

SOCK! BAM! POW!

When you think of Batman, your image is likely generational. Anyone around in the late 60s can likely hum the theme song from the TV series and will picture Adam West slugging the Riddler with a POW! Film fans of the 80s and 90s might call up images of Michael Keaton, George Clooney or Christian Bale. For all of us in Communications Media, when we think of Batman, only one name comes to mind... Chris Barber.

Barber's "Batman" reputation comes from his ability to fix almost anything and his uncanny tendency to appear almost instantly in times of need. Communications Media Department chair, Dr. B. Gail Wilson, uses the "bat" emoji on her phone. "I send a text and within seconds, he's in my office. That's my bat signal." Barber took his Batman persona seriously for the Department's annual Halloween costume day a couple of years ago, as pictured right.

More seriously, Wilson went on to say, "I have never known anyone who works as hard as Chris Barber. We tease him about how many times he has to change his shirt during the day because he sweats so much running from one crisis to the next. He's an invaluable part of our team."



"It is a cliché to say, 'we couldn't do it without you' but in his case it is absolutely true," Wilson explains.



For his part, Barber welcomes the opportunity to be a useful part of the team. "The most rewarding thing about my job is being able to help a student or faculty member with an issue and being able to solve it for them. It's very satisfying to be able to assist someone with a problem and be able to take care of it."

Since joining IUP 19 years ago, Barber has been an integral part of the technical operations in the Department of Communications Media. This includes being the chief engineer for IUP-TV and WIUP-FM and the on-site engineer-in-charge supporting the COMM 360 Digital Sports Production class, covering IUP football and basketball games. "The favorite thing about my job is the variety of areas I'm involved in. No two days are exactly alike, so it keeps things fresh", Barber ex-

plained. Last year, he earned his FAA pilots' license allowing him to fly a commercial drone. During the summer, he collaborates with Dr. Jim Lenze who teaches students to fly drones in the Department's Aerial Video Production course.

Beyond the Communications Media Department, Barber also works for the College of Education and Communications as the building manager for Stouffer and Davis Halls. He is the technical director for the Center for Videoconferencing in Stouffer Hall and provides technical support for four digital clinical observation systems in Davis and Stouffer Halls as well as the Pittsburgh East branch campus.

Before coming to IUP, Barber earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in Electronic Engineering Technology and ran his own consumer electronics repair business working with commercial and consumer audio/video electronics, installation of commercial and home entertainment sound systems, and installation/service of small business telephone systems. Calling Indiana home, Barber has been married to Deb, his high school sweetheart, for more than 40 years.

THE LINK

THE SHOE FITS



Darron Trobetsky (1994) has spent the last 22 years working for Nike, starting as an EKIN (Nike spelled backwards) doing sales support and marketing for Nike brands. Since then, Darron has moved up the ranks at Nike, currently serving as Global Footwear Product Director for Brand Jordan. Last fall, Darron made the trip from his home in Portland, Oregon back to IUP to share his expertise with our students.

During his presentation, Darron helped students recognize the convergence of all aspects of the media business and how this impacts his job. Media production, sales, marketing, and messaging are all parts of the process for making a connection with audiences across the Nike Brand. "Great storytelling is connecting. Whether it is with the athlete, customer or consumer. Making complex ideas simple and giving people a reason to care about what you are sharing. I share stories about footwear every day. What we are solving for, why the shoe is important, and how we connect with consumers," Darron explained. Everything from understanding shoe design to working directly with the brand's namesake, Michael Jordan, and other premier athletes

means Darron engages with the Nike Brand and Nike products at all levels.

During his presentation to IUP students, Darron recognized the influence of his mentors including former Communications Media professor, Dr. Richard Lamberski. "I still remember being a freshman and sitting in Dr. Lamberski's class. It was a cold January morning at 9 a.m. All the reasons in the world to not pay attention, but Doc L wouldn't allow it. He brought energy, passion, provocative thought and wove a story on the future of communication. Connecting. I'll never forget it."



Darron is pictured above (left and right) talking with IUP students and (center) with Jordan Footwear Designers, Ross Klein and Tate Kuerbis holding the Air Jordan XXXIII.

THE LINK

Our alumni often remark that one of the most valuable parts of their college education was their internship and the Department of Communications Media faculty agree. Although at one point it wasn't mandatory, the department now requires all students to complete a 9-credit internship either the summer of their junior or senior year. This ensures students get reliable professional experience and that benefits them academically.



The road to the internship experience begins with COMM 395 Career Planning, a course that may still induce nightmares for students who took the class with Dr. Richard Lamberski. We can assure you, nothing has changed under the more recent guidance of our internship coordinator, Dr. Jim Lenze. “We’ve maintained original connections and requirements that all trace back to Lamberski.”

What once was Dr. Lamberski’s bulletin board covered with papers of internship opportunities, is now Dr. Lenze’s website. He maintains a blog for electronic

distribution of paperwork and information. Students now subscribe to the website blog that generates email updates about internship opportunities.

