

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION
AT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, CARBONDALE
1874 to the Present**

This document presents a brief historical summary of the Department of Speech Communication from the beginning in the late nineteenth-century through the ebb and flow of faculty changes to the present. A more complete history, but one beyond the scope of this document, would include the contributions of thousands of students who have passed through the program, department activities and curriculum as well as cultural and social conditions relevant to the university context.

In 1874 the Board of Trustees approved a curriculum for what was then Southern Illinois College, founded in 1869, with twelve academic departments that included the Department of Reading and Elocution. This was one thread of a forerunner of modern communication; another historical thread lay in the new Department of Language and Literature.

Even though the department did not officially form until the 1940's, communication study has been a part of the university curriculum from the university's founding. President **Henry William Shryock**, while head of the English Department, taught courses in elocution. **Dorothy Magnus (1936-1943)**, who also began in the English department in 1936, is given credit for founding the Department of Speech when she decided to shift out of English in 1938 so that she could focus on oratory and dramatics. Magnus was followed by **Archibald McLeod (1947-1971)**, in 1938 so that he could expand his expertise in dramatic productions; McCleod is remembered for the McLeod Theatre, which bears his name,.

Originally titled the Speech Department, the Department of Speech Communication locates its departmental origins with that name in 1946, with **Melville P. Larson (1946-1948-photo right)** as the head of the Department.



C. Horton Talley
Chairman of the Department
of Speech
1948

In 1948, **Horton C. Talley (1948-1972-photo left)** became the first official Chair of the Department. Originally the School of Communication was a part of Vocations and Professions; however in 1953 Talley was assigned to Dean and the School of Communications was officially recognized. Speech communication was held in high regard at Southern Illinois and subsequently in 1958 it was one of the first four departments to be granted PH.D status by the University.

The School of Communication began in a barracks that was originally used for military training and stayed there from 1965-1967. During this time period communications at Southern Illinois University focused primarily on interpersonal and small group communication. Theatre was a part of the speech department from the beginning until 1958 when it separated and formed its own department in the School of Communications.

In 1948, after two years as head of the department, Larson retired and thus passed the duty of Department Chair to C. Horton Talley. **Rollin E. Buckman (1949-1950)** and **Paul Hunsinger (1949-1958)** both began in 1949. Hunsinger, who had studied at Northwestern and had previously worked as a preacher, is acknowledged as the first individual at Southern Illinois University to teach courses in oral interpretation. **Buren Calvin Robbins (1949-1957)** was hired and followed by **Albert J. Croft (1950-1954)**, the first debate coach **Lester R. Breniman (1954-1973)** who focused on communication education was brought into the department followed by **Ralph A. Micken (1959-1973)**. Micken would go on to become the department chair from 1971 until 1974. Micken brought **Raymond D. Wiley (1957-1976)** to the faculty in the early 1960's, first as an instructor and then as assistant professor and Director of Public Relations Education. Wiley had served as an Information and Education officer in the United States Army and brought that public relations experience to his teaching. Wiley developed the interdisciplinary degree in public relations in the speech communication department; the successful campus student PRSSA chapter bears his name as the Raymond D. Wiley chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA).



Marion L. Kleinau (1959-1990) was hired as an oral interpretation and communication education scholar; however she also did work in story telling, oral tradition, and eventually performance studies. When Dr. Kleinau arrived in 1959 the communication building was still under construction, however since several shows had been performed in numerous other buildings on campus the need for a performance space was increasing. Dr. Kleinau gained permission to set up a temporary

theatre space in the communication building which became the first theatre in the country dedicated to non-dramatic literature titled the Calipre Stage. The first show in the new performance space was titled "In White America" directed by Paul Roland performed in 1967. In honor of her work and dedication, The Calipre stage was renamed the "Marion Kleinau Theatre" in April of 1990. **David Potter (1960-1977)** was hired along with **Craig A. Baird (1959-1968)**. Interpersonal and small group scholar **William D. Smith (1958-1989)** arrived shortly after Baird. **Marvin Kleinau**



(1961-1992) joined SIU while studying communication education, rhetoric, and public address. Marvin Kleinau was subsequently chair of the department from 1982 until his retirement in 1991; he served as acting dean of the College of Communications and Fine Arts from 1982 until 1991.



