Spring as a Season of Remembering and Renewal

By Lynn Schofield Clark, MFJS Chair and Professor

Photo is from April 30, 2015. Ed passed away on May 9, 2015.

Center: Ed Estlow (University of Denver (DU) ‘42), longtime champion of education in media, film, and journalism studies

L to R: AHSS Dean Danny McIntosh, Ed’s daughters Susan Lyday, Mary Erculiani, and Nancy Gwin, Chancellor Rebecca Chopp, and Estlow Center Director Lynn Schofield Clark gather outside the MFJS building to celebrate the artwork honoring Estlow

It’s the time of year when throughout campus trees and flowers blossom, students are busily engaged in the completion of team and individual projects, and faculty are staring down the mountains of papers and exams that stand between us and summer vacation. It’s also a time when we find ourselves remembering the many activities, events, guests, and recognitions of the academic year that is now ending.

As we see a new group of students donning their graduation robes, we also can’t help but recall the students, faculty, and staff who have enriched our lives both in the recent and in the distant past. In the rhythm of academic life, spring is the season for both endings and for renewal, and this newsletter celebrates both.

We were sad to recently lose two important members of our MFJS community.

Bob Yablans, our beloved Senior Technology Specialist who was highlighted in MFJS' winter newsletter, died after a long battle with cancer. A well-attended April memorial celebrated his life and his many contributions to the university.

Photo by Tory Rust
Estlow with three of his four daughters and DU alums: Nancy Gwin, Mary Erculiani, and Susan Lyday

Ed Estlow, a 1942 DU graduate who served as Chairman of the university’s Board of Trustees from 1985-1990 and remained involved in the school through the center that bears his name, died in early May. His last visit to the university was a joyful occasion, as the department dedicated the artwork that had been donated to the university in honor of Ed.

That artwork, created by fellow newspaperman and artist Lloyd Schermer, hangs in the main hall of the building that houses the MFJS department. The artwork features wood and metal type, the kind used in the 1950s newsrooms in which Ed and Lloyd both worked. Lloyd Schermer has created similar sculptures for the Smithsonian, the Freedom Forum, and for several other journalism programs around the country.

A plaque next to the sculpture explains the significance of wood and metal type in the history of printing, as until the 1960s, most printers had to arrange wood and metal letters by hand into rows on a page that would then be aligned, inked, and then printed. Many newspapers got rid of their millions of blocks of wood and metal type when papers switched to photographic typesetting, but Lloyd started collecting them and they eventually became materials for his artwork, which preserves this unique art form of wood and metal type.

As Schermer wrote for the dedication, “You, Ed, dedicated your life to our profession and most importantly, to the values that really count in life...This is why I wanted to dedicate this sculpture to you.” You can read more of Ed’s story in the DU Magazine.

As the academic year draws to a close for most students, the university continues on its mission throughout the summer months.

Faculty and staff are engaged in revising curriculum and, as a preview of what we’re working on, we’ll be introducing some new graduate degree programs in the fall. We’re also developing new courses and activities, preparing to welcome new students, crafting new relationships in our communities, and diving deeply into our reading, research, and creative work so that our efforts in the classroom will be supported with a robust attention to changes taking place throughout the global media, film, and journalism studies landscape.
Summer tends to be a quiet time on campus, but we'll be offering twelve classes and overseeing numerous students involved in internships. We'll also have students involved in several research and filmmaking apprentice experiences so that student learning will continue in earnest.

Most of us on campus love this time of year, when we can celebrate the achievements of our community members present and past, and when we can look forward in earnest toward the new students and the new energy they will bring into our midst in the future.

Feel free to stop by for a visit to our lush and beautiful campus if your travels take you near the university this summer. We'd love to see you!