

WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN YEARBOOK?



Ask the entire yearbook staff why they decided to be involved and you'll receive dozens of answers. Some heard it was a fun class and others were instructed by older siblings that yearbook was a must. A love for photography, design or the written word encourages those looking for a creative outlet. But ask those same students how they benefitted from their years on staff and the responses are consistent; leadership, time management, attention to detail—oh, and an array of journalistic and technical skills were among the most important

...THINGS THEY LEARNED IN YEARBOOK

THAO TRAN WAS A SIXTH GRADER WHEN SHE FIRST JOINED YEARBOOK AT JOSEPH GEORGE MIDDLE SCHOOL IN SAN JOSE, CA.

She liked to write and some of her older friends from elementary school were on staff, so she thought it would be a fun thing to do. Her adviser, Lois Moore, set the bar high and the staff met her expectations. “I remember her being very picky about copy — opening and closing paragraphs tying up, quotes coming from a variety of people (not just our friends), and grammar and punctuation being very important,” recalls Thao nearly 20 years later.

As an eighth grade editor, she visited the high school she planned to attend and introduced herself to Independence HS adviser Paul Ender as “your 1997 editor.” The next year, she became one of few freshmen to work on the award-winning American staff, joining the 0-period class that met at 6:50 a.m. to avoid schedule conflicts.

After years of non-stop yearbook, including workshops in Santa Cruz, conventions in New York, San Diego and San Francisco and national awards like NSPA Best of Show trophies and Pacemakers and CSPA Gold and Silver Crowns, Thao graduated and feared her yearbook days were over. And they might have been, if not for the opportunity to be a teaching assistant at the yearbook workshop she'd attended. Or the summer she worked on campus at Wellesley, teaching high school girls about journalism and creating a mini-yearbook for the six-week summer program.

At Yale, she joined the newspaper staff and eventually served as Managing Editor of the Yale Daily News, the country's oldest college newspaper. She loved the creative process, the fact that the stories told would last forever and the dissemination of timely information to her peers, but her degree in Political Theory meant turning her focus elsewhere.

After graduation, she moved to NYC, where she worked as an analyst in the investment banking division at Goldman Sachs for three years. “Even when my job appeared to be completely unrelated,” she says, “I was using yearbooking skills like attention to detail, design/presentation, working under deadline, people management and teambuilding every project, every day.”

Following business school at Stanford, Thao returned to her media roots. She's now the Director of Corporate Development at the Washington Post Company. “The Post is in a variety of businesses — newspaper and magazine publishing, online and interactive, cable systems, TV broadcasting and education,” she explains. “I evaluate and execute acquisitions and investments across our media businesses. On the strategy side, I help the company think about

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new monetization strategies inside our businesses, work on new ventures the Company wants to start and also look at new and interesting technologies and companies that may not be part of our existing operations.”



CHRIS FEMATT'S YEARBOOKING CAREER WAS MUCH SHORTER, YET THE IMPACT OF YEARBOOK ON HIS LIFE IS VERY SIMILAR. Joining yearbook his senior year at Pittsburg (CA) HS “because one of my friends was going to be editor-in-chief and said it would be fun,” Chris found that he learned about more than the basics of design and reporting. His reps invited him to drop by their summer workshop even though his schedule didn't allow for him to be fully involved. As senior section editor of the Galleon, he found himself learning about working with others, networking to his advantage, being inclusive and creating a book that reflected his perceptions of the school. And he soon knew that yearbook was a more powerful experience than he'd imagined.

“I got Photoshop right away and I did a lot of raw designing with self-made rulers, margins and the like,” he remembers. “Eventually, I was given PageMaker. I was able to understand it pretty quickly, and applying it to yearbook just made sense to me.”

When his reps called to ask whether he wanted to be a teaching assistant the next summer, he was surprised. “I loved what I had learned and I had worked to learn and understand everything, but I was just trying to make a great book for my school,” he said. But, of course, he was up for an opportunity to spend a little more time yearbooking. “I loved teaching advisers InDesign,” he said. “It was great to see them ‘get it’ so quickly.”

When he headed to MIT to study architectural design, Chris knew he wasn't done with yearbook— or the workshop, California Yearbook Academy. He's been back every year since. In fact, he arranges his summers around the workshop. After years as a TA, he took the reins in the InDesign class in 2008.

He's an MIT senior this year and one of the things he brings up in his interviews is his summer schedule. “I just tell them,” he says. “I need some vacation flexibility in the summer... because I WILL be at the workshop again!”

Not only does the yearbook that's created last forever, but the process is memorable as well. Yearbook is a class unlike most others in the curriculum.

1. After editing her senior books at Basic HS in Henderson, NV, and UC-Davis, Leah Zilversmit joined the Peace Corps. At far left, she's with a home-based care group she led in Lesotho, Africa providing medical support to people who couldn't get to the hospital. When this picture was taken, the group had just performed dramas at a local primary school to teach facts about HIV. “Of all the things I learned in yearbook, one of best lessons I took away was staying cool under pressure. High school yearbook deadlines prepared me for success in college and my work in Africa where there were lots of issues that needed attention and no resources,” she said.



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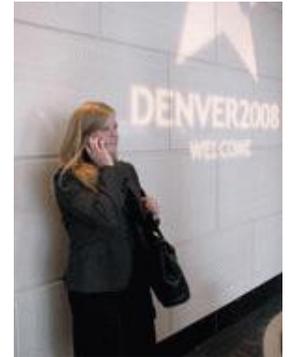


2. Yearbook helped Travis Ladue discover his passions for photography, publications and visual communication. The former digital editor from Corona del Sol HS in Tempe, AZ, is now enrolled in the College of Design at Arizona State University and working at the local Apple store. He joined the yearbook staff at school after hanging out for years with the yearbook staff his mother advised at nearby McClintock HS.

“When I was about 12, I thought it was interesting so I started taking pictures,” he remembers. “My mom taught me a little about the software and I used it first for other school projects.” In addition to cooperation, teamwork and leadership, he hopes his technical yearbook skills will be used daily in his work.



3. Janet Daly’s mom was a yearbook adviser too (she’s Herff Jones Special Consultant Kathy Daly), so it was no surprise when Janet joined the Trail staff at Overland HS in Aurora, CO. Fast forward through her three years on staff (she was editor in 1999) and degrees from Tulane in Economics and Women’s Studies, where she again found herself in leadership roles. She was headed for law school when the opportunity to go on the road with Howard Dean’s campaign piqued her political interests. Her ability to motivate/train volunteers and design pamphlets led to increased responsibility. Today, she’s an Account Exec with a group that raises funds for non-profits and political campaigns, so she returned to Colorado for the Democratic National Convention in part because of lessons she learned in yearbook.



Yearbook Discoveries