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A Riley Romance
Creativity and all-nighters aren't the only things that Riley Hall spurs—the building also has a knack for matchmaking. Alums Julie Ruffin '07 and Evan DeWalt '06 met in a design class in the spring of 2004 and grew close over late night LaFortune runs and project critiques. Staying in touch after graduation and navigating time zones, long distances, and strong wills, the two were married this past fall. Their wedding took place on October 12, 2012, and they currently reside in Atlanta, GA. Congratulations!

Young Alumni Share Secrets
For current students, knowing how to navigate the job market can be a little confusing and hugely daunting. Thankfully, various design program alums dedicated their time this fall to give students a little peace of mind by participating in the Young Alumni Lecture Series. Takashi Yoshi '10, Jonathan Lee '10, Dan Jacobs '11, Kelly Gronli '08, Andrew Paultz '10, and Coleman Collins ’11 ventured back to Notre Dame to discuss their career paths, challenges, and secrets to success with current students. These lectures allow current students to see how others have gone from student to professional and to connect with young alumni.

A Stellar Speaker
This spring, Notre Dame students were treated to a talk by Justin Ahrens, founder and Creative Director of Rule29 and an avid Notre Dame fan. Ahrens strives to expand his design capabilities while employing socially responsible practices, a concept that resonates with Notre Dame design teaching. Ahrens is currently creating promotional materials for Life in Abundance, a foundation that works in the slums of Northeast Africa to restore hope and inspire transformation for Africa’s most vulnerable families. Megan Malley, a senior graphic design BFA, says, “his talk really resonated with our design community here because he is a professional designer with a job and a family that he needs to support, but still finds a way to use his skills to change the world for the better. It was great to hear the experiences of someone who can balance working for profit with using design to help those in need.”

Design@ND showcases Notre Dame’s graphic and industrial design programs, illustrates the caliber of both students and graduates, and builds the University’s reputation within the professional design community.
A GLIMPSE INTO AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRIAL DESIGN EDUCATION OF THE PAST

In the fall of 2012, the Isis Gallery was adorned with drawings from industrial design students of the 1950s–1970s. The “Back to the Future” exhibit showcased automotive drawings from past ID students, featuring the work of current Adjunct Assistant Professor George Tisten.

Last fall, the ISIS Gallery went Back to the Future to host an exhibition of automobile drawings created by design students from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. The gallery was full of past industrial design work, showing a glimpse into industrial design education from those decades.

This blast-from-the-past was complete with 30 drawings, including six from current Adjunct Assistant Professor George Tisten (ND Class of ’70), which was a pretty amazing feat not only from the amount of work that he was able to showcase—but from the fact that he was able to showcase any work at all. Tisten explains, “after graduation I threw all of my sketches into the trash dumpster behind O’Shaughnessy; I simply didn’t have a place for them, so I tossed in my paintings, car drawings, everything.” Tisten estimates that he threw away over 1,000 pieces of work he had done during his time as a student, and he truly never expected to see them again.

But see them again he did, as a mystery person resurrected his drawings from the trash and gave them to then-professor Fred Beckman. Beckman, who was a professor from 1946 to the mid-1990s, was committed to making Notre Dame industrial design a nationally-competitive program. For this reason, he focused on teaching automotive rendering, a necessary skill for industrial designers at the time. Beckman started a multiyear, three-step project with ID undergrads in order to hone their automobile sketching skills. First, he would present students with a stack of professional sketches of automobiles from Detroit’s “Big 3”: Chrysler, Ford, and GM. Students were instructed to duplicate these sketches. After copying the sketch, they would then update the car, making slight changes to the headlights, grill, and other parts of the exterior. Finally, the students would design their own car—drawing it from multiple angles and creating a 3-D model of their design. It was these car designs that adorned the halls of the ISIS Gallery from September 13 to October 12. Students featured include: Virgil M. Exner ’56, Arthur Blakeslee ’59, Jon C. Siddle ’59, James Bisignano ’61, James R. Brunette ’61, Dennis Luczak ’61, Ernest J. Barry ’65, Stephen R. Hester ’65, Dennis Kristowski ’65, William E. Muempfer ’66, Joseph Papai ’66, James St. Clair ’67, Stephen J. Heagan ’68, George Tisten ’70, and Charles E. Maher ’71.

