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Journalism Award

Pulliam Fellowship Awarded to IWU English Major Headed to Phoenix Newspapers for 10-Week Program

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A Pulliam journalism fellowship has been awarded to an Illinois Wesleyan University senior and English major, who has reported for three newspapers and served as editor-in-chief of his college weekly.

David Brown of Matteson, Ill., will begin working at the Phoenix Gazette (75,000 daily circulation) and Arizona Republic (400,000 daily, 611,000 Sunday circulation) June 3 as a general assignment reporter, covering hard news, under the 10-week fellowship that carries a \$4,500 stipend. The fellowship is sponsored by Central Newspapers, owners of the Indianapolis Star-News, the Arizona dailies, and other properties.

Brown is among 20 Pulliam fellows selected from a nationwide pool of about 140 applicants. Ten fellows will work in Indianapolis and 10 will be assigned to Arizona.

Brown is the second IWU graduate in three years to win a Pulliam. Chris Fusco, a 1994 IWU graduate, had his fellowship at the Indianapolis Star-News. Fusco now is a reporter for the Daily Herald, a newspaper based in the Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights.

"The Pulliam fellowship," Brown said, "provides me with the best transition possible from college to the working world."

Brown said he was especially pleased to win the Pulliam since IWU does not offer a journalism major. However, IWU does offer courses in journalism and Brown was able to secure a wide range of practical experience working at The Doings, a twice weekly newspaper based in Hinsdale, a Chicago suburb; The Pantagraph, Bloomington-Normal's daily newspaper; the Daily Herald; and The Argus, IWU's weekly newspaper.

Journalism appeals to Brown as a career because of the great range of topics reporters can cover. "Everyday there is something new," he said. "I just don't want a job filled with monotony--where you do the same thing everyday."

"It's also great to see your name in the newspaper," Brown said, "especially when you walk by a newsstand and see your name on an article you wrote. That happened to me when I worked for The Pantagraph and had four page one stories in a month."

Brown wants a wide-ranging career as a journalist, however, he particularly enjoys feature writing and covering the courts and police beats.

Brown's interest in journalism was sparked when he worked as copy editor and opinions

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editor on the Rich South High School Centurian. At IWU, he worked for four years on The Argus, serving in several posts, including features editor, managing editor, and editor-in-chief.

As Argus editor, Brown transformed the newspaper from a tabloid to a broad sheet.

He also covered the high-profile Bloomington-Normal murder trial of Jennifer Lockmiller, a one-time IWU student, securing an exclusive interview with the victim's mother, Norma.

Brown knew the woman who found Jennifer Lockmiller's body since she had dated his roommate. During a court recess, she introduced Brown to Norma Lockmiller, giving him the opportunity to express his condolences about Jennifer, who had been an Argus staffer. Out of that brief conversation came Norma Lockmiller's commitment to talk to Brown after the trial.

"I wrote her phone number on my hand," Brown recalled, "and ran to the courtroom to write it down on paper before my sweat blotted it out."

Eventually, Brown talked to Norma Lockmiller for two- and one-half hours in her Decatur, Ill., home.

"I felt bad for her and I let it show," Brown said, recalling the interview. "I couldn't be a cold person, asking cold questions. I let her talk, asking a few intermittent questions. It was the best way to get the story out of her. Slowly she warmed and talked about her reactions to what happened, the trial, and about how wonderful Jennifer had been. She took me five times to Jennifer's room to see papers, her art projects, and a large box filled with letters of sympathy.

"It was a disturbing, but good experience," Brown added. "I found out that I can talk to victims and that talking to me, a reporter, can be a cathartic. I was helping her to vent. It was an amazing experience."

The summer between his sophomore and junior year at IWU, Brown worked at The Doings as an intern to see if he really liked journalism as a career option. He worked as a general assignment reporter, covering the police beat, town meetings, and writing features, including one about a fire department celebrating its 100th anniversary, giving him the chance to ride on a ambulance.

"They turned on the siren," he recalled, "and I couldn't stop grinning."

Brown also wrote for the newspaper's Street Talk column, a weekly man-on-the street interview feature. He'd position himself at a strip mall or supermarket and talk to 10 people about local and national issues, spanning the school board matters to the O.J. Simpson murder trial.

"Working at The Doings," Brown said, "gave me the chance to see how I would react to real deadlines. I got a charge out of it."

During January, 1995, Brown worked at The Pantagraph as a general assignment reporter. He was back at The Doings during the summer of 1995, covering the town of Willowbrook and working as

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business editor.

"I went through reams of news releases every day," Brown said. "I learned how to ferret out the good from the bad. I also had the challenge of writing a weekly business feature--the challenge of coming up with something fresh every week."

During the 1995 Christmas holiday break from IWU, Brown worked as a stringer for the Daily Herald, covering Carpentersville and East Dundee village meetings out of the newspaper's Elgin bureau. One day, he and Fusco shared page one bylines with stories on the Illinois Department of Transportation and a judge's ruling, respectively.

Brown sees both good and bad in his chosen profession. His heroes are journalists with a conscience--reporters like Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame--who accomplished much in digging out the tale of corruption infecting the Nixon White House, while protecting the privacy of sources.

"I tend to enjoy my privacy," Brown said, "and I respect that in others. I'm nosy and aggressive as a journalist, but I dislike sensationalist ambulance chasers."

However, Brown is turned off by journalistic abuses aimed solely at selling newspapers.

"The O.J. Simpson case," he explained, "is a case in point, where a story was ridiculously overplayed and did harm."

The Pulliam fellowship is designed to boost the careers of aspiring journalists by giving them the opportunity to polish their reporting and writing skills over an intense 10-week period, working with professional journalists who serve as writing coaches.

Pulliam fellows are selected based on their previous journalism work or internships, the quality of their writing, work on school newspapers, and their academic record.

Eugene Pulliam started the fellowship program in 1974, one year before his death at age 85. Russell B. Pulliam, editor of the Indianapolis News, said his grandfather started the program "to build a bridge between the liberal arts and the newsroom. He wanted to help young journalists to make the transition from college to the newsroom."

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,850 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$25 million science building opened in the fall of 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition.