



BROMMEL-LEVY-STANIEC SCHOLARSHIP IN COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, AND THEATRE

For five years I served as part-time director of the Kaskaskia program at Northeastern. The program no longer exists but it had at one time hundreds of students who designed their own specialized degrees. Most of this program evolved into the Honors Program because I believed that only the brightest of our students should bypass general education courses and do the amount of research and writing required.

Without the help of Lynn Levy and Geri Staniec-Leland as student assistants in different years I would never have been able to adequately help those students designing their own degrees. One needed to know a vast amount of information about the best professors and which courses would stretch the students' abilities. Professors had to be willing to direct independent studies. Both Geri and Lynn, coming from the departments of Psychology and Communication, had keen insights into our curriculum and they helped screen applicants. They knew the kind of students that I wanted to recruit, and found students that had the potential to create their own degree requirements.

Both women have had wonderful careers. Lynn in many ways does for Columbia College students what she did for me. She individualizes instruction to reach and meet the needs of undergraduate students. In the corporate world, Geri has done the same working with businesses to meet their pension and retirement needs. I found it no surprise that when her boss retired, she bought the business and now runs her own company! Both of these women had an indomitable streak that I admired and found so helpful to be around. I trusted them and often recognized how well they counseled students.

For the past 17 years Lynn Ellen Levy (Northeastern BA '83, MA '91) has been a program manager at Columbia College Chicago. Her responsibilities include overseeing two innovative student support programs: New Student Placement and Supplemental Instruction Peer Study Groups (SI),

for over three thousand students a year. During her tenure Lynn helped update Columbia's placement instrument to more effectively allow freshmen and transfer students to register for courses in writing, reading, and mathematics.

Additionally, Lynn has taught English and Speech at Columbia, and tutored students at all levels of writing. In SI she teaches her student leaders how to conduct dynamic study groups facilitating student success in courses in which most students, at all grade performance levels, may struggle. Lynn built Columbia's SI Program from two courses to nine with multiple sections, in all three Columbia schools: Media Arts, Fine Arts, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. Lynn mentors SI Student Leaders with interactive learning strategies, which help students develop their own answers in SI Peer Study Groups.

As a 19-year-old sophomore, Lynn found her self-confidence in Dr. Brommel's Foundations of Communications course. Inspired by his supportive course environment, she declared her major in communications. In her junior year, Lynn began working for Dr. Brommel as his assistant, proctoring student exams, helping to videotape their speeches, and working in the Kaskaskia program.

Geri Staniec-Leland (Northeastern BA '83) writes: "My path to Northeastern was not a straight one. I had already been working full-time and attending city colleges part-time. When I decided to attend school full-time, I was not sure what area I wanted to pursue. I started in Education and ended up in Psychology and Human Resources.

I met Dr. Brommel when I answered a school ad for a part-time secretary while he was the director of the Kaskaskia Program. I believe, initially, my job was just to make appointments, type letters, make copies and answer phone calls. It turned into something so much more rewarding. I met students who, with the help of Dr. Brommel, were able to design their own degree programs. It was an honor to work with them to see where their stories would lead. To this day, Dr. Brommel and I keep in touch and I am very grateful to have his friendship.

I, myself, kept to the more conventional way of getting a degree. I worked a few different jobs, took out a student loan and spent many hours in the library studying. So I am all too aware of trying to achieve a degree when many obstacles are in your way.

Since graduating from Northeastern my career path has had many twists and turns too. I learned from every position I was in yet not having the courage to stay in one place too long. When I finally found an area I enjoyed, little did I know that it would eventually lead me to owning my own small company.”