Language Development scholar **Dorothy C. Higginbotham (1964-1978)** and public speaking scholar **R. Paul Hibbs (1947-1977-photo right)** were brought in as faculty members. Professor Hibbs was well known for his extraordinary work in Forensics and was Chair of the

department from 1974-1975. **Thomas J. Pace (1965-1994)** began his work with interpersonal communication, small group communication, phenomenology, and philosophy of communication followed by **Keith R. Sanders (1967-1989-photo left)** as

the department's first political communication scholar. Sanders also worked in interpersonal and small group communication. **Russell Jennings (1965-1974)** was a part of the department for several years. The last person hired in the decade was **Marlow Anderson (1969-1970)** for his work in Oral interpretation.

The 1970's strengthened the department in areas such as philosophy of communication and phenomenology. **Robert S. Fish (1970-1981)** was the first person hired in the new decade to do work in Oral interpretation. Fish was followed by **Mary Lou Higginson (1974-2000)** who was hired to develop an organizational communication area and to continue her departmental work in public relations. Oral interpretation scholar **Janet Larsen McHughes (1967-1980)** was a part of the department for several years followed by **Elizabeth Norwood (1972-1976)**. **Richard Lanigan (1974-Present)**, who has now been a part of the department for over thirty years, was hired for his work in phenomenology, philosophy of communication, and semiology. Rhetorician and Public address scholar Professor Lanigan's career includes being named an Outstanding Scholar of the University. **Randall Bytwerf (1975-1985)** was hired along with **Edward McGlone (1975-1980)**. McGlone was a major force in the department with his work in humor and quantitative research. McGlone would go on to become the chair of the department from 1975 until his retirement in 1982. **Donald MacDonald (1976-1985)** helped strengthen the organizational and public relation elements of the department. **Stanley Deetz (1977-1984)** arrived with a focus in interpersonal, small group communication, phenomenology, and philosophy of communication. Deetz was also hired along with small group scholar **William E. Holdridge (1977-1984)**. **Michael Parkinson (1978-1999)** expanded the department doing work in language behavior as well as organizational communication. The last person hired in the decade was **Cecil A. Blake (1979-1980)** for his work in interpersonal.

With the passing of the 70's our department started to develop new areas of scholarship. **Bryan Crow (1981-Present)** was hired for his work in interpersonal communication, discourse analysis, and media studies. **Ronald Pelias (1981-Present)**, who is currently the Graduate Advisor, was hired in the same year for his work in oral interpretation, interpersonal communication, and literary criticism. **James Van oosting (1981-1997)**, who would later become chair of the department from 1993 to 1996, was hired for his work in oral interpretation, creative writing, and children's literature. **Mary Hinchcliff (Hinchcliff-Pelias, 1983-2007)** arrived to help the department develop its communication pedagogy and later intercultural and media studies perspectives. Over her career she won many teaching awards including the Outstanding Teacher of the University. **Dennis Davis (1984-1990)** was hired for his work in political communication, quantitative research methods, and media studies. **Gay D. Wakefield (1984-1991)** was hired for public relations. **James Jasinski (1985-1989)** was hired for his work in rhetorical theory, public address, and rhetorical criticism. Along with Jasinski, **Joseph Scudder (1985-1989)** was also hired to strengthen the organizational communication, small group, and interpersonal communication aspects of the department. **Jeffrey Bile (1984-1993, 1999-2000)** as director of debate, led Saluki Debate to four Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) championships.

Phillip Glenn (1989-2001) was brought in his focus on conversation analysis, interpersonal communication, laughter, play, conversational performance, and conflict. Glenn was chair of the department from 1997 until 2002. **Janet Hoffman (1989-1994)** was hired with a focus in instructional communication and TA training and development. **Ann M. Major (1989-1995)** rounded out the year with her work in public relations, public opinion and communication management.

