

## **BROMMEL-WAMBACH DETERMINATION AGAINST ALL ODDS SCHOLARSHIP**

**Timothy Wambach** is a proud 1999 graduate of NEIU, and a member of one of NEIU's legacy families (a family with two or more graduates). Wambach's parents met at and graduated from NEIU, and his sister graduated from NEIU as well. "NEIU is in my blood" Wambach quipped. Tim majored in Communication with a minor in Social Work.

Wambach created the Keep on Keeping On Foundation, a non-profit organization whose goals include alleviating the enormous monetary costs of living with a physical disability. He is also one of the lead actors in the two-man show, "Handicap This!" a life stage show about breaking down barriers and living with disabilities.

The show grew out of a relationship that began between Wambach and Mike Berkson, a 22 year-old college student living with cerebral palsy. In 2002, Wambach signed on as an aide to help Berkson navigate elementary school. Today the show helps to dispel myths about cerebral palsy and other disabilities and encourages others to overcome whatever obstacles they face in their lives. Wambach also serves as the Managing Director of "Handicap This Productions". The show has been seen by over 3,000 people since 2010.

Wambach, who has struggled with depression, understands obstacles and disabilities. The depression, which at times had him contemplating suicide, led him to drop out of college at the age of 20. Gradually Wambach worked his way back to mental health and earned his bachelor's degree. Today his main aspiration is to educate and empower others to make a difference.

While studying speech and communication (now Communication, Media and Theatre), Wambach met Professor Emeritus Bernard J. Brommel, who taught several of his communication classes. The

relationship that he developed with Brommel he described as “one of mutual respect and admiration of what each of us has accomplished.”

In remembering Tim, Dr. Brommel declared, “He impressed me from day one in class as a striving, hard-working student. Tim knew others excelled him academically, but that did not stop him from achievements. His personality presents himself so well. He never met a stranger or a person that he was not curious about. He will go to great ends to help the causes he sponsors. For example, Tim raised funds for the disabled by running alone from a convention in Orlando, Florida, back to Chicago to raise awareness for those with Cerebral Palsy! I got several phone calls from Tim as he jogged home. As a student I supervised his internships and saw Tim lead youths to new insights. If you want a kid who will go the last mile, I nominate Tim!”

To celebrate Wambach’s good work, and to honor students who overcome great barriers to higher education, Brommel named a scholarship after him. The Brommel-Wambach Determination Against All Odds Scholarship is an annual award given to an NEIU student who has overcome financial, emotional, physical or mental problems, family issues such as divorce, separation, abandonment or abuse (among others) in pursuit of higher education. Minority students, including LGBT, living on their own and struggling to attend NEIU, and students with special needs are encouraged to apply.

Wambach is extremely honored to have this scholarship named after him. “This distinction is something that I never strived for. It was not a life goal. At times, I still have to pinch myself to make sure it is real. The Determination Against All Odds Scholarship is a tribute to the man Dr. Brommel is,” says Wambach, “I am proud and humbled to be part of his legacy.”