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DePaul Digest

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Moments

Christmas at DePaul brings the magic of the holiday season to campus each year.

Photo by DePaul University/
Jamie Moncrief
Image by Image

Longtime photojournalist Jamie Moncrief tells DePaul’s stories through photos and videos.

Going into the military was a Moncrief family tradition, but Jamie Moncrief had other plans: He was going to become a photojournalist.

“My grandfather was a photographer, and he got me hooked on taking pictures,” says Moncrief, assistant director of visual content in DePaul’s Office of Public Relations and Communications.

His grandfather was Maj. John Ellis Moncrief, who photographed atomic bomb testing at Bikini Atoll for the U.S. War Department in the 1940s and 1950s. Since Moncrief spent every summer of his childhood with his grandparents in Florida, he learned early how to take photos and then develop them in his grandfather’s darkroom.

Born on an air force base in England, Moncrief moved frequently during his youth before his family settled in Wilmington, N.C. He spent summers working on blueberry and tobacco farms to save money to become the first in his family to attend college. It was at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill that Moncrief got his first taste of daily journalism as a photographer and photo editor for the Daily Tar Heel.

Straight out of college he landed a job at his hometown newspaper, the Wilmington Star-News.

He stayed for two decades, rising to photo editor and assistant photo editor for the New York Times’ Regional Newspaper Group to which the Star-News belonged, providing photos and stories for newspapers in a network of more than two dozen newspapers. He also worked as a freelance photographer for United Press International.

“That [job involved] chasing hard news,” Moncrief recalls of a career that enabled him to cover two papal visits, space shuttle launches, NASCAR and hurricanes, as well as loads of local news.

Eventually, the news business wore him down.

“There’s only so much bad news the human body can absorb. After all the fires and the hurricanes and the fatal car wrecks, I needed a break,” he says.

That’s when he made the happy transition into university photography at UNC Wilmington.

He had been at UNC Wilmington for a decade when his mentor, Cindy Lawson, approached him about an opening at DePaul, which she helped create and launch.

“This was my dream job!” says Moncrief. He and his wife, Katrina, a massage therapist, packed up and moved to Chicago in 2013.

At DePaul, Moncrief and his team create photos and videos that help tell the university’s story. One day he may stop at the Fullerton ‘L’ station to photograph the DePaul-centric murals installed by Br. Mark Elder and his art students, and the next he may be at the DePaul University Archives to dig up historic photos to weave together with current photos for a multimedia retrospective.

While photography gets Moncrief out of bed, it’s DePaul’s mission that keeps him inspired.

“I like to call it a work-life blend because the service and the mission are so incredibly ingrained and so important to what we do every day,” he says. “That’s what makes telling the stories of DePaul so much fun and so incredibly meaningful.”

Photo by DePaul University/Jeff Carrion

Staff photographer Jamie Moncrief

Marquee
On Oct. 10, the DePaul Humanities Center (DHC) welcomed actor **Ann Dowd** (THE MFA ’82) back to campus as the latest guest in the “In Conversation with Great Minds” series. H. Peter Steeves, professor of philosophy and DHC director, introduced Dowd, acclaimed for her work in the TV series “The Handmaid’s Tale” and “The Leftovers,” as well as the 2018 film “Hereditary.”

Steeves said, “Dowd’s work from television to film to Broadway has earned her a reputation as a master of her craft, someone who disappears into a role. What Ann does is make the people she plays obvious and complicated wholes, and this is something that’s rare indeed. They’re immediately, a whole person, the difference between imagining and experiencing.”

Citing her portrayal of Patti Levin in “The Leftovers,” a series premised on the disappearance of 2 percent of the world’s population, Steeves said, “That which is absent is never really completely gone. Patti, I think, understands this. She knows that the world cannot pretend that a sudden departure never took place, that those who disappeared can be forgotten, erased, ignored.”

Dowd originally wanted to be a surgeon. She said, “The approach in science is to study, study and study some more. And there’s one answer. Well, I thought that’s how I could approach acting. Of course, you can’t. It is a relationship, and the characters will find their lives in the way that we can express them.”

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Dowd voiced her belief in the primacy of the script and her appreciation for the actors and directors who have helped her throughout her career.

She singled out Justin Theroux, who plays Kevin Garvey in “The Leftovers,” as a brilliant scene partner. “In season three, I had to sing a song,” she remembers. “I kept thinking, what’s wrong with it? Why am I not getting it? I turned to him and said, ‘What’s the problem?’ And he said, ‘You have to give it a beat. Just give it a beat and then sing.’ Problem solved!”