Some major changes took place in the Department of Speech Communication in the mid-1990's. Top members of the university administration (SIUC President John Guyon and Provost Benjamin Shepard) closed the College of Communication and Fine Arts (CCFA) in 1993 ostensibly as a budget-cutting measure to save the cost of a dean's office and staff. The majority (60%) of CCFA was relocated to the **College of Liberal Arts**. That included the School of Art & Design, the School of Music, the Theatre Department, the University Museum, and the Department of Speech Communication (July, 1993). The administrators came to a special department meeting of the speech communication faculty and insisted that there would be no college left, so they forced the move and required that all departments find a different college location. However, a small group of remaining departments (Cinema & Photography, Journalism, Radio/TV) eventually were later allowed to form a new college called Mass Communication and Media Arts. By that time, though, most of the former CCFA units had relocated into Liberal Arts. Substantial confusion continues to this day since many people imagine that MCMA is a new version of CCFA instead of a new unit comprised of about 40% of a former college. Since Dr's Guyon and Shepard had sworn that there was not going to be a new college bearing the name "communication," when the new college was being formed, a compromise name "mass communication" was finally accepted with Speech Communication and the majority of the former CCFA remaining in the College of Liberal Arts.

Several new scholars were brought in to begin work in the new decade of the 1990's: **Suzanne Daughton (1990-Present)** for her work in rhetorical theory and criticism. **Daradirek Ekachai (1990-2000)** for her work in public relations and intercultural communication. **Kathryn French (1990-1995)** focused on conversational analysis, interpersonal communication, and health communication. **Lenore Langsdorf (1989-Present)** was hired for her scholarly work in rhetoric, argumentation, and social political theory. **Elyse Pineau (1990-Present)** for her work in women's autobiography and personal narratives in performance, and **Nathan Stucky (1990-Present)**—photo at right) for his work in performance studies, staging literature, conversation analysis, and dramatic literature. Stucky who currently serves as the Department chair, has done so since 2002.



Norman Greer (2001-2002) was hired for communication education and business communication. **James McOmber (1994-1998)** was hired for his interests in rhetorical theory, public address, rhetoric of science, and psychoanalysis. **Laurel T. Hetherington (1995-1999)** was employed for work in interpersonal communication, public relations, and communication management. **Jennifer Willis (Willis-Rivera, 1997-2004)** was hired to help with communication education and intercultural communication. **Michaela**

Winchatz (1997-2002) was hired to expand the department towards ethnography, language, and social interaction. **Greg Simerly (1994-1998)** was hired as Director of Debate. **Jennifer Rigdon (1998-1999)** hired as Director of Debate to replace Rigdon took the Salukis back into the top ranks of CEDA debate placing fourth in the national CEDA sweepstakes. **Nilanjana Bardan (1998-Present)** was hired for her work in public relations and intercultural communication. **Craig Gingrich-Philbrook (1998-Present)** was also hired for his interest in performance studies, queer theory, continental philosophy, and performance art. **Jonathan M. Gray (1999-Present)** was brought in as Director of the Basic Course and to join the area of Rhetoric and Philosophy of Communication, and for his work in popular culture, and communication pedagogy. **Todd Graham (2000-Present)** was hired to coach the debate team, he supervised the switch from CEDA debate to affiliate the Salukis with the National Parliamentary Debate Association. **Maurice L Hall (2001-2004)** was added for his work in organizational communication, intercultural communication, conflict management, and organizational leadership. **Kimberly N. Kline (2001-2007)** hired for issues of management and public relations, health communication, women's health issues, and rhetorical criticism. **Cheryl Nicholas (2004-2007)** hired in intercultural communication and ethnographic methods. **Robyn Remke (2005-2007)** came as a specialist in organizational communication. **Naida Zukic (2005-Present)** was hired for her work in intercultural communication. **John Warren (2006-present)** joined the faculty to head-up the area of communication pedagogy. **Melissa Curtin (2007--)** was added to the faculty in intercultural communication.

The Department of Speech Communication at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale has had many changes over the years; however, it has always retained a strong teaching, research, publication, and service record. It is one of the leading doctoral research programs in speech communication in the U.S. The department has a commitment to maintaining a scholarly community where faculty and students can work together. It has strong programs in performance studies, public relations, communication pedagogy, rhetoric and the philosophy of communication, interpersonal communication, persuasive communication, and intercultural communication. Our faculty are among the top scholars in the field. We continuously examine and upgrade our work to keep pace with a changing world while remembering our history and striving to maintain the core elements of our traditions that have marked the excellence of the program over the years. The newest area of study is gender, sexuality and communication. As the department moves through the 21st century, it is evident through its tradition and legacy that its strength and stability at Southern Illinois University will continue to flourish.

[Authorship includes contributions by Nathan Stucky, Christopher Collins, and Mimi Hodis. Last updated: 6 June 2007.]