IN MOTION
USC Cinematic Arts

WOMEN OF SCA
Alumnae Speak on Careers, the Industry and the SCA Experience

A Day in the Life of Dr. Casper
ENTER THE WORLD OF SCA'S ICONIC PROFESSOR

The Hollywood Reporter Archive
THE SCHOLARS OF SCA BRING THE PAST TO LIFE WITH THE HELP OF THR

Anatomy of a Game
SCA'S GROUNDBREAKING TRANSMEDIA EXPERIMENT GOES LIVE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
FALL 2011
As in past years, it seems that the amount of change here at the USC School of Cinematic Arts continues to mirror the level of change in the entertainment industry as a whole. Firmly established in the Cinematic Arts Complex, we are now looking forward to the construction and completion of the final Phase III construction. This extraordinary facility will house our Interactive Media Division, the Institute for Multimedia Literacy and the Interdivisional Media Arts and Practice Ph.D. program. The past several months have seen the inauguration of the Marilyn and Jeffrey Katzenberg Center for Animation, the creation of a new state-of-the-art performance capture lab at the Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts, and the dedication of the 20th Century Fox Soundstage, the John Williams Scoring Stage and the Cecil B. DeMille Chair in Silent Film.

Each of these resources contributes to an educational environment that offers an incredible level of opportunity for our students, who are working toward leaving their own unique imprint on the industry and the art form. The School continues to move forward each year, and we are grateful to the generosity of all those who make that movement possible.

This year, with the help of alumni and industry partners, we have made amazing strides in the areas of visual effects, augmented reality games and immersive technology. When the industry leaders of tomorrow look around and ask, “What’s next?”, it is clear that our students will have the answers.

With so much going on, from new buildings to new technologies and initiatives, it is important to remember that our greatest resources at the School are our students and alumni, who are all connected by the bonds of being part of the SCA family. No matter if our young women and men are studying to become leading scholars of the moving image, delving into the techniques of 2-D and 3-D animation, writing the great American (or any other country’s) screenplay, designing immersive game worlds and experiences, telling an awe-inspiring story on film or digital, or launching their career as the next studio head, the most important asset they have is each other.

On behalf of the faculty and staff here at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, let me thank you for what you have done for the School and for being an integral part of all that we do in the future.

Happy Holidays!

Elizabeth M. Daley
Steven J. Ross/Time Warner
Professor and Dean
The USC School of Cinematic Arts hosted a variety of special events through the year. The calendar included the dedications of the Marilyn & Jeffrey Katzenberg Center for Animation, the John Williams Scoring Stage, the 20th Century Fox Sound Stage and the Cecil B. DeMille Chair in Silent Film.

In addition, the School hosted many guest speakers including several friends and alumni of SCA.

On June 1st, the Marilyn and Jeffrey Katzenberg Center for Animation was dedicated at SCA. Steven Spielberg, George Lucas ’66, Dean Elizabeth M. Daley, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Marilyn Katzenberg, Niki Nicas and USC President C. L. Max Nikias were among the guests.

Legendary filmmaker John Waters met with students as part of Visions and Voices’ An Evening with John Waters. Professor James Egan, Jack Epps, Jr., and Professor Ted Braun met with Waters for a cocktail reception. The event was in conjunction with Egan’s new book Interviews with John Waters.

Steven Spielberg, composer John Williams and George Lucas at the dedication of the John Williams Scoring Stage on April 26th. John Williams called his scoring stage a "monument to the idea of collaboration." Williams also met with John Singleton ’90.

On November 11th, Robert Towne spoke to students about his legendary film Chinatown.

The SCA Network hosted another slate of films for members including Super 8, Contagion, I Am Number Four, Real Steel and Cars 2.
Provost Elizabeth Garrett, Dean Elizabeth M. Daley, CeCe DeMille-Presley and Frank Price at the dedication of the Cecil B. DeMille Chair in Silent Film. Chair of the Critical Studies Division Dr. Akira Mizuta Lippit and CeCe DeMille-Presley look over the exhibit of DeMille artifacts in the Hefner Exhibit Hall.

At Commencement, Daley was presented with a 20-year anniversary plaque. Professor Doe Mayer presented Academy Award winning director Lee Unkrich ’90 with the Mary Pickford Award for Alumni Excellence. Chairman of the Board of Councilors Frank Price, Daley and Commencement Speaker Sumner Redstone, who spoke on the importance of hard work and passion.

For the first time all of the SCA student festivals were held under the same banner, First Look. Three of the four events were held at the DGA theatre in Los Angeles. Professor Mary Sweeney, Dean Elizabeth M. Daley and Erin Levy ’05 at the Four Seasons Beverly Hills for the Writing Division’s First Pitch. Students pitching at First Pitch. Students in the lobby at the Animation Division’s Adobe First Frame.

Senior Lecturer Head Brenda Goodman and Chair of the Production Division Michael Taylor with the winners of the Subway: Fresh Artist Filmmakers program on March 10th.

Professor Mary Sweeney, Dean Elizabeth M. Daley and Erin Levy ’05 at the Four Seasons Beverly Hills for the Writing Division’s First Pitch. Students pitching at First Pitch. Students in the lobby at the Animation Division’s Adobe First Frame.

OC creator and alumnus Josh Schwartz speaks to students as part of the Writing Presents speaker series.
The School dedicated the new 20th Century Fox Soundstage on Wednesday, March 30th. George Lucas, Shawn Levy ’94 and Dean Elizabeth M. Daley on the red carpet. Daley, Tom Rothman, Lucas, Jim Gianopulos and President C. L. Max Nikias. Gianopulos joked that his mother always assumed that Lucas was Greek when they began working together.

VFX company GenArts hosted an event for students led by directors Tim Story ’94 and Steven Sommers ’93 where they discussed the role of VFX in storytelling.

This year, the Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts opened its new performance capture lab. With forty-five Vicon cameras, the stage is in the top-ten in North America in terms of number of cameras.

The Grove hosted Al Gough ’94 and Miles Millar ’94 at the screening of their film I Am Number 4.

Ed Saxon ’84, Chair of the Interactive Media Division Tracy Fullerton, Jay Roach ’86 and Phil Spencer, the corporate Vice President of Microsoft, at the Microsoft Next Generation Initiative Dedication on October 18th.
Director McG speaks to Professor Pablo Frasconi as part of the YouTube Creator Institute this summer. Ten students were housed at SCA and taught the basics of filmmaking.

Avatar and Titanic producer/alumnus Jon Landau speaks to students on the performance capture stage as part of the YouTube Creator Institute.

Members of the Institute for Multimedia Literacy traveled to Qatar to debut the project Pluff for autistic children.

The Peter Stark Producing Program turned thirty this year. At the anniversary party, longtime staff member Kathy Fogg was honored with a plaque. Guests included John August ’94, Ed Saxon ’84, Dean Elizabeth M. Daley, Fogg and Chair of the Peter Stark Program Larry Turman.

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Breaking Bad actor Bryan Cranston speaks to students at the Robert Zemeckis Center.

Academy Award-winning writer David Seidler interviewed as part of the Writing Presents lecture series. He commented that, “at my age, you can’t take any of it too seriously.”

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In the 1930s, journalists from *The Hollywood Reporter* would scale studio walls and sift through film executives’ garbage in search of news. In 2011, the publication invited the University of Southern California Cinematic Arts Library to scavenge through their own discard pile, which comprised 350 boxes of photographs documenting Hollywood history.

“It really came out of the blue, fell into our laps and turned out to be something terrific,” said Sandra Garcia-Myers, associate director of the Cinematic Arts Library. “I got an email saying that *The Hollywood Reporter* was moving to a new location. They have these photos and don’t want to take them to the new place, since they’ve changed publishers and are going in a new direction. So we went down there, and within two seconds, I could tell it was a treasure trove of wonderful things.”

Spanning the 1960s to the present, *The Hollywood Reporter* photography archive provides a visual record of film, television, animation, music, entertainment personalities and executives.

“The *Hollywood Reporter* has been covering the entertainment business since the 1930s, so its photo archives represent a fascinating window into Hollywood history,” said Janice Min, the publication’s editorial director. “We’re excited to help USC’s film library preserve an important part of the industry’s past.”

The collection includes publicity stills and behind-the-scenes photos of productions ranging from *Boyz n the Hood* to *A River Runs Through It*, shows from *M*A*S*H* to *Masterpiece Theatre*, and cartoons from *X-Men* to *Yogi Bear*.

“They pulled out some stills from *The Price Is Right* that had Bob Barker,” said Garcia-Myers. “He wasn’t grey – he was a young Bob Barker. The second I saw *The Price Is Right*, I knew I wanted this collection just because you’re not going to find that anywhere. Those are big items for researchers. So the ‘aha’ moment for me was seeing the TV stuff. I said to myself, ‘We have got to have this.’”

The collection also includes hard-to-find items on the film side.

