



Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, 2002-2017

Volume 21
Issue 1 *Spring 2012*

Article 6

Spring 2012

Family Man

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Recommended Citation

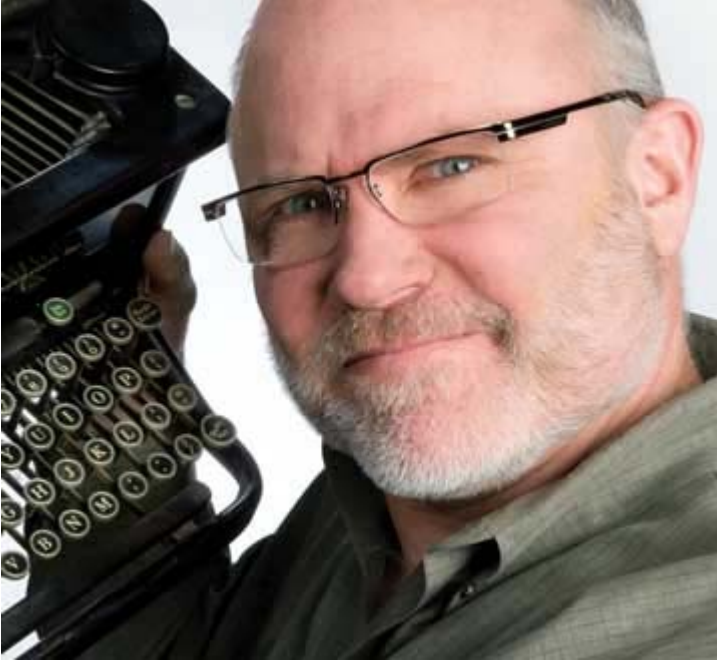
Julian, Sarah (2012) "Family Man," *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, 2002-2017*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/iwumag/vol21/iss1/6>

This is a PDF version of an article that originally appeared in the printed Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, a quarterly periodical published by Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact iwumag@iwu.edu.

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Family Man



In addition to his writing and radio work, Jay also writes, blogs and speaks about being a husband and father, "I want husbands and fathers to know they're important and to share a few ideas they can use in real life," he says.

Author-producer-husband-father Jay Payleitner '79 puts family first.

Story by SARAH (ZELLER) JULIAN '07

Whether he's writing, speaking or producing, the No. 1 priority in Jay Payleitner's life is being a family

man. The producer of well-known Christian radio shows and author of eight books has found inspiration for his work from his own wife and children.

"My family is my ministry," says Jay. "I just write and present what I've seen work in our lives and in the lives of other men and their families." His most recent book, *52 Things Wives Need from Their Husbands*, was published in February. He and his wife, Rita, have raised five children and fostered 10 more at their home in St. Charles, Ill.

A 1979 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, Jay majored in theatre arts. Upon graduation, he took the first job he was offered — selling photocopiers. "I was terrible at it, but I learned much. About myself. About business. About what motivates people to do what they do." Deciding he needed to appeal to his creative talents, he embarked on a new career path. He pounded the pavement at advertising agencies along Chicago's Michigan Avenue, finally landing a job where he worked with big-name clients like Midway Airlines and Frito-Lay.

But after five years, Jay felt that something was missing. "I had two small sons at home and a commute that kept me away from home from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.," he recalls. "I knew I needed to make a change."

The opportunity presented itself when Jay found a position at a smaller agency that specialized in radio programming for Christian publishers and ministries. "That really changed my career and my life," he says. As a radio producer, he has worked with well-known Christian leaders like Chuck Colson, Josh McDowell and Phyllis Schlafly and has produced work for organizations like the Bible League, The Voice of the Martyrs and *Guideposts* magazine. One of his current projects, "Today's Father," is a daily broadcast that airs on more than 400 radio stations.

In his career, Jay has received as much as he has given. "From people like Josh and Chuck, I learned integrity. These men are the same people behind the scenes and in front of a crowd or a camera," he says. "What I brought to the table was honesty, a sense of purpose and a good awareness of what motivates people to do what they do. Even with veteran communicators, I was never afraid to say, 'Let's do one more take' or 'Could we say that another way?'"

In addition to his radio work, Jay also writes, blogs and speaks about being a husband and father, a passion that has increased since his time as executive director of the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative.

"Men are taking a beating today in the media, courts, church and public arena," he says. "Most of the guys I meet are working hard to build a career and keep their family together. When I speak to a room full of dads on a Saturday morning, my goal is just to help them find a little more joy and contentment for today and a fresh vision for the future. I want husbands and fathers to know they're important and to share a few ideas they can use in real life."

In his writing and speaking, Jay often finds that the best way to communicate is through humor. "You can't be a husband, dad, salesman, copywriter, producer, journalist, professor, teacher or influencer without connecting on a personal level. Humor is part of that, and thankfully it comes natural to me," he says. "No one will take you seriously until they know you are real, have flaws, have a sense humor and care about them."

Jay celebrated his first book publication in 2003 with the release of the modern parable *Once Upon a Tandem*. "My first book was a story that touched my heart and had to be told," he says. "It was only 1,200 words, but it took 12 years from first draft to bookstore shelves. The next seven books have come a little quicker, but only because I have logged so many hours at the keyboard."

All of Jay's past experiences, including his time at Wesleyan, have helped him carve out his niche. "It's stunning how God has used the entirety of my experience to mold me into the author/producer/husband/father that I am today," he says. "In 1979, I wrote and directed a one-act play in the IWU Lab Theatre. I can absolutely see the direct link between that experience and what I do today."

To visit Jay Payleitner's website, [click here](#).