameDay. I wrote for various GameDay editions. I transcribed press conferences. A lot of the day was spent helping where it was needed.

**Is there anything specific you'd like to tell the readers about your experience?**

This opportunity is not something to just brush off. There is a lot of work and really long hours, but the excitement makes it more than just an ordinary job.

# Dr. Otto Lerbinger: 50 Years of Giving to Students, the University and His Field

by Marianne Koh, M.S. Public Relations '08 and Christine Lee, B.S. Public Relations '09

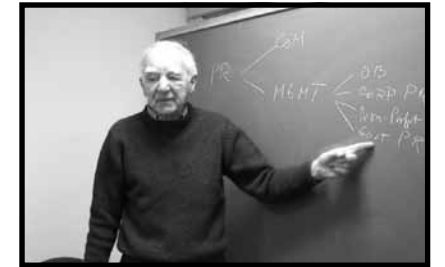
He pauses briefly in the doorway with a friendly twinkle in his still-piercing blue eyes. When he enters, he quickly fills the room with an erudite spirit. Retired after 50 years of teaching public relations at Boston University, Professor Emeritus Otto Lerbinger, Ph.D. shares his memories about the past half-century and his predictions for the next half.

As the field of public relations becomes increasingly specific, in particular investor relations and community relations, public relations classes at Boston University also reflect this trend. Under Dr. Lerbinger's leadership, the program was among the first to introduce specialized courses in crisis communication, international public relations, investor relations and environmental communication.

Another important transformation in public relations education is the

changing focus on the function of the field. Dr. Lerbinger begins to get very animated as he talks about the direction of public relations. Despite nearly four years of retirement, the professor within takes over as he instantly jumps out of his seat and reaches for the chalkboard to illustrate his point. "Public Relations is not just about generating publicity," he said, "it is about managing relationships and changing behavior."

So what advice would Dr. Lerbinger give to current students? "Do not limit yourself to communication. Do what Edward Bernays (father of public relations) did – he was interested in the social sciences." He also encourages students to develop specialties, a paradox he recognizes and admits. "On the one hand, we have to be generalists. On the other hand, we need to specialize in something." Students should try to be experts in an



Dr. Otto Lerbinger conducting a class.  
Photo courtesy of Christine Lee.

area while knowledgeable about every aspect of the world around them.

When it comes down to why Dr. Lerbinger loves public relations and why he continues to dedicate his life to the field, he explains that it is because "Public Relations is an expanding universe. I get excited about it."

Dr. Lerbinger inspires an Ulysses-like will to strive, to learn and to push beyond boundaries. Through his vision, public relations provides an endless scope for the imagination.

## COM's Latest Professor — Dr. Cheryl Ann Lambert

by Laura Wolf, M.S. Public Relations, '10

The Department's newest professor, Dr. Cheryl Ann Lambert, has the works: 11 years full-time industry experience; a master's in journalism from Temple University in Philadelphia; a doctorate in communication and information from the University of Tennessee--Knoxville; and a dissertation concerning health messages and female undergraduates. In fact, she defended her dissertation the same day she drove the first leg from Tennessee to Boston.

With a fascination for public relations and health communication, Dr. Lambert describes a "big disconnect between the intended meaning of health messages and how students react to health messages

they encounter." Her dissertation and research focuses on "helping health communicators reach students better."

Currently, she teaches Media Relations and Oral Presentations. A true believer in "facilitating learning" rather than simply teaching, Dr. Lambert uses her background in public relations at Sears, Roebuck & Company to encourage learning. "The idea of teaching is very one-way. Facilitating is more of a two-way partnership, in which you are simply facilitating students' learning," she explains.

Dr. Lambert also authored and self-published a book about her father's life story *Others Said No, But God Said Yes: The Faith Journey of*

*Rev. John L. Lambert*. "I was able to combine my background in journalism and public relations to create interest in the book. Also it made a great Father's Day gift for him!"

She's also one of the toughest communicators on the block. "In October 1998, I ran the La Salle Bank Chicago Marathon," Dr. Lambert says. "It doesn't matter what place I came in, just that 2,000 people came in behind me!"

Though a mid-westerner at heart, Dr. Lambert enjoys Boston so far. "You know how you have to break in a pair of shoes before they're comfortable? In Boston, I didn't have to do that to appreciate the charm of this city," she said.

Compiled by Matthew Crook  
M.S. Public Relations '09  
All photos courtesy of Matthew Crook.

How has your  
graduate work changed  
your impression of  
**COMMUNICATION  
MANAGEMENT?**

**MICHAELA PLUNKETT  
M.S. PUBLIC RELATIONS '09**

My graduate work has shown me the importance of two-way communication in both my professional and educational life. I have learned by example from my professors and their teachings. Receiving and appreciating feedback in an authentic, transparent manner will positively influence my life.



**ELROY D'SILVA  
M.S. ADVERTISING MGMT '09**

It helped bring the real world's hard facts to life by opening up and stressing a range of factors that affect the marketing communication business on various levels. It made me aware of the important roles that new media and consumers have in the overall communication process.

**JENNA LYNN BARAN  
M.S. MASS COMM, APPLIED  
COMM RESEARCH '09**

My graduate work has changed my impression of communication management by opening my eyes to strategic planning and implementation on a realistic and practical level. Additionally, the time I have spent at COM has enhanced my writing, speaking and analytical skills - three key elements of communication management.



**WILL WHITE  
M.S. MASS COMM,  
APPLIED COMM  
RESEARCH '09**

Management of communication involves an entire company, not just marketing or communication departments. A collaborative and consistent effort must be made to ensure communication that is clear concise and connected to all other kinds of company communication.



**KETAKI CADAMBI  
M.S. ADVERTISING MGMT '09**

Working with individuals from diverse backgrounds in a high-energy environment has been a great learning experience. Also, making presentations and watching others present gave me a fresh perspective on how to communicate effectively. It's all about time management, team work and a balance of logical and creative thinking.



This issue of "The COMmunicator" is dedicated to Professor Jack Falla. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from COM - and later made his inimitable presence known as a COM professor. He will be missed by the faculty and students who had the good fortune of crossing paths with him.



Jack Falla 1944 - 2008

*Photo courtesy of BU Photo Services.*

### ...and next time...

Our next issue "The COMmunicator" will feature an article on Michael Reilly, M.S. Mass Communication '85 of Reilly Communications. Mike recently designed a campaign which was awarded first-place in a national competition sponsored by the Society for Marketing Professionals.

### ...and in addition...

"The COMmunicator" will have more news and interviews on the 60th anniversary of our public relations program... a piece on the Department's recognition as best in the nation when it comes to publishing scholarly research articles and books... and a host of other stories to give you a kaleidoscopic view of the vibrancy and depth of the Department of Mass Comm, Advertising and Public Relations...

## the COMmunicator

boston university  
college of communication  
640 commonwealth avenue  
boston, massachusetts 02215