In response to Steeves’ question about the role of directors, Dowd recalled a guest appearance she made on the TV series “NYPD Blue.” “I was scared to death,” she admits. “I understood [the character] emotionally, but that’s a trap because you’ve got to know what you are doing. What’s the verb there? Because that’s how we function. I couldn’t figure out what she was doing.

“This character’s husband, a police officer, was found dead in his car with his mistress from [inhaling] exhaust. David Milch, the creator of the show, comes in and watches the rehearsal. He said, ‘Do you know what she wants?’ I said, ‘I don’t.’ And he said, ‘She wants to protect her husband’s honor.’ I tell you, we sailed through it! That’s what a good director does.”
All Aboard the Blue Demon Line

DePaul has launched our new alumni blog—the Blue Demon Line. The DePaul alumni family is many things: We're big (more than 180,000 strong), dynamic (more than 120 different majors) and caring (8,700 alumni gave back to DePaul last year). Most of all, we’re stronger when we come together.

The Blue Demon Line is designed to bring our alumni family closer together, to rekindle our lifelong relationship with DePaul. Weekly posts with you in mind will feature in-depth profiles of alumni who are accomplishing amazing things, contests where you can win alumni swag, lists of benefits and services you receive as a graduate of DePaul, and more.

DePaul alumni have so much expertise, spirit and pride to share—from fun, seasonal activities to the tips and tricks of alumni experts working in fields from photography to fitness. The Blue Demon Line brings you the very best that the DePaul alumni family has to offer.

Connect to your community today at bluedemonline.com.

Going on a Trip? Take Flat DIBS Along!

Ever heard of Flat Stanley? You know, the cardboard cutout guy who travels the world having adventures and spreading knowledge? Well, we’re putting our own spin on the Flat Stanley project with our all-new creation: Flat DIBS!

You can download your very own Flat DIBS from the Blue Demon Line alumni blog (bluedemonline.com) or the Alumni & Friends website (alumni.depaul.edu). Pack DIBS with you the next time you go on vacation, and show your DePaul Pride by posting pictures of yourself with Flat DIBS using the hashtag #FlatDIBS. You can also send your pictures to alumnisocialmedia@depaul.edu. Your photo could be featured in an upcoming issue of DePaul Magazine!

Alumni Events

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<td>30 Chicago Young Alumni Seminar: Building a Brand</td>
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<td>18 Brookfield, Ill. Brookfield Zoo Outing</td>
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<td>22 Arlington Heights, Ill. Arlington International Racecourse Outing</td>
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Registration dates vary. Please visit alumni.depaul.edu/events for more information.
Escaping Your Comfort Zone

By Susan Neustrom

Ahh, your comfort zone. It’s a great place to reside. There are no worries, problems or hassles—just comfort. That is, until you are confronted with change.

Whether you are considering a career or life transition, any kind of personal or professional change requires you to step outside your comfort zone.

And leaving your comfort zone, your personal space where you know what to expect, can be frightening. In fact, fear can stifle growth, halt progress and negatively impact behavior, giving you the feeling of being stuck.

But the comfort zone as you know it is an illusion. Instead, what you believe to be your comfort zone is really habits that you’ve set up to protect yourself against any perceived danger associated with change. You do not want to lose control, and it’s easier to hold on to what you know instead of stepping into the unknown, regardless of how determined you are to make a change. Therefore, developing new habits to keep yourself moving forward is well worth your time and effort. New behavior repeated over and over again helps you maintain control even when everything around you is changing.

Here are three strategies to help you step out of your comfort zone:

1. **Create urgency** Without a sense of urgency, there is no reason to change. You create urgency by developing a story with a pressing problem and highlighting the benefits of the change outcome you are seeking. Therefore, taking action now instead of later becomes necessary.

2. **Move by inches, not feet** The view from where you are to where you want to be can be overwhelming. Taking small steps is a comfortable way to make change accessible. Design five-minute actions to inch yourself closer to your goal. Don’t forget to record your movements. By doing this you will see how much you can accomplish through consistent, steady actions.

3. **Amplify self-awareness** Deep self-awareness opens a window to your thoughts, feelings and actions. Look at yourself objectively by spending 30 minutes each day in reflection, and maintain a journal of your thoughts. In this way, you will reveal a new and hidden you.

When you want to leave your comfort zone, developing movement habits to replace habits no longer serving you enables you to set the wheels in motion to discover a new approach to change.

Susan Neustrom, an adjunct professor in DePaul’s Master of Arts in Educating Adults program in the School for New Learning, has over 25 years of experience in corporate and nonprofit leadership positions. She is the author of “The Comfort Zone Illusion: Leaving Your Comfort Zone Is Not So Hard After All.”
We asked readers: Who was or is your favorite professor at DePaul? Here are some of their responses.