“Students would have to do a facelift of a car, just as automotive professionals would do when creating a new model of a preexisting car. Then, based off their facelift, students would have to design an entirely new car—their own original design. The entire project would take about three years.” – George Tisten
Designing Under Deadline
Creating and presenting all three projects in such a short time was grueling and intimidating, say participants. For five days they worked intensely and sacrificed sleep—but ultimately produced well-conceived and interactive design projects. “John Bielenberg pushes you to go for crazy first and figure out if you can refine it later,” explains Keelean. “Through the process of forcing solutions we get a lot of ideas, and every once in a while there’s something really good in one of those crazy ideas.” The combined stress and satisfaction of the blitz experience was also transformative on a more personal level, says Rantanen. “Before doing this, I felt like I was in a design rut, and I wanted to get shaken up,” she says.

Bienenberg, co-founder of the “rapid ingenuity” firm Future Partners, says the Notre Dame design students, “were smart, engaged and passionate about this project. I was impressed at their ability to collaborate with each other under stressful creative and deadline pressures,” he says. “I set the bar pretty high and expect legendary results. This group lived up to the challenge.”

Staying Engaged
While the design blitz was intended to last only one week, it struck a chord with participants. Inspired by the experience, a number of students are now petitioning for a bus that goes directly from campus to downtown—and discussing future projects. “We’re hoping to make another appearance downtown or use the outdoor projection idea to advertise things going on in the community as a source of entertainment for people,” says Brandenberger.

“I hope the wall will stay,” adds Rantanen. “We just need to figure out how to provide chalk in a sustainable and consistent way.”

— Eileen Lynch
“Business today needs much better capabilities to innovate—and I believe that design thinking coupled with a variety of other fields is something that the economy demands. The new facilities at West Lake help develop curiosity, communication, and collaborative thinking, which will serve students well as undergraduates and in their careers.” —Benefactor Marty Cregg, ’73
ND DESIGN STUDENTS’ PROJECT RECEIVES $50,000 SAPPi ‘IDEAS THAT MATTER’ GRANT

Students from the Fall 2011 Graphic Design 3: Design for Social Good class undertook a project they dubbed “together+,” a campaign to combat xenophobia in South Africa. The students split into teams to create various solutions to the racial problems in this volatile country. Recently, they earned the “Ideas that Matter” grant to continue their work.

Collaboration among University of Notre Dame faculty and students, Sedlack Design Associates, and Notre Dame’s Center for Social Concerns has resulted in a $50,000 Sappi Ideas that Matter grant to together+, a campaign to combat xenophobia in South Africa. The Ideas that Matter grant program is an initiative of Sappi Fine Paper North America, producer of fine coated papers for the print industry. The program—the only grant program of its kind in the industry—was established more than a decade ago to recognize and support designers who donate their time and talent to a range of charitable activities.

The goal of the University’s design curriculum, says Robert Sedlack ’89, associate professor of design and director of graduate studies in the Department of Art, Art History, and Design, is to develop students who can make a difference—both in business and in the world. “It makes all the sense in the world given the mission of the University.” In his class, “Graphic Design 3: Design for Social Good,” Sedlack’s students spend 16 weeks exploring the intersection of design and social issues.

The idea to develop a campaign to unite a South African community divided by xenophobia was born out of community-based research done by the Center for Social Concerns and its community partner, Kgosi Neighbourhood Foundation (KNF), an organization based in a Johannesburg neighborhood greatly affected by xenophobia-fueled violence.

In April 2011, Paul Horn ’97, KNF’s director of community outreach initiatives, approached Sedlack and Andéria Pellegrino ’85, founder of Pellegrino Collaborative, a consulting group that partners with corporations, non-profits, and educational institutions to develop strategies, actions, and communications for social impact. “There was a critical need in the refugee community for some outside agency to try to address the problem of xenophobia, and I thought it would be a perfect fit for design and communication,” Horn says. “I knew both Andéria and Robert had a strong interest in and belief that design could affect positive change and be used for social good.”

Sedlack and Pellegrino traveled to South Africa over fall break 2011 to do research and fact-finding. “When I came back, I knew the project wasn’t going to stop at the end of the fall semester in December,” Sedlack says. Of the 12 students in the class, only two—BFA students with thesis projects due—were unable to continue with the project the following semester.