“There was a whole file drawer called ‘executives,’” said Garcia-Myers. “Researchers trying to do a history of executives at a certain place wouldn’t be able to find a lot of these people.”

Because of the publication’s impending move, USC only had 10 days to transport the massive quantity of photos to the Cinematic Arts space on the ground floor of the Doheny Memorial Library on the University Park campus. The number of boxes kept multiplying as *The Hollywood Reporter* stumbled upon additional file cabinets, rooms and basement storage areas.

The library is still in the process of inventorying the photographs, and Garcia-Myers hopes to apply for a grant to create a digital archive of the collection. In the meantime, the contents of many boxes are still unknown.
“It’s like a little treasure hunt,” said Garcia-Myers. “You don’t know what wonderful things you’re going to find. There are always those little gems in there that make you think, ‘Oh my god, how did we get lucky enough to be able to have this? There’s got to be somebody writing a book on this, and boy, this is going to be the thing that they’re going to get really excited about.’”

Media arts researchers are becoming increasingly interested in television, and Garcia-Myers believes the archive will be useful to scholars writing books and articles as well as USC students doing projects for critical studies and history courses. The Hollywood Reporter collection will enlarge the existing Cinematic Arts photography archive by between 50 and 100 percent.

The Cinematic Arts Library has more than 350 collections focusing on studios, directors, actors, producers and behind-the-scenes artists. In addition to photographs, its holdings include books, scripts, scores, letters, storyboards, production designs, budgets and other artifacts, which are often featured in exhibitions in the School of Cinematic Arts, Ronald Tutor Campus Center and other campus venues. Along with the USC Warner Bros. Archives and the Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive, the Cinematic Arts Library performs a unique role by serving as Hollywood’s attic.

“As far as we know, the Cinematic Arts Library is the only stand-alone university library that specializes in film and television,” said Garcia-Myers. “We’re trying to preserve Hollywood history, and so much has gone by way of the circular file. So we’re doing everything that we can to bring in these collections. We’re constantly talking to people and saying, ‘Save your stuff because it’ll help future generations of students, scholars and researchers.’”
We all know the traditional speech from the first day of film school. The Dean tells the incoming students, “Look to your left and to your right. These are the people that you will be spending the rest of your career working with.” It’s the oldest speech in the book for a reason: ask any SCA alumnus with a long record of success and they’ll tell you it’s true.

This year, the School has taken that tradition one step farther with the interactive media-making game officially called Reality Ends Here, but known to the students simply as “The Game.”

On a technical level, Reality Ends Here is a fifteen-week collaborative production, alternate reality game. In layman’s terms, it’s a new way for students to meet, network and start working together creatively. The game came out of a committee created by Dean Elizabeth M. Daley to envision the future of SCA.

“One key initiative for that committee was to establish a ‘gateway experience’ for incoming students that introduced them to the changing media landscape, the history and future of the School, the possibilities that can emerge from the SCA network of current and past students and the importance of bridging the divisions of the School while they are here, both socially and academically,” said Interactive Media Division Chair Tracy Fullerton, who was one of the committee’s original members, along with professors Holly Willis, Steve Anderson, Tara McPherson, Mary Sweeney, Michael Patterson and Michael Peyser.

The gateway class, which is being taught by Tara McPherson, was designed by the committee to introduce a new kind of social networking for SCA students, both on and offline, that would become critical to their involvement in courses and with each other.

“As the class developed, it became clear that a game layer would be a perfect way to achieve all of the goals set out by the committee without falling victim to the general survey or lecture class tradition we wanted to move beyond,” Fullerton continued.

The game experience was designed by iMAP Ph. D candidate Jeff Watson, IMD MFA student Simon Wiscombe and Fullerton, who together focused on creating an unique entry point to this experience, what alternate reality game designers call “the rabbit hole.”

“Students got a postcard at orientation that had an old picture from SCA’s original building on it and the cryptic message ‘Carry your cards at all times,’” said game designer and creative director Jeff Watson. “A URL on the card led to a website that had a countdown timer on it.”

During orientation, a flag was flown off the balcony of the SCA Complex with Reality Ends Here’s logo on it. A super 8 camera with a coded message instructing the students to report to an unmarked office on the second floor was under the flag. The students deciphered the code and found the game office.

Once the students had found the game office, they could pick up their Reality ‘packs’ – a deck of 10 playing cards, different cards for each player, that contained prompts and challenges that can be combined to create any number of creative deals.

For example, one student might have a card challenging them to make a “30-second short.” Another student could have a connecting card that with the property “in an elevator,” and a third student has another connecting card that stipulates that they must “use the colors black and white.” The cards are each worth points, with bigger deals generating higher scores. All students who participate in the deals get the total number of points in the deal. Collaboration was the key to success.

Once a deal is struck, the students all work together to answer the challenge described by the prompt they’ve created. Some deals include cards that prompt them to meet and involve other freshman, or to link multiple projects together from various divisions – such as a shared story universe between a game, a video and a poster.
Once students have created a piece of media for a deal, they upload it to the game website at reality.usc.edu. They also have to come into the game office to show the cards that they used to make the deal and film a “justification” video. In the justification video, the students have to describe their deal and how each of the cards applies to the project.

Each week, the students with the most points are rewarded with a very special prize: an encounter with an SCA alumnus or other well-known media maker.

Some of the encounters that students have had so far include meetings with director John Singleton, screenwriter John Watson, cinematographer Dante Spinotti, game designers Kellee Santiago and Jenova Chen, writer/director John Waters and a visit to the set of Mad Men with writer Erin Levy.

The students have said that the game and the reward encounters have opened their eyes to both the future and the history of media making.

The Class

In addition to the game element of the experience, all freshman and first year transfer students enrolled in a class called Reality Starts Here, taught by Professor Tara McPherson. The irony of teaching a class about the future of media to a lecture hall wasn’t lost on McPherson.

“Teaching what we imagine as a cutting-edge new class in a lecture format was a challenge,” said McPherson. “It was very important to me that the class not devolve into fifteen weeks of me talking to them in a very old-school format.”

In McPherson’s class, things run the opposite of most lecture classes. To begin, students are asked to take out their laptops as opposed to putting them away. Instead of asking questions, students tweet to a class hashtag. Instead of the teacher explaining to them how media is created, the students create media.

“I’ve divided the students into eight groups and, at least once during the semester, one of those groups takes over one half of the class,” continued McPherson. “The students doing the work for that week have a much richer and deeper experience of the material at hand while the students in the audience are equally or more engaged than they would be with a traditional lecture.”

The class also featured guest speakers: Henry Jenkins (USC faculty); Jeremy Gibson (USC faculty: IMD); Barnet Kellman and David Isaacs (USC faculty: Production + Writing, Comedy@SCA Initiative); Marti Noxon (Writer/Producer: Buffy, Mad Men, Glee, Grey’s Anatomy, Private Practice, Fright Night); Tracy Fullerton (USC faculty: IMD); Richard Lemarchand (Game Designer at Naughty Dog); Elan Lee (Leading Designer of Alternate Reality Games for Nine Inch Nails and many others); Jon Dudowski (USC alum and editor on TV show Fringe); Norm Hollyn (USC faculty: Editing/Production); and Midge Costin (USC faculty: Sound/Production).

In the second week of the class, guest speaker Henry Jenkins told the class, “I do enjoy media. But, to me, enjoying media means being thoughtful about the media.”

Jenkins neatly summed up the Reality Ends Here experience. In addition to being a place where students can meet each other, the experience had taught them to appreciate media and be thoughtful in their approach.
How a Deal Goes Down

When it comes down to nuts and bolts, the basic unit of Reality Ends Here is the deal. In the third week of the game, a group of ten students made the biggest deal in the game up until that point by producing the trailer; “The Game,” a loving homage to the game itself.

The mega-deal was born as a reaction to a group of students who started gaming the system. One “super team” organically emerged with the intention of winning every week.

“Right off the bat, a big group of people got together and they named themselves Marra,” said freshman Sam Sandweiss. “They started putting out a lot of projects and they were very strategic.”

Marra’s strategy worked. The first two weeks, the top points earners were both members of Marra. In the third week, however, the idea of a “super deal” emerged.

“We decided, ‘What if we make a deal about a group of kids that want to make a deal?’” said production freshman Michael Effenberger. “It’s going to be haphazard and wonderful.”

“We sat down and thought, ‘let’s make a really big deal’,” continued Sandweiss. “We wanted to make fun of the fact that some people were so concerned with winning that they had compromised their artistic vision.”

The biggest deal in the history of the game was born, not out of great ambition but out of mocking the seriousness of the game.

“We decided that we wanted to make a project that spoofed how serious certain people had gotten about the game,” said IMD freshman Riley Pietsch.

The vision for “The Game” came from group collaboration. The script was loose and all ideas were welcomed at the table. The filming took place in one day and the editing was done in two.

