

ALUMNI FOCUS

Sandra J. Lord Thomas

(’93, BS communication and ’98 Med.) recently completed a Ph.D., program receiving Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Following graduation from SUU, Thomas served as Southern Utah University’s Director of School Relations for five years and as one of the Directors of the Governor’s Honors Academy for the state of Utah for seven years.

As Director of School Relations, Thomas was responsible for recruitment, and played a significant role in public relations, enrollment management and marketing processes. She directed and founded the Admissions Adviser Program, the Sanctuary Scholarship Competition, Quest Leadership Seminars, and the Spring Leadership Competition.

She has enjoyed many diverse and varied educational experiences serving as an educational representative in Minsk, Belarus during her senior year at SUU. Additionally Thomas she served as the Student body President at SUU during the academic year, 1992-93. She also served on the Board of Trustees and as a member of the Utah Council of Student body Presidents.

Thomas teaches as an adjunct professor for Northern Arizona University’s Educational Leadership Department and functions as an independent researcher and consultant for various public and private entities. She volunteers with the Make-A-Wish Foundation as a wish granter, is an avid reader, writer, black and white photographer, artist, and dreamer.



Dennis Sponer (’92

business) has the distinction of having his \$18 million company Scripnet, listed on the Inc. 500 for two years in a row. Founded and based in Las Vegas, ScripNet ranked #331 on the 2003 list. With a 551% sales growth over the last first five years, ScripNet is



Nevada’s leader in private business growth. In 2002, ScripNet ranked #34, with \$7.8 million in sales.

“ScripNet joins an elite group of growth companies that are making a significant contribution to the U.S. economy. A ranking on the Inc. 500 has often been an early indicator of future accomplishments on a global scale,” said Inc Editor John Koten. Companies previously listed on the Inc. 500 include Oracle, Microsoft, Patagonia and Domino’s Pizza.

“To make the list two years in a row is quite an honor. We help workers’ compensation claimants get their medicine and we offer significant cost savings to their insurance company in the process,” said ScripNet President and co-founder Dennis M. Sponer. “We accomplish this goal by providing personal service including a customized on-line system and toll free help desk.”

Founded in 1997, ScripNet has revolutionized workers’ compensation by introducing leading technology into the claims process and managing costs at the pharmacy level.

Jeanette Goins (’94

psychology) was selected Mrs. Utah America in July 2004. The Pageant took place July 17th at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Centre in Salt Lake City. She won the crown with the platform of Deaf Awareness and Hearing Impairments... a platform

that is especially close to her heart given that both of her parents are deaf. She also competed for the Mrs. America title in Palm Springs California from August 24th through September 8th. Jeanette graduated from SUU 1994 with a major in Psychology and minor in English Literature, and currently teaches American Sign Language at a local high school in the Salt Lake Valley, and is the cheer advisor. She has been featured in the *Who’s Who among America’s Teachers* for seven consecutive years.



Elaine Braithwaite Vickers (’01 *chemistry*) is completing her Ph.D., in Inorganic Chemistry, at the University of Utah. Her research in the field of molecule-based magnets has led to the discovery of several new magnetic materials, and has been published in several of the top journals in chemistry, including, *The Journal of the American Chemical Society*. As a graduate student, she was invited to present her research at the International Conference on Molecule-Based Magnets in Valencia, Spain in 2002,

and was recently awarded a \$10,000 University of Utah, Graduate Research Fellowship.

Paul Speirs ('92 *public relations/advertising*) has launched his own public relations firm in Las Vegas. The firm, Steinbeck Communications, specializes in gaming and entertainment public relations. Previously, Paul directed PR for both Excalibur and Luxor hotel/casinos in Las Vegas and was vice president of a large Las Vegas ad agency, where he opened its PR division. He lives in Las Vegas with his partner, Brent. Their dining room table is a door that was used in the Shakespearean Festival's 2002 production of "Man of La Mancha."



Zach Barnard ('01 *business*) recently became the entrepreneur he always wanted to be, opening his own business. Z Pizzeria is a gourmet pizza restaurant in the Millcreek area of Salt Lake City, Utah, which features a gourmet menu as well as the traditional menu. "I fell in love with the food business at my first job when I was 16. At SUU I studied business management, which has provided me with a solid foundation for owning my own restaurant," said Barnard, 26. Barnard is a 2001



graduate of SUU, majoring in psychology with a minor in business management. He also was the starting pitcher for the Thunderbirds baseball team, for which he still holds several school records. The store also provides catering services and business lunches.

Ben Winslow, a former communication student of Southern Utah University, has been named the recipient of the prestigious national, Edward R. Murrow Award,



The Murrow Award, named after the famous and accomplished broadcast journalist, is the equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize in the world of radio and television. According to Radio-Television News Directors Association and Foundation, "Murrow Award recipients demonstrate the spirit of excellence that Edward R. Murrow made a standard for the broadcast news profession."

"This is wonderful news for Ben; he's a talented broadcaster," Dean O'Driscoll, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, and fellow SUU communication alum, declares. And it's certainly a statement about the quality of the education Ben received at SUU."

Mike Heather ('87 *humanities and social science*) recently accepted a position as an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performing Arts, Designer and Technical Director for Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky. While at SUU, Mike focused on Social Studies, History and Theatre.

SAVE THIS DATE

Friday evening, September 17, 2005

S O U T H E R N U T A H U N I V E R S I T Y

Scholarship Jubilee III

Gourmet Sit-Down Dinner and Auction • Acclaimed Headliner Entertainment
Gilbert Great Hall, Hunter Conference Center, SUU

All proceeds dedicated to SUU Student Scholarships