The class ultimately developed four projects designed to effect change through communication: a book on refugee rights; a campaign for health care rights, written in six different languages (English, Zulu, Sotho, Portuguese, French, and Afrikaans); a replicable community event where people gathered for a cookout and painted over hateful graffiti; and a children’s book, “Blooming Together.” Sedlack was able to take seven students to South Africa over spring break 2012. “It wasn’t a deep immersion, but it was enough to help them better understand the variety of challenges that the refugees are facing.”

The trip was critical to the project, he adds. “We put the projects in front of the people they would affect. We got to talk to teachers and students, did in-home interviews—it really changed the way the students thought about their ability to be agents of change through design.”

The grant will be used to produce and distribute the various projects that the students created. Plans for the future include expansion of the story and curriculum for older children, impact measurement tools, and scaling the campaign for other South African communities, as well as refining it for other regions of the world affected by xenophobia.

Says KNF’s Paul Horn, “This grant takes together+ from a theoretical level to practical implementation. What's really exciting is that because of the committed partners who are part of this program, the project has a major chance to influence thousands and thousands of people and really make a difference in society.”

~Carol C. Bradley

Students (left to right) Megan Malley, Brittany Backstrand, Maria Massa, Alex Leonardo, Jacqueline Hull, and Andrea Shergar travelled to South Africa during spring break 2013 to continue together+’s work.
This fall, the design program at Notre Dame had the opportunity to hear Emily Pilloton discuss the power of design and its ability to do good. After Pilloton, founder of Project H, a nonprofit organization that uses effective design to help people who need it most, talked to current ND students about sustainability and the potential they have as designers to change the world.

As a young designer, Pilloton was frustrated with some of the outrageous ridiculous aspects of the business. After being asked to choose which doorknob was better, Pilloton decided to quit commercial design and instead turned her focus to solving design problems. Luckily, Pilloton realized that she wasn’t alone in her quest to do more meaningful work, and she was able to connect with other young designers around the world who were designing pro bono and self-initiated projects. Project H has grown substantially in the last five years, designing projects in Uganda, North Carolina, California, and in various other places around the world.

In Uganda, Pilloton and her team designed “The Learning Landscape,” an educational playground system for elementary school children that teaches core concepts, social skills, and leadership. The Learning Landscape uses a grid of half-buried tires and includes a whole suite of games, based on the geometry of the tires, which are team-based, individual, timed, fast-paced, and fun. The Learning Landscape was originally developed as a low-cost solution for students struggling with math due to a lack of materials, but has since expanded into an outdoor play space that can be paired with games for every core subject. This design solution has since grown out of Africa and has been built in a multitude of other countries, including the US, New Zealand, Thailand, Costa Rica, and many more.

After creating the Learning Landscape, Pilloton was committed to using her design talents to create other real-world solutions. In 2010, she received an email from Chip Zollinger, the superintendent in Windsor, North Carolina, a struggling school system in the northeastern part of the state. Zollinger had read her book Learning Landscapes and to develop a design-based assistant Matt Miller traveled to Bertie County to build Learning Landscapes and to develop a design-based curriculum for high school students in the area. Pilloton began by expanding the computer lab facilities with the help of Dr. Zollinger; they made it a rich, engaging space complete with angled stations, wire-free capabilities, and quality computers. After overhauling the computer space, Pilloton and her team turned their attention to the football weight room. Football games in Bertie County were the social center of the town and a huge part of the community’s identity. In order to add to the community engagement of Windsor, Pilloton convinced investors to donate new weights and other athletic equipment to the program as she redesigned the weight room space.

While Pilloton contributed to the playgrounds and weight rooms of Windsor, that was not enough for her. She then developed an entire design curriculum for 13 high school students—students learned architectural, brainstorming, creative thinking, participatory action research, woodshop, metal work, and design skills—all while earning college credit. In order to enrich the design curriculum, now known as Studio H, Pilloton used a construction-based program; students first built corn hole sets, then chicken coops, and finally a full-scale farmer’s market for their struggling town. Throughout the construction process of each project, Pilloton says she could see the kids pushing through creative struggles, thinking outside the box, and realizing that they could accomplish something substantial.