“The biggest challenge was, because we were more concerned with the points than anything, was laying out this piece that had to have all of these cards that had to be worked in,” said Pietsch. “We were all worried when we had to justify.”

They did justify and they did win. Dozens of pieces of media were formed in the game. Some students are trying to express themselves, some students are trying to win but only one, “The Game,” was making a conscious comment about how some of the students were only out to win… and they won.

The students involved with “The Game” were the week three point winners and got to go to the premiere of Machine Gun Preacher at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Anatomy of a Card

The cards in Reality Ends Here are double sided. One side contains a profile of either a media maker or a piece of media. People, places and things students should know about are presented to students with the hope of inspiring ideas and conversations. On the card above, a brief description of On the Waterfront with a screenshot is featured.

The other side contains an instruction, obstacle or caveat that has to be a part of the media project which students turn in for the project. In this case, they have to include and justify “At LA Harbor” which means the students either have to literally film at LA Harbor or find a creative way to represent LA Harbor in their projects.

The New Bullpen

“One of the things we’re trying to pass on to the students with this project is the feeling of the bullpen which was an area of the film school back when the School was in the stables. It was this wild and unruly place with graffiti all over the walls and piles of film and people sitting on benches. I don’t think it’s surprising that the generation that came from the bullpen was one of the most fruitful in the School’s history. It was a crazy place. That kind of cross-pollination space is something that having our amazing facilities actually limits. We’ve noticed that some of the pictures that the students are uploading to the new electronic bullpen in the game have the same swagger as some of the old photos of the bullpen generation. We named the interactive space The Bullpen out of respect for the School’s past.”

Jeff Watson
A Day in the Life of Dr. Drew Casper
by Ryan Gilmour

It’s eleven AM on a day that’s scheduled to end at eleven PM and Dr. Drew Casper is already wearing me out. I quickly learn that my assignment to cover “a day in the life of Dr. Casper” is going to be more accurately “a half-day in the life of Dr. Casper.” By the time I take a seat in his office, he’s been up for seven hours.

Dr. Casper has been teaching at SCA for thirty-nine years. “I was a child prodigy,” Casper joked. “I started working here when I was twelve years old.” He’s best known for his 190: Intro to Film course (his class was number eight on a t-shirt which students produced listing the top ten reasons to come to SCA) but he has also published five books, holds the prestigious Alma and Alfred Hitchcock Chair in American Film, was awarded the 2005 USC Associates Award for Excellence in Teaching, has provided more than forty-five DVD commentaries and, in 2011, lectured at the Beijing Film Archive.

Before becoming an authority on cinema, Casper was ordained a Jesuit priest. “The Jesuits sent me to get my Ph.D. in production,” said Casper. “I told the Provincial that film was the new humanity and he bought it.”

During Casper’s second semester of study, writing professor Irwin Blacker, impressed with his work, asked him to teach his writing class when he was hospitalized. Shortly after, Blacker had the head of the School, Bernie Kantor, offer Casper a tenure track position.

“There was a problem,” Casper continued. “The Provincial said ‘no.’ I was baffled. I knew that I could reach so many more hearts and minds that would be entering the entertainment industry teaching at SCA than not. I left the Jesuits and fell under the wings of my new Jewish guardian angels, Blackwell and Kantor.”

“The first thing I did was to expand the historical-cinema component of the division by teaching classes on comedy, film noir and the style of Vincente Minnelli.”

“Looking back, I think the Jesuits realize it was an unwise decision. When I revisited them a couple of years ago, they said, ‘It’s too bad that this happened. Leaving wouldn’t be our advice now.’”

As a student at SCA, I had heard the legend that Casper wakes up every morning at four AM to walk and pray for an hour before hitting the gym and weights at five and swimming sixty laps. He confirms it, “Healthy mind. Healthy body. The Jesuits taught me that. They got it from Cicero.”

This morning, Dr. Casper is running around the Critical Studies office at 100 miles per hour: getting water for his student workers, checking his calendar and, most of all, making sure he looks good in his...
photos. He can be described a million ways but low energy isn’t one of them.

Before I’ve even settled in, he’s taking meetings with students. In the first half hour of his work day he’s written a letter of recommendation for a student to study abroad, given career advice to an aspiring screenwriter and quoted Horace and Shakespeare to a student to describe contemporary action films – “the mountain roared to emit a mouse... full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Next, we head to Norris Cinema Theatre for Dr. Casper’s famous CTCS 190 course. Before the class, Dr. Casper prowls the aisles of the auditorium learning names of students and grilling them on the assigned reading. Less than eager students avoid eye contact.

The lecture details the strategy of performance as it enters into the production and consumption of a film text. At lecture’s end, Casper thanks the students for their open minds and hearts. He receives his first standing ovation of the day.

Casper’s night class, CTCS 469 The Films of Martin Scorsese is clearly a different crowd from 190. They are older and most of them looked exhausted to the point of collapse (presumably production students in the editing phase of a film.)

My guise as a “fly on the wall” quickly breaks down as Casper points me towards students and instructing me, “Get a quote from him. He loves me. Ask her for info, she’s got stories.” The students do, in fact, love him. None of them have anything bad to say, but most of the undergrads are afraid to say anything on record. A common fear when my tape recorder comes out is being “called out.”

When the class gets into full gear, I see the “calling out” in full force. Casper is trying to emphasize the importance of color composition in Scorsese’s New York, New York, when he calls on a student sitting directly behind me. The student mumbles to himself, “oh no” and starts frantically flipping through a binder. He gives an answer which doesn’t appease Casper but, fortunately for everyone involved, Casper moves on.

At the end of the evening, Casper reminds the class that the film is a 35mm print. “That’s the way movies are meant to be consumed —not streamed, not on DVD –but on the big screen… and communally. People don’t even remember films they see today because they watch them on the size of a postage stamp and alone!”

In large lecture classes, sometimes students choose to view the movies at home and the break between the lecture and the screening signals a mass exodus. In Casper’s class, the students stay.

When he leaves the lectern, the class gives him his second standing ovation and he slips out the back.

The entire day, Dr. Casper didn’t slow down at all. I can only imagine that, at the end of the day, he collapses but, according to legend, he’s up the next morning at four AM to do it all again.

DREW CASPER
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL STUDIES

“In today’s culture, the word is being eclipsed by the image and, of course, this School is devoted to understanding, respecting and, hopefully, making some of the students fall in love with it. Unfortunately, we, as a culture, are moving away from the art of movies and the humanism they contained and getting into empty spectacle. Seeing movies of the past and the few exceptional movies that are made today makes students aware that movies are a primary way of us talking to one another about one another.”
Dr. Casper serenades the class before bidding us an emotional farewell. Knowing that a professor cares so deeply about his life’s work is refreshing at a level of academia where many professors solely want to conduct research.

— Erin Loadvine
Junior

Working for Dr. Casper is like working for a force of nature. It’s like being immersed.

— Casey Riffel
Ph.D.

It’s exciting to be in the class of someone who loves what they do so much. He’s got a certain drama and energy behind what he does.

— Jesse Small
Junior

I thought he was brilliant but, honestly, I was frightened in 190. He keeps lecture fun. He came to the first day of Scorsese class dressed as Travis Bickle.

— Audrey Rosenberg
Freshman

He is bold and daring in everything he says. It is few and far between that I meet a teacher or professor that will speak freely about his religious and political views, but Casper speaks of it with emphasis. He knows exactly what he believes and says it proudly and passionately.

— Jade Niemeyer
Senior

Some kids at SCA should just say, ‘I majored in Casper.’ I’ve had five classes.

— Michael Bitar
Senior

“The Wisdom of Dr. Casper

“Singin’ in the Rain, which I begin 190 with, was made in 1952, some sixty years ago and it can still fill students with so much joy. They come out bounding. They come out walking on air. Not too many movies today put us in such fine fettle.”

“Thank God for independent filmmaking today.”

“As a culture, we are getting more primitive. It’s sad but it’s true.”

“I’m so sick of films where heroes are destined or selected to save the world and the galaxies. Whatever happened to movies in which people go about mending their own hearts?”

“No more tattoos. People with your brains and looks don’t need gimmicks.”

“You want to know what a star entrance is? Look at Gene Kelley’s introduction at Grauman’s Chinese in Singin’ in the Rain. Blindingly white fedora, tie, shirt, camel hair coat and an ear to ear grin where his teeth literally sparkle.”

“To be able to spend a good part of your life sharing your passion with young people, as I have, is a profound blessing. To have my name associated with that of Alfred Hitchcock is equally a blessing that could have only happened with me staying at SCA.”

“Dr. Casper serenades the class before bidding us an emotional farewell. Knowing that a professor cares so deeply about his life’s work is refreshing at a level of academia where many professors solely want to conduct research.”

