

BROMMEL-KRAMER-BARNITZ SCHOLARSHIP IN COMMUNICATION, MEDIA AND THEATRE

Michael Kramer became a graduate student of Speech and Performing Arts, now Communication, Media, and Theatre, in the early 1980s. It was there that he met Professor Emeritus Bernard J. Brommel, Communication, Media, and Theatre, with whom he took two classes. “They were two of the most influential classes I ever took,” remembers Kramer. Those classes gave Kramer the background he needed to be successful in his Ph.D. program at University of Texas, and continued to influence him and inform his teaching when he became a university professor.

Today, Kramer serves as professor and chair of the department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. Previously at the University of Missouri (MU), his work in the classroom earned him the MU Provost Outstanding Junior Faculty Teaching Award in 1995, the prestigious William T. Kemper Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching in 1999, and the MU Outstanding Professor Award in 2010.

Kramer is in the top one percent of published scholars in the history of the discipline, and is known for his work in organizational and group communication. His research centers on three main areas: employee transitions, emotion management and group communication processes. He has written two books, “Managing Uncertainty in Organizational Communication,” and “Organizational Socialization: Joining and Leaving Organizations,” plus seven book chapters and 37 articles in refereed journals, for which he has won several awards.

Brommel states, “The fact that two of my former students became two of the top published scholars in the field of communication pleases me immensely. Jarice Hanson joins Michael in this honor. In the Spring of 2013, the Central States Communication Association honored Michael with a special program focused on his research contributions. Michael is such a wonderful credit to NEIU and the University of Texas where he achieved his doctorate. He was one of those exceptional students I had the joy of teaching.”

Kramer has also written four full-length plays and has been involved in more than 70 theatre productions as director, producer, technical director, crew or actor. He also has published several scholarly articles about his community theatre experiences.

Brommel honored Kramer in the naming of the Brommel-Kramer-Barnitz Scholarship in Communication, Media, and Theatre. This scholarship provides an annual award to one of the top students majoring in Communication, Media, and Theatre at NEIU who demonstrates the potential to go on in the field at the graduate level. “It was truly an honor to have Dr. Brommel name a scholarship after me,” remarked Kramer.

“It meant a great deal to learn that Dr. Brommel was truly proud of what I have been able to accomplish after receiving a degree from NEIU.”

John Barnitz came to NEIU in the early 1970s, when it was still Northeastern Illinois State College. Barnitz earned a B.A. in Secondary Education: Linguistics, with teacher preparation in English Language Arts in 1973. Although Barnitz was an education major, he enrolled in several courses related to public speaking, performing arts and media production. He volunteered at the College’s television station, NISC-TV. He served as President of the Linguistics Club; secretary and freelance writer and photographer for the Northeastern Print student newspaper; he joined the French Club and the Activities Council. Barnitz earned certificates for high academic achievement and service to the University in 1972 and 1973.

In Spring 1973, Barnitz began teaching English as a Second Language to foreign students at Amundsen High School. He also volunteered at his elementary alma mater, St. Jerome School. Barnitz went on to earn an M.A. in Linguistics: Syntax, Phonology, Applied Linguistics, and a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics: Reading, Psycholinguistics, from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

Barnitz recently retired as a university research professor in the department of curriculum and instruction in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of New Orleans (UNO), where he held the positions of department chair and graduate studies coordinator. Barnitz, the author of numerous book chapters, articles and presentations, has research interests in the linguistic aspects of reading development, plus the roles of creative arts and athletics in literacy education of urban youth.

In addition to being named a university research professor, Barnitz received the UNO Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Teaching. Barnitz was inducted into the Gordon Tech High School Alumni Hall of Fame. During his time at NEIU, Barnitz crossed paths with Professor Emeritus Bernard J. Brommel. “Northeastern has excellent professors who excel in teaching, scholarship and community service. Dr. Brommel is one of the very best. Forty years later, I can still recall Dr. Brommel talking about family communication.”

This endowed scholarship provides an annual award to one of the top students majoring in communication, media, and theatre at Northeastern who demonstrates the potential to continue in the field at the graduate level. Dr. Brommel remembers, “John Barnitz as an eager student who pushed hard to be his best. John was one of those students that made me feel like I was teaching him some things he could use. His later in depth scholarship in linguistics and reading merits attention.”

Barnitz wrote “Dr. Brommel serves as an exemplary role model to all of us who also excel in academic excellence in teaching, publishing, performing, and other means of communication,” said Barnitz. “I am certainly honored to be associated with Dr. Brommel’s generous awards.”