
J-alumna encourages student-run media in D.C.

Dorothy B. Gilliam, J-'61, continues to help Washington, D.C.-area high school students create and strengthen student-run media. Gilliam is founder and director of Prime Movers Media Program at The George Washington University. The program began in 2003. "Prime Movers Media is opening an ever-widening pathway for diverse high school students to work in the expanding 'information highway' and creating a pipeline for ensuring racial diversity in the new media era," said Gilliam, a retired long-time Washington Post journalist and the 10th president of NABJ [1993-95].



The GWU program operates in an environment in which a number of high schools no longer publish student newspapers or related media. In Richmond, Va., novelist David L. Robbins funded a program to encourage [extra-curricular](#) student writing. Meanwhile, as horrific reports of newspaper closings, layoffs and firings of journalists are announced daily, observers were perplexed that enrollment at leading schools of journalism and communication was stable or rising. Columbia J-school Dean Nicholas Lemann told [Forbes](#) magazine "I've never met a person in 35 years who went into journalism out of pure economic reason. It doesn't make us recession-proof, but it makes us less recession-responsive."

Prime Movers Media gives high school students hope and practical training. Students are matched with mentors from USA Today, National Public Radio, the Washington Post, New York Times and other media. Last year the program expanded beyond metro Washington, D.C. to Philadelphia. About 2,000 young people have participated in the program and 30,000 high school students have been exposed to student media participants created as readers, viewers and listeners. To learn more, visit www.gwu.edu/~primemovers/.

Columbia J-chapter of NABJ hosted meet and greet at spring alumni meeting



Members of the revived NABJ student chapter at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism are about to graduate and they want to make sure and transition smoothly to the incoming class. The officers encouraged alumni to meet with them at The Heights restaurant/bar on Broadway to discuss the future. The photo is of CU ABJ members after their "Reporting in Africa" program that featured four top-notch journalists.

Obama's 100 days

Want a better measure? Check back in 2 years



The first 100 days of a new presidency is [overrated](#). Recent history informs us that citizens cannot get a good read of their commander-in-chief based on a fixed and artificial milestone. Barack Obama has done a heck of a lot in 100 days. He has repealed previous administration policies, such as resisting stem cell research and ended general hostility toward scientific inquiry.

Obama stated emphatically that intelligence and military people must not and will not torture terrorist suspects. His rationale is effective interrogation and less chance of putting American warriors and civilians at greater risk.

Read more of Wayne Dawkins' April 29 [commentary](#) at [politicsincolor.com](#)

Green Day

A promise that environmental advocacy is back at the EPA

It's a new day at the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Science, not ideology will guide the agency, Obama administration appointee [Lisa P. Jackson](#) told half-dozen columnists from the Trotter Group during a Monday conference call. "We had eight years of neglect of the role of the EPA," said [Jackson](#) of the Bush administration. "It's time to restart the engine, but it is eight years we can't get back."

The Princeton-educated, chemical engineer's words were not partisan or gratuitous. One of her predecessors was Christine Todd Whitman, a [moderate Republican](#) with a solid reputation for environmental protection as governor of New Jersey during the 1990s. I [covered](#) Whitman back then. Yet as a Bush appointee, her attempts to lead were thwarted, so she left quietly 2003 rather than soil her reputation. Read more of Dawkins' April 16 [commentary](#).

Movie review

American just-us

In the daily tsunami of news, talk shows and blogs on current events, it is rare that the issue of



race and racism ever gets a hearing without reticence, apology or hostility. For example, even as some tout the arrival of the so-called "post-racial" America, this week's government report about increased recruitment by racist extremist groups was shouted down by right-wing talking heads. So, for me, it is amazing to even see the film "American Violet," which is based in part on the true story of how a wide swath of the black community in Tulia, Texas was arrested one day in a massive drug raid in 1999. I admit it, before the first frames roll, I give a film like this some props for just being, and I also give it a bit of a pass if it is not big-budget polished.

But with "American Violet," no such pass is needed. Director Tim Disney and producer-writer Bill Haney hold the story, production values and action in a close embrace from beginning to end. A story about big issues is distilled into a compelling narrative about one young black mother who finds herself in the crosshairs and entanglement of the justice system. At the same time, the nation is in thick of the November 2000 presidential race.

People



Mira Lowe, '88, was named editor in chief of Jet magazine, reported the online media column Journal-isms on April 22. Lowe's is the first major appointment to be announced since the financially troubled, privately held company [confirmed](#) in February it was undergoing a major reorganization in which staffers had to reapply for new jobs. Jet is a pocket-sized weekly newsmagazine heavy on celebrity news and known throughout the years for its news tidbits and its "Beauty of the Week." Lowe, a former Newsday associate editor, would apparently be the first woman to edit the magazine in its 57-year history.