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— Michael Bitar
Senior
Dean Elizabeth M. Daley and the School of Cinematic Arts are proud to announce the groundbreaking of the final stage of SCA’s massive reconstruction and modernization process, with the creation of a 60,000-square-foot building, housing the Interactive Media Division, the Institute for Multimedia Literacy and the Interdivisional Media Arts and Practices Ph. D. program. Located at the corner of 34th Street and McClintock, the four-level facility will include laboratories, collaboration areas, gallery and exhibition spaces which will feature student and faculty work, classrooms and a digital theatre.

A cornerstone of the building will be the Game Innovation Lab, a state-of-the-art play testing and design lab for the Interactive Media Division. Additional programs and curricula housed in the building will focus on interactive architecture, immersive, mobile and environmental media, alternate reality games, augmented reality and mixed reality experience design.

On August 16th, the groundbreaking for Phase III was held. Guests included IMD Chair Tracy Fullerton, Senior Associate Dean of External Relations Marlene Loadvine, Provost Elizabeth Garrett, Assistant Dean of Facilities Doug Wellman, Dean Elizabeth Daley, architect Tom Brady, Angelo Garcia, Senior Director: Lucas Real Estate Holdings, Tom Leary and Mandeep Bhari, of Capital Construction Development for USC.

Online: cinema.usc.edu/onlinegiving
Located on the corners of 34th and McClintock, the Phase III Building will stand where the former Facilities Maintenance Services once stood and expand the SCA Complex all the way to the end of the block.
Referring to George Lucas’ $175 million gift to SCA, Dowling explains, “Maybe I didn’t create the biggest franchise of all time where I’d be able to give a couple hundred million dollars, but I did want to give something that would help keep the school growing for the next generation of filmmakers and kind of pay it forward.”

So Dowling, who has also scripted Denzel Washington’s upcoming Uptown Saturday Night remake and the Reese Witherspoon espionage romance This Means War, teamed up with ten former USC classmates and got creative. They named a bathroom after themselves.

Each classmate donated $3,000 to USC’s School of Cinematic Arts. In return, their names now adorn the restroom next to the Dana and Albert “Cubby” Broccoli Theatre in the George Lucas Building. Dowling explains, “We’re hoping when people see our names on this bathroom, it might encourage them to think in terms of the smaller gifts: ‘Okay I might be able to do something fun on that level.’”

Dowling’s inventive contribution represents exactly the kind of thinking encouraged by Marlene Loadvine, Senior Associate Dean, Advancement, who directs SCA fundraising efforts. “Making donations to the school is a way people can share this legacy and be part of something bigger than themselves. Our hope is that we can deter the perception that, ‘Well, George [Lucas] did everything so you don’t need my help.’”

On the contrary: “Every gift makes a difference,” Loadvine says. To maintain its ranking as the nation’s best film school, SCA requires an ongoing flow of donor revenues to fund operating expenses, which are not entirely covered by tuition fees. Continued expansion also calls for fresh funding. For example, SCA’s 60,000-square foot Phase III Building, scheduled for completion in 2012, will serve as a home for the Interactive Media Division, the Institute for Multimedia Literacy and the Interdivisional Media Arts & Practice (iMAP) program. Loadvine says, “All the funds we raise go towards one of three things: capital construction, endowment or programs.”

A variety of programs enable alumni, current students and their parents to participate in SCA fund-raising efforts.

Graduate student Andrew Peat, who started work on his MFA in September, belongs to the SCA Network. The

Why I Give...  
By Hugh Hart

After graduating from USC in 1996, screenwriter Tim Dowling penned the hit comedy Role Models. Grateful for the immersion in film culture he’d experienced during his student days at USC, Dowling wanted to make a contribution to School of Cinematic Arts.

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group, which offers access to screenings and other events, encourages student philanthropy via annual pledges. Peat, 46, says, “$25 is the minimum donation, so that’s what I gave.” Peat, who relies on student loans to attend school, adds “People like Lucas and Spielberg are doing the heavy lifting but that does not relinquish the duty for the rest of us to chip in. An army isn’t made out of one or two generals, it takes a lot of people to pull together and get something done."

Twenty-two year old Casey Larson also donated $25 when she signed up with the SCA Network after arriving on campus. Larson, a first-year MFA candidate, explains, “One thing that’s always been really important to me is to say ‘Thank you.’ Giving money is a way for me to show that I’m grateful for this education that is going to open up so many opportunities.”

USC alum Jim Owens and his wife Barbara, both employed as Los Angeles County Counsel, contributed about $200 to the SCA Family Program after their son Michael, now a junior, enrolled at the film school. Jim Owens says, “For us, making a donation is a way for us to feel like we’re part of the university. If every alumnus [member] donated $100 – roughly the equivalent of a nice dinner nowadays — it would really add up. It’s very rare that we can be part of anything that can be truthfully classified as the best of its kind. The bottom line is, we’re very proud to be number one and we want to stay there.”

That takes money, adds Barbara Owens. “Some people can’t afford to put their names on a building or a classroom, but the School still needs money to provide [career] counseling and outreach programs so the students can actually get jobs afterwards.”

The SCA Leadership Circle, which offers a variety of benefits for members who pledge $25,000 and up, proved to be the best option for Brian and Alexis Kjos. Their decision two years ago to join the group was inspired by the School’s impact on their daughter Jenna, who graduated from SCA in 2010. Brian Kjos says, “Watching Jenna when she’d come home and listening to her excitement, we could tell that USC was making a huge transition in my daughter. The school gave her this can-do attitude.” Kjos, who donated with a $25,000 gift, says “We cut a check for that program because of what the School did not only for Jenna but also for Alexis and myself. The great Trojan family has this ability to make you feel like you’re a winner; that you are going to be successful; that you are successful. When I look at my daughter, I could not be more happy with an institution that has given her direction and hope for the future.”

Kjos, a partner in Sequoia Restaurant and Entertainment Group, says he appreciates Leadership Circle perks including a reserved parking spot at football games. “But it’s not about some quid pro quo ‘What do I get out of this situation?’” he elaborates. “When I started out in this business, I had some tough years. Anybody who helped me get through that is on my ‘I’ll never forget you’ list. Because of what the school has done for my child, USC is on that list. ‘I’ll never forget you.’ That’s why I give.”
the Women

BY Cristy Lytal
PHOTOGRAPHED BY Carell Augustus

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
Kellee Santiago '06, Jennifer Au '05,
Cassandra Brooksbank '11, Leslie Iwerks '93,
Dean Elizabeth M. Daley,
Melissa Rosenberg '90 and Erin Levy '05
Stacey Sher produces films that make waves — titles ranging from The Fisher King to Pulp Fiction, from Erin Brockovich to Contagion. But on the set of Gattaca, Sher herself was stirring the waters.

“It was a lower budget science fiction film, and we didn’t have the equipment that was going to make waves,” she said. “So I was lying on the side of the pool, moving a kickboard to make enough waves for the shot. Those are the great moments, when you just pitch in, and you do whatever needs to be done.”

Making a splash comes naturally to the remarkable alumnae of the USC School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) — including Stacey Sher ’85, Melissa Rosenberg ’90, Erin Levy ’05, Leslie Iwerks ’93, Kellee Santiago ’06, Susan Vaill ’00, Jennifer Au ’05, Nicola Marsh ’06, Liz Blazer ’03, Chera Kee ’11, and Cassandra Brooksbank ’11.

“This is an amazing group of women, and they’re enormously generous with their time to young women coming up behind them,” said SCA Dean Elizabeth M. Daley. “I feel so good knowing that these women are out there to help support the next generation coming in. These women are just the perfect role models.”

Sher — a self-professed “movie geek” from an early age — first heard about SCA’s Peter Stark Producing Program as
an undergraduate at the University of Maryland.

“The program was three years old when I first came, and we started out in the very old building — the portables or the bungalows,” she said. “And it’s not that I couldn’t have learned what I learned anywhere else by starting in an entry-level job; it’s just that it would have taken me a decade to have the overview and have the access to the people with real-world experience that were successful in their fields.”

Sher proved her eye for good material early on when she brought the script for Adventures in Babysitting to the attention of her then-bosses Debra Hill and Lynda Obst. Since then, she’s collaborated with visionary filmmakers such as Steven Soderbergh, Oliver Stone and Richard LaGravenese.

“Women’s instincts are always to bring everybody together; so that’s why producing is a really great job for women,” she said. “It’s part camp counselor; part mom — taking care of everybody’s booboos and just making sure everybody’s happy and productive and moving forward. It’s a great life filled with adventure and learning.”

Chera Kee concurs, particularly if the learning involves zombies. An assistant professor of film and new media at Wayne State University, Kee credits her father for her spooky research interests.

“He really loves cheesy 1950s horror,” she said, laughing. “And so it was nothing when I was three years old to sit me down and be like, ‘Let’s watch Them! and The Killer Shrews and The Giant Behemoth.’”

