



27 Years of Outstanding Teaching



Professor Darla Belshe

In 1961, Darla Belshe graduated from what was then known as the San Jose State College Department of Journalism and Advertising, with a degree that emphasized newspaper reporting and editing, but a last semester internship led to a job offer she hadn't expected.

Then, San Jose ABC affiliate, KNTV, hired her and in the summer of 1961, she became the first woman ever to work in the station's newsroom, and perhaps the first ever to work in any Bay Area television newsroom. She started as the stations' only nighttime reporter/photographer/editor.

She went on to work in the television field for 16 plus years as a news and documentary reporter, photographer, editor and occasionally, producer. She also worked for various educational, commercial and corporate film companies as a producer, writer and film editor.

Her career path changed direction in 1977 when she returned to the San Jose State campus and joined the Broadcast Journalism Faculty. Her assignment was to teach television news courses.

At KNTV Belshe had met her future husband, Don Hayward, who anchored both sports and news at the station for more than 20 years. When Belshe returned to San Jose State, Hayward, who died in January of 2006, began volunteering to work with her students, and donated countless hours, coaching and critiquing their air work and offering career advice.



In 1977, television news students were using second hand Bell and Howell 70DR silent film cameras equipped with three lenses and viewfinders and shooting black and white film.



Through the years, Belshe moved her students to color film, sound cameras, reel to reel black and white video tape recorders, black and white Beta II home video cassette recorders, then color and finally into the digital age. When she arrived on campus in 1977, her students were using small, clunky Griswold Film Splicers, and automotive files (purchased at a local automotive store) were used to scrape the film emulsion off so the pieces could be cemented together. When Belshe retired, 25 years later, they were editing with digital equipment.



Along the way those students won more than 300 awards in local, western regional, statewide and national competitions, beginning in 1978. Between 1989 and 2001, 25 of those journalism students placed in the top 20 in the nation in the very prestigious William Randolph Hearst Foundation Competition. Eleven of those students placed in the top ten, five in the top three.



Three of them placed first in the nation. They bested students in top journalism schools like Florida, USC, North Carolina, Northwestern, Missouri, Kentucky, Iowa and New Mexico.

The former California Intercollegiate Press Association named the weekly Update News television newscast produced by Belshe's students, the top student newscast in the state 17 times between 1982 and 2001.

Today, the students Belshe taught are scattered across the country and the world. Those who are not working as reporters, photographers, editors, producers, assignment managers, anchors and news directors, have been able to use their San Jose State education and their communication skills in a multitude of other fields and positions.



Rarely does a week go by when Belshe does not hear from one of her former students. They have become dear friends. She says she's been privileged to follow their careers, share their successes, watch them marry and celebrate the birth of their children. There can't be too many jobs that keep on giving like that.

San Jose State University is extremely proud of the achievements of its students in broadcast journalism over the past 50 years. We recognize the faculty, who through their tireless efforts and conscientious guidance, have inspired students to be the best they can be. For 27 years, Darla Belshe was an outstanding example of excellence in broadcast journalism education. She commanded the respect and admiration of her students, the faculty and broadcast industry colleagues. Her personal style, warmth, compassion, caring spirit and endless determination to help others made Darla Belshe one of the most outstanding and beloved university professors in the nation. Thank You Darla! You are the best!

– Prof. Bob Rucker, Coordinator of the SJSU Broadcast Journalism Sequence.