Mirza Gonzalez was a great professor and friend at DePaul.

**Isabel Mesa-Collins (EDU ’77, EdD ’11)**

Jean Richine (SNL ’89) provided initial feedback on entering SNL after taking a workshop. She didn’t realize it at the time, but it was her support I needed to attend DePaul.

**Ted Revell (SNL ’11)**

Rocky Perkovich, collective bargaining back in 1993 or 1994. Such a dynamic speaker.

**Heather Ritter (BUS ’94)**

Bill Poppei, financial statement analysis. He’s the smartest person I’ve been fortunate enough to encounter.

**David Snyder (BUS ’95, MBA ’02)**

Michele Shade McCay, public health professor.

**Dianella Mazzulla Ramsey (CSH ’14)**

Margaret Storey in the history department. She is a woman who knows all about the American Civil War, and it was great to see a budding, young, female historian like me!

**Ashley Nally-Reyes (LAS ’08, MEd ’10)**

Jim Block is a totally inspiring and engaging professor and one of the reasons I switched over to political science.

**Brian Easley (LAS ’10)**

Khaled Keshk, religious studies; Patrick Murphy, management; Alexander Devience, business law; Robert Kallen, economics; Gabriella Bucci, economics. They challenged me and built my critical-thinking skills.

**Omar Farooq (BUS ’12)**

DePaul Law Lauded
The 2018 U.S. News & World Report ranked DePaul’s College of Law 16th in the nation for health care law and 28th for intellectual property law.

Princeton Review Praises DePaul
The Princeton Review ranked DePaul as one of its 2019 “Best 384 Colleges.” It recognized DePaul as a “green college” and one of the best in the Midwest. The university’s graduate entrepreneurial program is ranked 20th and its undergraduate entrepreneurial program 22nd in the nation. The undergraduate video game design program is ranked 28th.

Theatre, Film Programs Catch Hollywood’s Eye
The Hollywood Reporter ranked DePaul 13th on its list of the Top 25 American Film Schools of 2018. The Theatre School ranked 24th on the publication’s list of Best Drama Schools for an Acting Degree.

DePaul Chosen for US-Japan Teaching Partnership
DePaul is one of six American colleges and universities selected by the American Council on Education to participate in the U.S.-Japan COIL Initiative. Using online communication, faculty will share teaching and students will partner on learning goals, a process known as collaborative online international learning, or COIL.

Fulbright Scholars Production Triples
DePaul boasted 10 Fulbright Scholars in 2018, including seven who applied through the university’s Fulbright mentoring program. Since the program was established five years ago, the number of Fulbright applicants, semi-finalists and winners from DePaul has more than tripled.
Before there was DIBS, there was Billy Blue Demon, the first costumed mascot to regularly entertain fans at DePaul basketball games. Sporting enormous blue ears, a black goatee and fat, furry hands and feet, Billy was born in the wake of the famed San Diego Chicken, who captured the nation’s fancy in 1974 with his wild antics. Eddy Formanski (LAS ’80) was the first to appear as Billy, and Evelyn Duff (BUS ’80) wore the costume once, making her the first woman to serve as DePaul’s mascot.

And then along came Terry Shields (LAS ’86). As soon as he donned the costume in 1980, he “tried to do the crazy, to see what I could get away with, like little skits and funny little moves, and it snowballed,” Shields says. Over the next three seasons, he developed a signature shtick. He created a jazzy, strutting walk, three steps forward and one step back. He mugged with fans. He accessorized the costume, adding giant hands or cowboy hats. He parodied popular culture as characters such as Billy “Blues Brother” Demon. He brandished signs, drawing roars from the crowd. Then he started messing with the Blue Demons’ opponents.

“I used to rib the other teams, not in a mean-spirited way, but as a joke. When we played Syracuse, the Orangemen, I used to come out and squeeze oranges or call their mascot the Banana-man,” he says. He routinely clobbered stuffed animals representing the opposing team, such as Old Dominion’s lion.

The costume was heavy, Shields recalls. “The inside suit was a fat suit that made the outside suit plump up a little, followed by a huge body vest. The giant head was on a construction helmet,” he remembers. “I’d be soaked with sweat by the time the game was over.” Despite the discomfort, Shields says being Billy Blue Demon was a blast. “It was fun to be there with that team, those five men of steel. It was a great time.”

Blue Demon Blues
The man behind the mask tells all about the birth of Billy Blue Demon.
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Read more responses at depaulmagazine.com.

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