After earning a master’s degree in Chinese literature and history from Harvard University, Kee enrolled in SCA’s Ph.D. program in Critical Studies to explore Asian cinema. During a father-daughter outing to the 2004 Dawn of the Dead, she wondered aloud where all the “old-school zombies” had gone, and her father encouraged her to ask her professors.

“Before I knew it,” she said, “I was writing an entire dissertation on zombies. I would have never dreamed that I could do anything other than Chinese language film, and now I teach a horror class and intro to film, and I’m hoping to teach a documentary class. And that’s all because of what I learned at USC. It really opens up your avenues of what is possible.”

Literary manager Jennifer Au has equally fond memories of her dad sitting her down to watch classic television and movies ranging from I Love Lucy to Taxi. She majored in Critical Studies at SCA, and after graduation, she worked for a film sales and production company, a
management company, an agency and an author.

“I am a huge reader, and I love being creative,” she said. “And I need the business side of things as well. So I just thought, ‘What about working in literary management?’”

She interviewed with alumna Jennifer Levine at Untitled Entertainment, where she still works today.

“You have an incredible opportunity graduating from USC,” she said. “This is the Trojan Family. And it’s fantastic to have that network here as a woman and also just as a graduate of the program.”

Editor Susan Vaill also enjoys a close working relationship with an alumna, Grey’s Anatomy showrunner Shonda Rhimes.

“I remember one day hearing Shonda and another producer say, ‘What do you think [about the music]?’ I turned around at my Avid, and I realized they were looking at me,” said Vaill. “That belief that they have in me creates a lot of loyalty, so I’ve stayed with the show for eight years now, and I’ve cut over 40 episodes.”

After majoring in art history at Williams College, Vaill worked at an interactive television company before earning her M.F.A. in production at SCA. She likes to tell directors that her editing bay is “the room where we try things.”

Vaill experiments outside of the editing bay, too, and she’s currently directing the documentary My Evil Twin. She’s also participating in the ABC DGA minority shadowing program and will be directing her first episode of Grey’s Anatomy in January.

“In Hollywood, I’m a woman, and I am a huge minority,” she said. “It’s really important as women to foster some sisterhood and support of each other.”

As a woman in the gaming industry, Kellee Santiago is also in the minority, “which helps you stand out in a crowd,” she joked. As the co-founder of thatgamecompany, she’s also in “a position to help create more diverse teams in game making.”

With a father who worked in software, Santiago grew up as a gamer. After earning her undergraduate degree in theatre from New York University, she enrolled in the SCA Interactive Media Division’s M.F.A. program with the intention of creating multimedia stage performances. Her plans changed when she, classmate Jenova Chen and a student team created the online game Cloud.

“You play as this boy who’s trapped in a hospital and daydreams that he can fly through the clouds,” she said. “It’s a really simple game, but the response was incredible. Within a week, it had been tipped up on G4’s Attack of the Show, and we were getting hundreds of thousands of downloads. We crashed the school servers. That was my departure from the theatre and embracing of digital distribution because of its reach.”

It also inspired Santiago and Chen to found their company “to create games that communicate emotions that aren’t commonly explored in the videogame marketplace,” she said.

Liz Blazer embarks into equally unusual emotional territory in her whimsical animated documentaries, such as Backseat Bingo, which looks at senior sexuality.

After majoring in fine art at Skidmore College, Blazer worked as a mixed media artist.

“While working in the studio, I just literally saw my still images moving,” she said. “I realized at that moment that I always loved animation.”

She started working in the Israeli animation business on projects including the Palestinian-Israeli Sesame Street before pursuing her M.F.A. in Animation at SCA.

She currently teaches at Kean University in addition to making animated documentaries including Food Court Diaries and Bridezillas. She also lends her talents to books for children with learning disabilities, and she recently designed an online game.

“USC enhanced my goals and my ability,” she said.

Writer Melissa Rosenberg also credits USC with upping her skills and saavy.

After studying dance at Bennington College, Rosenberg worked for a producer and realized that “television and films were written, and you can actually do this for a living.”

As an M.F.A. student in SCA’s Peter Stark Producing Program, Rosenberg forged lifelong friendships and learned how to write production-friendly scripts.

“It’s understanding that if I say ‘and then Atlanta burns’ [like it does in Gone with the Wind] that we’re talking about millions of
dollars and several weeks of shooting and thousands of extras,” she said. “It’s helped me work really well with production.”

She’s put that knowledge to the test writing *Dexter* and the *Twilight* films. She also plans to launch Tall Girls Productions, “because I’m six foot, basically,” she said, laughing. “My goal is to write and produce television and film and to create — not exclusively — complex, interesting roles for women in front of and behind the camera. I’m interested in the female Iron Man and the female Tony Soprano.”

Rosenberg has promoted gender equality as a member of the Writers Guild of America Diversity committee and co-founder of the League of Hollywood Women Writers. She encourages women to stay tough and, in her words, “just go for it.”

“You take a lot of hits in this industry,” she said, “and the question is: can you take a punch, and can you pick yourself up off the floor? Being tenacious is what we all need.”

British-born cinematographer Nicola Marsh embodies this quality. As a student, she recognized and tirelessly pursued the opportunities she had at SCA. “For a cinematographer, access to that many ambitious directors that need somebody to shoot their content is just completely unparalleled,” said Marsh, who did her undergraduate work at Bristol University and shot news for NBC before earning her M.F.A. in production at SCA. “I came out of USC with a real reel that I could show to people.”

Since then, Marsh has shot narrative features and documentaries, including the Emmy-nominated *Troubadours* about James Taylor and Carole King.

“Shoot everything,” she said. “Kiss as many frogs as you can. You never know which one’s going to turn into a prince.”

Erin Levy, who won an Emmy at age 26 for her writing on *Mad Men*, offers analogous advice. “Keep writing,” she said. “You never know when you’re going to be in a position to be able to show it to someone or do something with it. I am driven to write. It is a 24/7 job.”

In elementary school, Levy dreamed of becoming a novelist. When she was in high school, her father, Emmy-nominated television writer Lawrence Levy, suggested that she enroll in a USC summer screenwriting seminar, which shifted her interests to writing for the screen.

As an undergraduate at SCA, she took a rewriting class with alumnus Matthew Weiner. Years later, when he was looking for a writer’s assistant for his show *Mad Men*, he called Levy, who quickly earned a promotion to writer.

Her favorite *Mad Men* character is Peggy Olson, who rises through the ranks of the advertising agency under the mentorship of Roger Sterling.
of creative director Don Draper.
“There have been parallels drawn to
the fact that Don promoted this woman
who started off as a secretary, and Matt
promoted me when I was a writer’s
assistant,” said Levy. “I also love the idea
that she is a woman who, although the
word feminism didn’t quite exist, is going
after what she wants and is a feminist.”

Like Levy, director and producer
Leslie Iwerks always had a passion for
entertainment.
“My grandfather [Ub Iwerks] was the
creator of Mickey Mouse, and my dad
worked at the Disney studio for 35 years,”
she said. “They’ve got their two Oscars on
the mantle side by side, and I hope to add
a third some day.”

After graduating from the SCA
production program, Iwerks made
a feature documentary about her
grandfather called The Hand Behind the
Mouse for Disney. An old friend and close
collaborator of Walt Disney, Ub Iwerks
experimented with sketches of frogs, dogs,
cats, cows and horses before creating
Mickey Mouse. With his lightning quick
pencil, he would sometimes complete up
to 700 drawings a day. He also invented
cutting-edge technology and developed
classic Disney theme park attractions such
as It’s a Small World.

After completing this tribute to her
grandfather, Leslie Iwerks made the Oscar-
nominated Recycled Life about the people
living in the Guatemala City dump, the
Emmy-nominated The Pixar Story, and the
recently Oscar-nominated Pipe Dreams
about the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline.

“I like to inspire through filmmaking, and
documentaries are a great way to do
that,” she said. “They allow me to meet
really good and interesting people all over
the world and dig into subjects that are
important.”

No matter where her filmmaking
adventures take her, she always stays in
touch with the Trojan Family.

“I really like the people at USC,” she said.
“What Dean Daley has done for that
school has been extraordinary. I believe in
the School, and I know what it’s done for
me. So I like to give back in the ways that
I can.”

Just graduated alumna Cassandra
Brooksbank has already had a chance to
give back to her alma mater. Originally
admitted to USC as a history major,
Brooksbank earned her acceptance
into the SCA Production program after
applying five times.

“I’m pretty persistent,” she said.

Meanwhile, she worked at the student-run
television station Trojan Vision, where she
volunteered to direct promotional videos
that led to assignments from SCA itself,
including her award-winning “Dean Daley
Tribute Video.”

“That video was my love letter to the
Cinema school,” she said. “I got in depth
with all the history of the Cinema school
and why it’s so important to be at USC
and what the Dean’s done for the School.
I jump at opportunities like that.”

Erin Levy  Cassandra Brooksbank
Gary Alazraki ’01 wrote and will direct an untitled comedy feature shot in Mexico City. The film will be distributed by Universal Pictures Mexico.