“The students go out and they get the experiences, network, learn some things they didn’t know and often get job offers. Frequently, students who may have struggled in the classroom blossom at the internship. They walk out the door as college students and walk back in as a professional. These internships really are a transformative experience,” Lenze explains. Lenze (shown right) also makes time available with extensive office hours to help students make internship connections and decisions.

Students have completed internships with companies like ESPN, ABC, Disney, and Atlantic Records, but Lenze mentions that smaller operations are often some of the best internships for getting hands-on opportunities. The biggest internship affiliation the department has is with The Washington Center in Washington, D.C. The experience there goes beyond internships to give students the professional development, connections and guidance to pursue a fulfilling career.



Lenze says it’s important to save projects throughout the college years and get involved with student organizations to have as much experience as possible to be ready for the internship. No matter what path students chose to take, Lenze’s advice is to “Be bold and be courageous.” He encourages students to not be afraid of any internship, even those far from home, because no matter where they go, they will come away with new training and new skills. “Enjoy the adventure!”

THE LINK

LIVING AND LEARNING

Imagine living on a dorm floor with other Communications Media students, sharing classes, and even having access to your own production equipment. Today's Communications Media undergraduates have that opportunity by living in a clustered community in IUP's Ruddock Hall. This "living-learning" community (LLC) gives students access to media equipment and a small video production room, the CommEd studio, in their residence hall. Dr. Vicky Ortiz is the Communications Media partner with the LLC and Residence Director, Brad Henry. Vicky and Brad recently took a group of students, who reside in the LLC, on a media field trip to Johnstown. With help from Communications Media Department chair, Dr. B. Gail Wilson and our alumni network, the students visited Forever Media and WJAC-TV.

At Forever Media, the group was hosted by Communications Media alumnus, Mike Fetsko (1994), who is Forever's corporate program director. Mike toured the group through the studios for Key 96.5, Rocky 99, Froggy 95.5 and Hot 92. He explained how the stations operate and described some of their recent promotions. While touring the station, the group also met up with another IUP Communications Media graduate, Brian Wolfe (1985), who is an on-air personality. The students are pictured left with Mike in the back and Brian on the right.



After the tour at Forever, the group hopped back in the van to travel just up the street to WJAC-TV where 2012 Communications Media graduate, Crispin Havener provided the station tour. Crispin, an investigative reporter, talked about the news gathering and reporting process and the group watched the noon news from the control room and the studio. As pictured

below, the green screen provided some laughs with the students trying their hand at finding Indiana County on the weather map. Pictured below left, Dr. Wilson, Dr. Ortiz, Crispin, the student group, with Ruddock Residence Director, Brad Henry on the right .



THE LINK

ALUMNI PROFILE: Kwame Stroman

Working in the heart of Philadelphia with one of the biggest market consumer cable, television, internet, telephone, and wireless services companies in the US is an exciting opportunity for Communications Media alumnus, Kwame Stroman (2016).

As an Editorial Programming Specialist with Xfinity, Kwame is an assistant editor for Music on X1 where he oversees programming and scheduling mid-level and day-to-day campaigns for the music section. He also assists the managing editor in planning and implementing programming strategies for children and music.

Kwame earned two IUP degrees, a B.S. in Communications Media and a Master of Arts in Adult Education and Communication Technology (AECT) in 2017. “Although the AECT program doesn’t directly fit in with what I do at Xfinity, the skills I’ve learned from that experience are beneficial. The classes helped prepare me for corporate America in ways that I wouldn’t think.” He credits various professors for inspiring him to join the master’s program and creating an impact on him including, Dr. Dean, Dr. Ortiz, Dr. Leidman, and Dr. Wilson. He was a graduate assistant in the Communications Media office and posed with current student, Hayley Bush, (below) to show off the department t-shirt design.



During his time at IUP, Kwame was involved in various organizations including the boxing club and being a residence hall community assistant. He is also grateful for his experience with live broadcasting as a morning DJ for WIUP-FM; however, one of his most memorable moments was collaborating with True Culture to executive produce two episodes of the IUP-TV show “Bridging the Gap” that were focused around racial tensions on campus.

THE LINK

ALUMNI PROFILE: Jamie Smolinski

Healthcare and Communications Media may sound like two different things; however, Jamie Smolinsky (2002) has made a career of successfully combining the two. As a Client Executive at IBM Watson Health, Jamie is a medical sales professional who meets with clients such as UPMC, Allegheny Health Network, Johns Hopkins University Health System, and the University of Maryland Health System. Every day he is working with individual department leaders or on the road visiting customers presenting and promoting healthcare products and explaining why his company is the right choice.