Michelle Johnson, '82, a multimedia journalism professor and one of the founders of Boston.com, The Boston Globe's Web site, is leaving Emerson College for Boston University, the Emerson student newspaper, the Berkeley Beacon, [reported](#) on April 30. Johnson "was contacted by BU about an opening for a multimedia professor and college adviser on online journalism. BU also offered her a long-term contract, whereas her Emerson contract was year-to-year, and she'll be able to apply for associate professor status as soon as she arrives there."

[Item from the online media column Journal-isms, [mije.org](#)]

William H. Hamilton Jr., '80, can now add Ph.D. to his name. He successfully defended his dissertation on college writing and culture on Dec. 5 at the University of Louisville. Hamilton is a professor at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Kentucky.

Kirk Jackson, '82, a refugee from the Allentown Morning Call [Tribune Co.] checked in: "How I'm doing? Not bad. Working for the Census bureau as a clerk and writing on the side. Not sure what direction I want to go career wise since leaving the paper, but I'm holding steady. I have a lot to be thankful for, I think."

Gil McDonald, '80, is senior contracts officer in the Office of Sponsored Programs at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. He negotiates research agreements (ie: contracts, subcontracts, confidentiality agreements, material transfer agreements, licensing agreements, clinical trials, etc.) He has been a career university research administrator pretty much since graduation at Columbia, Howard University, University of Maryland, Bowie State University, and the National Safety Council.

Jobline

ABC News has an opening for a **digital reporter** based in Moscow. Strong production, print writing, and broadcast skills are mandatory. Responsibilities include providing on-air and off-air content, producing for dotcom, radio and television. Responsibilities also include pitching unique content to all shows and platforms. Candidates must be proficient with digital technology as they will be required to shoot and edit their own material. Advanced training will be provided, but candidates should already have some DV shooting, laptop editing and FTP skills. Language skills, while not mandatory, are a plus.

Please indicate relevant technical and language skills. 3-5 years of production experience is required. Candidates must be self-starters, independent, and enterprising. Strong editorial sensibilities are required. Apply through www.disneycareers.com and use requisition #191087.

Black Alumni Network

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Investigation of slain weekly newspaper editor earns award for best reporting of racial bias and intolerance

Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism April 29 named the Chauncey Bailey Project the 2009 [Paul Tobenkin Memorial Award](#) winner. The project was started to probe the 2007 assassination of Oakland Post editor Chauncey Bailey, who was investigating a community empowerment enterprise called Your Black Muslim Bakery in Oakland, Calif. The Tobenkin Memorial Award is given annually by the J-School to recognize courageous work on racial discrimination and intolerance.



The project is a collaboration of nearly three dozen Bay Area news outlets, freelance journalists, journalism schools, local and national media organizations, and funders. The Bailey Project has produced more than 150 stories over the 20 months since the August 2007 murder. The stories have appeared in dozens of San Francisco Bay Area news outlets such as the Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury News, Contra Costa Times, *New America Media, KTVU-TV, CBS-5, ABC-7, KQED-FM, among others. The stories are also distributed through the Web sites of the Center for Investigative Reporting <http://centerforinvestigativereporting.org/> and the Chauncey Bailey Project www.chaunceybaileyproject.org. As the series of stories unfolded, the Oakland police chief resigned and the lead police investigator was suspended for ignoring evidence against one of the murder suspects. State and federal law enforcement agencies are now investigating a conspiracy surrounding Bailey's murder.

"The work, the results, and impact of the Bailey Project represent the value of investigative reporting to our democracy," said Robert J. Rosenthal, executive director of the Center for Investigative Reporting and executive editor of the project. "It is hard work, done by skilled and passionate journalists who believe they can make a difference in our society," Rosenthal added. "The business of journalism is under assault, but the need and value of the journalism that is being eliminated has never been greater. The project, which is based on collaboration and trust, is a model for our transformational time." The award carries a \$1,500 prize. It will be presented on May 19 at Columbia's Journalism Day Ceremony during commencement week.

The **Black Alumni Network** of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism was founded in May 1980 and since July the group has published a monthly newsletter. The BA Newsletter's mission is to keep people connected. We publish job changes and moves, news about books and films published or produced by alumni, and family milestones. And of course we keep alumni connected to news from the Columbia GSJ. Log on to our Web site at www.jrn.columbia.edu/alumni/services/ban/ or see our link on the home page of www.blackjournalist.com Wayne J. Dawkins – **editor**, Betty Winston Baye, Kip Branch, Kissette Bundy, Angela Chatman, Cheryl Devall, Dan Holly, Keith Rushing, **contributing editors**
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