Jonah Ansell ’08 wrote and directed, and Amanda Ely ’08 produced Cadaver, starring Christopher Lloyd.

Judd Apatow will write and direct an untitled follow-up to Knocked Up.

John August ’94 wrote the musical book Big Fish for the forthcoming Broadway version of August’s 2003 screen adaptation.

Joe Ballarini ’99 will write a feature adaptation of Paul Watson’s action-comedy The Robot.

Daniel Barnz ’95 will direct the feature film Still I Rise. Michael Bostick ’90 will oversee the project.

Alicia Dwyer ’97 directed the PBS documentary The Calling. Michael Dwyer ’06 served as director of photography.

Dan Etheridge ’92 will write and produce the Warner Bros. Television comedy series Little in Common.

Andre Fabrizio ’02 and Jeremy Passmore ’04 wrote and will produce Sandbox, an action drama series in development with Cinemax.

David Freedman ’10 is producing Just Seen It, a web-based movie review show hosted by a group of USC film students.

Gordon Freeman ’06 wrote and directed the independent feature No Answer. Fellow Alumns Dinga Haines ’06 was the producer. Michael Dwyer ’06 and Maura Milan ’06 served as directors of photography.

Ian Fried ’08 has set up and will write the screenplay for a supernatural action film with Legendary Pictures/Warner Bros called Spectral.

Russel Friend ’95 and Garrett Lerner ’95 will write a drama pilot for NBC billed as a modern-day take on Frankenstein.

Liz Glotzer ’85 will produce Castle Rock’s teen romance feature The First Time.

Michael Goetz ’99 will direct, and Kyle Killen ’97 will write the indie drama Scenic Route. Paul Jensen ’06 and Brion Hambel ’06 of Best Medicine Productions will produce the film.

Phillip Goldfine ’86 will produce the feature thriller Breathless.

Alfred Gough ’94 and Miles Millar ’94 will produce an untitled Disney feature from the writer of Erin Brockovich about a teacher who transformed a defunct drama department.

David Goyer ’88 will write Da Vinci’s Demons, a new series for Starz that will focus on the early life of Leonardo da Vinci.

Susan Downey ’95 will produce the Warner Bros. feature film The Judge.

Amanda Ely ’08, a 20 Under 40 New Yorker, is also producing a project for Starz that will focus on a defunct drama department.

David Bezmozgis ’99 made the New Yorker’s 20 Under 40 list for his recently released debut novel, The Free World.

Ann Biderman ’75 will write Showtime’s darkly humorous family drama Ray Donovan.

Steve Boman ’09 sold his memoir Film School: The True Story of a Midwestern Family Man Who Went to the World’s Most Famous Film School, Fell Flat on His Face, and Sold a Television Series to CBS.

Sheldon Candis ’02 co-wrote and directed the independent feature film LUX Justin Wilson ’98 co-wrote the film while Jason Berman ’06, Mike Jensen ’06, and Joel Newton ’00 produced and Gavin Kelly ’04 was the director of photography.

Stephen Chbosky ’92 adapted and is directing the feature film version of his own novel The Perks of Being a Wallflower.

Karen Croner ’87 will write the screenplay adaptation of Jean Harff Korelitz’s 2009 novel Admission.

Jon Chu ’03 is directing G.I. Joe: Cobra Strikes. Chu will also receive a career achievement award at this year’s Princess Grace Awards Gala.

Lamar Damon ’84 and Norman Buckley ’80 wrote the spec script for a new ABC Family dramaedy Strut.

Scott Derrickson ’95 will direct an independent, untitled, supernatural thriller for Stuart Ford’s IM Global genre label Octane. Derrickson will also write and direct an untitled thriller starring Ethan Hawke.

Joshua Donen ’79 will executive produce the new Starz series Noir, a live-action adaptation of the Japanese anime series.

Thomas Dean Donnelly ’94 and Joshua Oppenheimer ’94 will write the feature adaptation of Voltron.

Tim Dowling ’96 is writing the Warner Bros. remake of Uptown Saturday Night. Dowling will also executive produce Guidance, a single-camera adult buddy comedy series set in a high school.

James Gray ’91 will direct the feature film The Gray Man.

Brian Grazer is slated to produce the feature film Arabian Knights. Grazer will also produce the feature film Colossus, a remake of the 1970 sci-fi pic Colossus: The Forbin Project. Grazer and Ron Howard will executive produce an untitled comedy series starring Sarah Silverman.

Robert Greenblatt ’87 was named chairman of NBC Entertainment.

Javier Grillo-Marxuach ’93 will executive produce and write TNT’s new drama series Tom Clancy’s Homeland Security.

Derekson is directing G.I. Joe: Cobra Strikes.

Doug Liman will write, direct and produce the sci-fi feature Luna. David Ellison’s Skydance Pictures will co-finance the project. Liman is also producing UPN’s upcoming comedy series I Just Want My Pants Back for MTV and will executive produce Fox’s recently acquired detective series Metropolitan.

Alex Litvak ’95 will write the action feature Five Against the Bullet for Sony.

Charles Matthau ’86 wrote and is directing the feature adaption of Elmore Leonard’s crime novel Freaky Deaky.

Corey May ’01 and Dooma Wendschuh ’01 will produce the feature comedy Dogs of Babel.

Dan Mirvish ’94 will write, direct, and produce the feature adaptation of the Off Broadway play Between Us.
Neal Moritz ’85 will executive produce a single-camera ABC comedy about an entire family finding themselves single at the same time. Moritz is also attached to produce an adaptation of a Soviet-themed sci-fi fantasy comic book series The Red Star for Warner Bros. and the Columbia Pictures comedy feature Road to Nanda.

Don Murphy ’88 has contracted with Cartoon Network to develop a live-action feature based on the 1990s cartoon series Captain Planet.

Eric Nazarian ’99 will write and produce the feature thriller Blood Brothers.

Caitlin Parrish ’12 wrote the stage play A Twist in the Water.

Robbie Pickering ’06 wrote and directed and Brian Hambel ’06 produced Natural Selection, which took home the jury awarded Best Feature Narrative and Documentary at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin, Texas.

Jon Poll ’81 will direct the independent romantic comedy Responsible Adults.

Stuart Pollok ’93 will join the film financing, production, and consulting shingle Indomitable Entertainment as Executive Vice President and Executive Producer.

Arie Posin ’93 wrote and will direct the independent feature film The Look of Love.

Ross Putman ’10 has been promoted to Creative Executive at The Walt Becker Company.

Shonda Rhimes ’94 will executive produce and write the ABC series Damage Control. She will also executive produce Gilded Lilies, an ABC drama series set in nineteenth century New York, as well as an untitled legal drama acquired by ABC.

Charles Roven will produce the remake of Gilligan’s Island for Warner Bros. Roven will also produce the feature reboot of Buffy the Vampire Slayer and the feature film The Great Wall.

Ira Rubenstein ’92 is now Executive Vice President of Digital Marketing at 20th Century Fox.

Ian Sander wrote and will produce Monster Heist, a series for Sony Pictures Entertainment’s digital-only video network, Crackle. Sander has also renewed his production deal with ABC Studios.

Wallaine Sarao ’06 has optioned a one-hour drama Protectors through Fox Writers Initiative.

Steve Schklair ’81 will now serve as CEO of the newly combined company 3ality Technica, which will provide an estimated 80% of the technology used in 3D production worldwide.

Josh Schwartz will produce an untitled DC project for ABC. He and fellow alumnus Bard Dorros ’99 are producing the feature film Fun Size. Schwartz is making his directorial debut on the film. He will also executive produce My Best Friend is a Loser, a half-hour comedy for NBC.

Stacey Sher ’85 will produce a feature film based on the 2009 Washington Post article about the Wall Street bailout, entitled The $700 Billion Man.

Ian Shorr ’08 wrote a futuristic re-telling of Alexander Dumas’ The Count of Monte Cristo which was purchased by Warner Bros.

Juliet Snowden ’95 has written Dibbuk Box, a horror film based on true events.

Stephen Sommers ’93 will write, produce and direct the adaptation of the Dean Koontz novel Odd Thomas.

Chris Terrio ’02 will write Argo, a feature adaptation of a true hostage-rescue story. Grant Heslov will produce the project.

Jeff Wadlow ’01 will executive produce and write and Beau Bauman ’01 will produce the CBS television series Hall Mary. Wadlow will write and direct the off-beat detective drama Brickhouse for CBS. He will also write and executive produce an untitled CIA drama for Fox through Warner Bros. Television/Wadlow is directing Non-Stop, a feature action thriller for Dark Castle.

John Wells ’82 is writing the pilot The Wishbones, about a small town wedding band that aspires to rock and roll greatness.

Robert Zemeckis ’73 will produce an animated feature that is based on the humor book How to Survive a Garden Gnome Attack.