The main project for Studio H was the farmer’s market the students built over the summer between their junior and senior years of high school. After a flood, earthquake, and hurricane nearly destroyed the town, Pilloton and her students wanted to help everyone rebuild, but also contribute something to the landscape of the town that could be sustainable. After deciding that a farmer’s market would not only provide a common meeting place for people of Windsor, but also contribute to the economic growth of the town, the students got to work. They began formulating design plans, deciding what materials would be best to use, and raising funds for their 120' x 80' plot of land. As the students started construction in the summer, the community rallied around them and began to anticipate the opening of the farmer’s market. On opening day, the mayor and entire community was there to see the students’ design come to life, and the students were presented with the key to the city. This project gave them a reason to be proud of their hometown, see how design thinking and creation can instill change in their community, and believe in their own abilities.

After completing her work in North Carolina, Pilloton moved to Berkeley, CA, where she has started a charter school to continue this design teaching. Now Pilloton teaches 75 students, leads the sixth grade girl advisory, and runs the summer camp Studio G, a design and building camp for girls ages 9-12. Pilloton still believes there is work to be done, and that they have only scratched the surface on how this design education can be beneficial across the country.
Nick Abrams (BA ’05), whose dad was a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and whose mother and sister were fine artists, clearly had creativity in his blood from the beginning. Due to his family’s influence and his experience with Photoshop and Illustrator in high school, it seemed obvious that he would pursue major in design when he entered Notre Dame in the fall of 2001.

During his time at Notre Dame, Nick pursued a variety of extracurricular activities that fueled his creative capabilities, including dorm apparel design and serving as the Art Director for Scholastic magazine. While he devoted much of his time to these design-related activities, he also worked with other students on a book-exchange business within the Notre Dame community. His work designing and starting a business paved the way for his future career, giving him a sound mind for both creativity and strategy implementation.

Nick graduated without a job, but with a desire to expand his education. Realizing that digital design was the future, he enrolled in a variety of Flash and Web Design classes, which gave him a significant edge in the job application process. His first full-time job was at Forward Development, a small agency with a group of young creative minds. Nick’s boss at Forward Development then started Cudder Interactive and hired him and one other employee to start the company. Over seven years, the company grew from three to 30 people and works with major clients like Quicksilver and Sony.

While Nick certainly enjoyed his time at Cudder Interactive, this past January he made the shift to business-ownership and opened his own agency. Nick explains, “I’ve had consistency and security for seven years, and all of a sudden I made this decision that I had been praying a lot about. I had the desire to design for good—I realized I may not be making consistent money, but one of the bigger challenges is to realize that sometimes you don’t know what’s coming and realize that God will provide.” While Nick had no concrete clients when he first started his agency, he is currently designing material for a few of his friends’ start-up companies, which have a social focus. For example, one start-up is a charitable online shopping app designed to help non-profits generate sustainable funding. Supporters shop online, and the online retailers (like Amazon or Illamasqua) give a percentage of their revenue back to the non-profit without costing the shopper anything.

This new business has presented Nick with a variety of challenges and opportunities, but he is excited to see what’s to come. For now, his plan is to continue to grow the business on his own and push himself out of his comfort zone. “My hope is to do good in the world. I want to use my gifts for God and his Kingdom. It’s an adventure, and it sure is an awesome one.”

Graphics for a promotional documentary in Cannes, France. Nicole is unsure of her post- graduation plans, but she is definitely interested in pursuing design full time.

Alumni Contributions Did you know that when you make a contribution to Notre Dame, you can designate your funds to go directly to the design program? Your gift to the University can help support design initiatives like this newsletter and the annual Alumni Design Conference. All you have to do is note on your correspondence that you want the contribution to go to the “Graphic and Industrial Design Alumni Fund.” It’s that easy. Also note that any gift given to the University is credited toward eligibility for the football ticket lottery. The requirement for each class in order to be eligible for next year’s lottery application (2013) is as follows: Class of 2013 to 2004 — $100 Class of 2003 to 1964 — $200 Classes before 1964 — $100 The gift must be made between January 1 and December 31 of the current year (2013) in order to make an alumni/alumna eligible for the following (2014) year’s lottery.

Alumni, remember that your generous contributions help make this newsletter happen!