When it comes to how his degree in Communications Media helped him prepare for this career, Jamie explains. “What COMM Media did was spring board me to that first step. My education taught me to be versatile and aggressive and to have strong presentation skills. Every day I’m broadcasting to clients on why they should want to be with us.” While an undergraduate, Jamie was involved in The Penn, WIUP-FM, and his fraternity, all things he feels contributed to his professional preparation and helped him gain leadership skills. “I like to give back to IUP in any way that they gave me. Coming back for alumni events and being open to talking with grads and students on how to be successful. I owe a lot to IUP both socially and professionally.” Last year he caught up with former professor, Dr. Richard Lamberski, and college pal, Brent Whigham, at IUP Night at PNC Park (below).



Jamie has been honored as MEDRAD Rep of the Year and MEDRAD Circle of Excellence Winner, however he feels his greatest accomplishment is his family. He met his wife, Leanne, at IUP and is the proud father of two daughters, Mia and Brielle. He has a passion for running and has participated in multiple marathons.

THE LINK

ALUMNI PROFILE: Tatia O'Connor

Communications Media majors are not generally known for being good with numbers. That is certainly not the case for Tatia (Mitchell) O'Connor (1989) who spends her days managing data. Working in broadcast media for 25 years has taught Tatia how to interpret and present data to any audience.

Tatia currently serves as the Director of Research and Client Services at WTAE-TV in Pittsburgh where she has worked for 17 years. "Research has been the best job I've had. It's interesting. As the research director, I get to talk to different clients, do research in the sales department and produce work for sales people to help convince advertisers to buy advertising on our channel." Her past work experience in radio, television, commercial copy writing, and news directing at WCPA/WQYX led her to her current career in research.



When she isn't meeting with clients, Tatia is looking at Google analytics and social media for insights on who's watching WTAE-TV. Every day her job is different. "I could be going on a sales call or guest lecturing in a class about research. I've served on boards for media associations."

Some of Tatia's best memories of IUP come from playing trombone in the marching band and through her minor in theater. She credits her Communications Media major with giving her a broad base of knowledge, allowing her to sample different opportunities in the industry and communications. We welcomed Tatia back to IUP last fall when she volunteered to be part of our alumni networking event at Homecoming.

Tatia is proud of going back to college in 2013 to earn an MBA while balancing work and family. Her husband, Joe, and son, Kyle, have always been a great support system.

THE LINK

ALUMNI PROFILE: Dr. Sharon Storch



Before receiving her Ph.D. in Communications Media and Instructional Technology (CMIT) in 2018, Sharon served as a Business, Computer, and Information Technology Instructor, teaching subjects like hybrid personal finance, movie production, coding, emerging technologies, and computer literacy.

Now, she's heading to the University of Nebraska at Omaha where she has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor of Organizational Communication where she will teach business communication courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Sharon's goals in her new position are to create a safe atmosphere for students to actively engage in discussions and diverse activities that will expand their horizons and translate to real world experiences. She also believes it is important that students can laugh together and realize that learning can be fun. "I seek to energetically and creatively build curricula and embark on new challenges such as teaching graduate classes and new research opportunities. I look forward to being stretched outside of my comfort zone, so I can continue to be a lifelong learner."

She gives credit to the CMIT program for helping her grow personally and professionally. "I was challenged as a scholar to think critically about theories and their applications to research both historically and currently. These learning experiences allowed me to look at experiences through a variety of lenses. I grew in terms of extending my network to work with diverse individuals and within diverse learning experiences."

In her free time, Sharon spends time making memories with her husband, family, and friends at arts and cultural activities. She has enjoyed hanging out at dog-friendly places in Pittsburgh with her two poodles, Maurice and Sophia.

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SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

Your donation to the Foundation for IUP can be designated specifically to benefit one of our organizations or scholarships. So often, we hear from former students about how their involvement in our student productions and organizations helped to launch their careers. A contribution to IUP-TV or WIUP-FM helps fund equipment purchases, support promotion events, and student activities. A donation to the Communications Media Department's general fund helps us hire student workers, provide scholarships for students, host student, and alumni networking events, and support other departmental activities.

This link can be found on our main departmental web page, [Department of Communications Media](#). From the link above, you will find a list of our accounts where you can donate to one or more of our funds.

SUPPORT IUP COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA STUDENTS

When you make a gift in support of our department, you invest in the world's next generation of leaders. Scholarships and program support create the best possible student experience.

[Support Our Students](#)

Selected Designations

Name	Amount	Percentage
Communications Media Department, General	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
IUP-TV	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
WIUP-FM RADIO	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
Center for Media Production and Research	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
W. Darryl Green Memorial Scholarship	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
Communications Media Journal and Conference	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
Communications Media Doctoral Scholarship and Research	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> %
Total:	\$0.00	0%

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CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Our social media accounts keep students, alumni, faculty, and prospective students up to date on department activities. Follow us to see if you will be featured in our #TBT (Throwback Thursday) posts, get information on events in the department, and see what our students and faculty are doing!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/iupcommmedia>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/iupcommmedia/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IUPCommMedia>

The Link is produced by the Department of Communications Media with help from student photographer and writer Hayley Bush and our administrative assistant, Mrs. Tammy Lucas.

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COMMUNICATIONS
MEDIA

*The Department of Communications Media
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