Stu Zicherman ’93 wrote and will direct the independent comedy Adult Children of Divorce.

Craig Zisk will direct two comedy series from NBC, Bent and The Untitled Kari Lizer Project. Zisk will also make his feature film directorial debut with the indie comedy The English Teacher. Dan Chariton ’97 and Stacy Chariton wrote the script.

Cathy Yuspa ’95 and Josh Goldsmith ’95 will executive produce and write NBC’s My Life as an Experiment.

Production Division Professor Mark Harris hosted the new show Perspectives with Mark Harris for Documentary Channel. The show was filmed on Stage 3 at SCA.

Instructor of Cinematic Practice Peter Brinson and Game Innovation Lab Art Director Kurosh ValaNejad are nominated for a Digital 25 award, in the category of “Console and PC Gaming” for The Cat and the Coup.

Summer Program Head David Weitzner launched the YouTube Creator Institute which housed ten students at SCA and presented speakers, classes and lectures on creating better media.

Production senior lecturer Don Hall was honored by the Editors Guild with the Editors Guild Fellowship and Service Award. This is only the fifth time with the award has been given.

Writing Division professor Howard A. Rodman was elected Vice President of the Writers Guild of America West.

Production adjunct Shirley Jo Finney received the NAACP Theatre Image Award for Best Director for her production of Emmett Till. During this season, she also received the Drama Critics Award, the Los Angeles Ovation Award and the Backstage Garland Award for Best Director.

Hench-DADA adjunct Candace Reckinger and visiting Associate Producer Michael Patterson won an Adobe Education Leader Impact award for their work on Pictures at an Exhibition, a 35-minute animation work created for multi-screen projection in sync with live symphonic performance, at the New World Symphony.

IML Research Professor Holly Willis in collaboration with the Institute for Computing in Humanities, Arts and Social Science (I-CHASS) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign were awarded a 30,000 Service Units (SU) startup allocation grant on the Dash/Gordon supercomputer at the San Diego Supercomputing Center.

Screenwriting adjunct Janet Batchler’s film, Pompeii was the big seller at Cannes, raising $105 million in territory sales in 27 hours. It is being directed by Paul W.S. Anderson. Batchler co-wrote the script.

Hench-DADA Instructor of Cinema Practice Tom Sito hosted a panel of experts at the San Diego Comicon entitled ASIFA/Hollywood’s State of the Animation Industry 2011.

Peter Stark Producing Program adjunct Samuel Dickerman was promoted from senior Vice President to Executive Vice President of Production at Columbia.
ALUMNI TV AND FILM RELEASES

Blue Mountain State—Sharla Sumpter Bridgett, Executive Producer
Bones—Carla Kettner ’83, Co-Executive Producer/Writer
Castle—Andrew W. Marlowe ’92, Executive Producer/Writer
Chaos—Tom Spezialy, Executive Producer/Writer
Chuck—Chris Fedak ’98, Executive Producer/Writer
The Closer—Adam Belanoff ’90, Co-Executive Producer
Desperate Housewives—Charles Skouras III, Producer
Falling Skies—Robert Rodat ’83, Executive Producer/Writer
Greek—John Ziffren ’78, Executive Producer
Grey’s Anatomy—Shonda Rhimes ’94, Executive Producer/Writer
Hart of Dixie—Jason Ensel ’97, Executive Producer/Director; Josh Schwartz, Executive Producer
Homeland—Nelson Cragg ’03, Cinematographer
House—Bryan Singer ’89, Executive Producer; Garrett Lerner ’95 & Russel Friend ’95, Executive Producers/ Writers; Greg Yaitanes, Executive Producer/Director
The Inbetweeners—Aaron Kaplan ’90, Executive Producer
Intervention—Sarah Skibitzke, Supervising Producer
Last Man Standing—Shawn Levy ’94, Executive Producer
Lights Out—Stuart Zicherman ’93, Co-Executive Producer
Love in the Wild—Tom Shelly ’87, Executive Producer
The Lying Game—Charles Pratt Jr. ’78, Executive Producer/Writer
Mad Men—Matthew Weiner ’90, Executive Producer/Writer; Amy Wells ’80, Set Decorator; Marcy Patterson ’02, Associate Producer; Erin Levy ’05, Writer
Make it or Break it—John Ziffren ’78, Executive Producer
Melissa and Joey—John Ziffren ’78, Executive Producer
New Girl—Brett Baer ’88, Executive Producer
Nick Swardson’s Pretend Time—Brett Baer ’88, Executive Producer/Writer
The Nine Lives of Chloe King—John Ziffren ’78, Executive Producer/Writer; David Crabtree ’06, Editor
The Office—Paul Feig ’84, Co-Executive Producer/Director; Jeffrey Blitz ’97, Director
Pan Am—Jack Orman ’93, Executive Producer/Writer; Thomas Schlamme, Director
Pair of Kings—Brady Heck ’94, Editor
Person of Interest—Bryan Burk ’91, Executive Producer
Ringer—Paul Feig ’84, Executive Producer/Writer
Shameless—Joshua Oppenheimer ’91, Writer
Sons of Anarchy—Paul Maibaum ’75, Director of Photography
Spartacus: Gods of the Arena—Joshua Donen ’79, Co-Executive Producer
Switched at Birth—John Ziffren ’78, Executive Producer
Terra Nova—Aaron Kaplan, Executive Producer; Steven Spielberg, Executive Producer; Alex Graves ’89, Director; Nelson Cragg ’03, Cinematographer; Jeff Betancourt, Editor
Too Big to Fail—Peter Gould ’90, Writer
Undercovers—Bryan Burk ’91, Executive Producer
Weeds—Jonathan Talbert ’02, Co-Producer
Wipeout—Matt Kunitz ’90, Executive Producer; Tom Johnson ’81, Re-Recording Mixer

Mad Men has won three consecutive Golden Globes and four consecutive Emmys for Outstanding Drama Series.

Abduction—John Singleton ’90, Director
Apollo 18—Cody Zieg ’01, Executive Producer
Beastly—Daniel Barnz ’94, Writer/Director
The Beaver—Kyle Killen ’94, Writer; Tom Johnson ’81, Re-Recording Mixer
Bernie—Liz Glotzer ’85, Producer
Bridesmaids—Paul Feig ’84, Executive Producer; Judd Apatow ’87, Producer
Captain America: The First Avenger—Kevin Feige ’95, Producer; Robert Daiva ’67, Editor; Jeffrey Ford ’91, Editor; Stephen H. Flick ’78, Sound Designer
Cars 2—Ben Queen ’96, Screenwriter
The Change-Up—Neal Moritz ’85, Producer; Lee Haxall ’81, Editor; Greg Hayden, Editor
Circumstance—Melissa M. Lee ’07, Producer
Conan the Barbarian—Thomas Dean Donnelly ’95, Writer; Joshua Oppenheimer ’94, Writer; Sean Hood ’97, Writer
Contagion—Stacey Sher ’85, Producer
Cowboys & Aliens—Brian Grazer, Producer; Ron Howard, Producer
Crazy, Stupid Love—Lee Haxall ’81, Editor
Damsels in Distress—Liz Glotzer ’85, Producer
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules—Gabe Sachs ’84, Writer; Elliot Tyson, Re-Recording Mixer
The Dilemma—Ron Howard ’73, Producer/Director; Brian Grazer, Producer
Don’t Be Afraid of the Dark—Matthew Robbins ’76, Writer

Contagion reunites The Talented Mr. Ripley’s Matt Damon, Jude Law and Gwyneth Paltrow. Contagion is produced by alumna Stacey Sher.
**I am Number Four**—Matthew Cohan ’05, Co-Executive Producer; Alfred Gough ’94, Writer; Miles Millar ’94, Writer

**In Time**—Eric Newman ’96, Producer

**Jumping the Broom**—Tenlyn A. Shropshire ’85, Editor

**Just Go With It**—Timothy Dowling ’96, Writer

**Justin Bieber: Never Say Never**—Jon M. Chu ’03, Director; Avi Youabian ’02, Editor

**Killer Elite**—Joni Sighvatsson ’85, Producer

**Killer Joe**—Caleb Deschanel ’69, Cinematographer

**Kung Fu Panda 2**—Erik Aadahl ’98, Supervising Sound Editor

**Limitless**—Tim Carra ’03, Visual Effects Supervisor

**Monte Carlo**—Jeffrey Ford ’91, Editor

**Mother’s Day**—Joseph White ’04, Cinematographer

**Paranormal Activity 3**—Michael Perry ’70, Writer

**Pearl Jam Twenty**—Nicola B. Marsh ’06, Cinematographer

**Mr. Popper’s Penguins**—Bruce Green, Editor; D.M. Hemphill, Re-recording Mixer

**Priest**—Joshua Donen ’79, Producer

**Prom**—Joe Nussbaum ’96, Director; Katie Wech ’02, Writer; Byron Shah ’98, Cinematographer; Jack English, Gaffer

**Puss in Boots**—David H. Steinberg, Writer

**Rango**—Addison Teague ’02, Supervising Sound Editor; John Knoll ’84, Visual Effects Supervisor

**Real Steel**—Shawn Levy ’94, Director/Producer; Don Murphy ’88, Producer; Robert Zemeckis ’73, Producer

**Rebirth**—Jim Whitaker ’94, Director

**Restless**—Ron Howard, Producer; Brian Grazer, Producer

**Seven Days in Utopia**—Jason M. Berman ’06, Producer; Michael Jenson ’05, Associate Producer;

This year Kung Fu Panda’s Jack Black demonstrated his awesomeness and good sportsmanship by showing up twice for the same event at SCA. The day of the event, and the day before, when he was told by accident the event was happening.

I am Number Four references Hannah Montana, when Sam says he could’ve given John a Hannah Montana sweatshirt as a change of clothes. The film’s writers and alumni Alfred Gough and Miles Millar, also produced Hannah Montana: The Movie.

Mick Partridge ’08, Associate Producer

The Smurfs—David N. Weiss ’87, Writer

Super 8—Bryan Burk ’91, Producer

Take Me Home Tonight—Lee Haxall ’80, Editor

The Thing—David Foster, Executive Producer; Eric Newman ’96, Producer; Marco Beltrami, Composer

The Three Muskateers—Alex Litvak ’95, Writer

Thor—Kevin Feige ’95, Producer; Kevin LaNeave ’97, Lead Visual Effects Editor; Wesley Sewell ’92, Visual Effects Supervisor

The Tree of Life—Erik Aadahl ’98, Co-Supervising Sound Editor/Sound Designer

Tower Heist—Brain Grazer, Producer

Tucker and Dale vs. Evil—Eli Craig ’04, Writer/Director; Morgan Jurgenson ’04, Writer

The Union—Nicola Marsh ’06, Cinematographer

Unknown—John Ottman ’88, Composer

You’re Next—Keith Calder ’04, Producer

Zookeeper—Walt Becker ’95, Producer
Laura Ziskin 1950-2011
Producer, Philanthropist, SCA Board of Councilors Member and Alumna

Ziskin was born in the San Fernando Valley and had a brief career as a writer for game shows immediately following her graduation from SCA.

After working as producer Jon Peters’ personal assistant and later, a development executive, Ziskin began her long and successful career as a producer in both the independent and studio arenas. In 1984, Ziskin formed Fogwood Films with actress Sally Field. Her credits with Fogwood include No Way Out, the remake of D.O.A. and Everyone’s All-American.

In 1990 Ziskin served as executive producer on Pretty Woman, and in 1995, produced To Die For, her first film under the banner of Laura Ziskin Productions. In 2002, Ziskin reached two milestones by being the first woman to produce the Academy Awards solo and by producing the worldwide smash Spider-Man. Ziskin produced each of the films in the trilogy, which went on to become Sony Pictures’ most successful franchise.

After being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004, Ziskin was the driving force behind the launch of the Stand Up to Cancer foundation, which aims to raise significant funds for translational cancer research through online and televised efforts.

Ziskin was a long-time friend of the School of Cinematic Arts and, in 1999, received the Mary Pickford Award for distinguished alumni.

John Calley 1930-2011
Producer and Board of Councilors Member

Calley was born in Jersey City on July 8, 1930. He served in the Army and worked as a mail clerk for NBC in New York.

After a stint in advertising, Calley moved to production company Filmways, where he delivered films like The Cincinnati Kid and Catch-22, Calley had a remarkable run of success at Warner Bros., beginning in 1968. During his time at the studio as head of production, president and vice chairman, the studio created Mean Streets, Superman and All the President’s Men, along with a string of other hits.

In 1989 Calley produced Postcards from the Edge and The Remains of the Day, a film that earned him a Best Picture nomination. His next challenge came from CAA chief Michael Ovitz, who asked Calley to serve as President and COO for United Artists Pictures. Under his leadership, the studio released GoldenEye, The Birdcage and Leaving Las Vegas.

Sony also experienced a major turnaround thanks to Calley’s efforts, beginning in 1996. After the success of the first Spider-Man film, the studio went onto release As Good As It Gets, Men in Black and Air Force One.

He stepped down from the chairmanship at Sony in 2003 to focus on producing, working with Mike Nichols on the Oscar-nominated Closer, and bringing Sony The Da Vinci Code, which eventually grossed $758 million worldwide. In 2009, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognized him with the Irving G. Thalberg Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Gene Polito 1918-2011
Cinematographer, Professor and Alumnus

Polito was born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 13, 1918 and was eight months old when his family moved to the west coast, where his father continued his career as a cinematographer for Warner Bros. Studios.

Polito graduated from Loyola High School in Los Angeles, and went on to attend Loyola University and the University of Southern California, earning his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. Throughout WWI, he worked as an engineer for Douglas Aircraft.

An active member of the American Society of Cinematographers and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, over the course of his 40-year career Polito worked on hundreds of productions. Also an avid inventor, Polito is credited with the invention of the “Polito Bracket,” a mounting accessory used by studio photographers.

At age 62, Polito became a professor at the School of Cinematic Arts, a calling that gave him great pleasure. He pushed students toward a deeper understanding of core cinematic principles, such as the mathematical derivation of optical formulas so they would understand the science behind the art. His dedication and enthusiasm made him a favorite among his students. He retired from teaching at age 70.
Eugene Moriarty 1920-2011
Alumnus and Lecturer

Moriarty was born in 1919 in Chicago, Illinois, and graduated from Fairfax High School in Los Angeles. He attended the University of Maryland, where he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves.

After transferring to the University of Southern California, he was called into active duty and sent to Quantico, where he was tasked with creating training films for the Marine Corps, which he did for five years. He later served on the aircraft carrier The Block Island throughout the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre.

Moriarty was a member of the so-called “Unholy Five”, a group that included Herb Farmer, Dave Johnson, Mel Sloan and Dan Wiegand, who were all instrumental in the formation of SCA’s curriculum and expansion of its infrastructure.

Irvin Kershner 1923-2010
Director, Alumnus and Faculty Member

Kershner was born in Philadelphia in 1923, and grew up an avid musician, studying violin, viola and composition.

After attending the Tyler School of Fine Art at Temple University, he went to New York and Provincetown to study with renowned painting teacher Hans Hoffman. After moving to Los Angeles, he studied photography at the Art Center College of Design and film at the USC School of Cinematic Arts. Kershner began his career as a still photographer for the United States Information Service in Iran.

Kershner had a long career including credits on Confidential File, Stakeout on Dope Street, The Eyes of Laura Mars, RoboCop 2 and many others, but is best known as the director of Star Wars: Episode V -The Empire Strikes Back.

SCA Alumnus George Lucas said of Kershner, “The Star Wars story has had to evolve to stay fresh, and it took a filmmaker like [Kershner] to make that important step in galaxy building.”

Kershner continued to produce and write in recent years, teaching at SCA and lecturing around the world. His fine art photographs have been exhibited in New York, San Francisco and Mexico, as well as in a permanent exhibition at the LAC+USC Medical Center.

Kershner received a lifetime achievement award from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films.

Daniel Pfisterer 1967-2010
Cinematographer, Camera Operator and Alumnus

Pfisterer worked as a cinematographer in both film and television, with credits including The Oprah Winfrey Show and Undercover History.

He was known for his work on socially conscious documentaries and his calm presence on set.

Pfisterer graduated with his MFA in Production.

Lyman Hallowell 1916-2011
Editor and Alumnus

Longtime friend of SCA and prolific editor Lyman Hallowell’s credits include I Drink Your Blood and The Defenders.

Hallowell spent many years in the editing department of Twentieth-Century Fox and was an assistant editor for MKR Films. In addition to his prolific career as an editor, he was one of the first people to legally marry a same sex partner in California and was honored in 2008 by the San Diego Pride Day Parade. Hallowell graduated from SCA in 1938 with his BA in Cinema and was a long time friend of the school.
SCA NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

The SCA Network is a fun way to stay connected to fellow SCA Trojans and make a difference in the School’s future. Through exclusive screening and mixers, the SCA Network provides an outlet for alumni and current students to mix and network. Best of all, Network benefits are complimentary with an annual donation to the USC School of Cinematic Arts. Recent screenings have included Real Steel, Cars 2, Super 8 and Contagion.

$25 Level
Invitations to exclusive SCA Network-only screenings and Network Mixers plus website recognition.

$50 Level
SCA Military Style Cap*

$100 Level
Print/online SCA Alumni Directory (printed annually in May)*

$250 Level
SCA Polo Shirt and Reality Ends Here 80th Anniversary History book*

$500 Level
Reserved seating at SCA Network events*

$1000 Level
Invitation to SCA Special Events as part of the Annual Leadership Circle membership*

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