

Harris describes her role at the Neuharth Center as a 'wonderful job'

By Travis Gulbrandson
travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

Current events have always played a large role in Janine Harris's life.

"I always had an interest in the news," she said. "You just need to know what's going on in the world - your own city, your own town."

That interest turned into a career for Harris, first as newsroom manager and assistant to the executive editor at the Argus Leader, and then as manager of the Al Neuharth Media Center at the University of South Dakota.

Additionally, Harris works as assistant to the president and COO of the Freedom Forum Diversity Institute, Jack Marsh.

She has worked in Vermillion since 2001.

"I tell most people that we run journalism programs," Harris said. "I try to take care of not only logistics with programs, but in working with the university on building needs, inside and outside."

Two of the programs within the Freedom Forum that Harris helps to coordinate are the American Indian Journalism Institute and the Crazy Horse Journalism Workshop.

Both programs offer opportunities to Native

American students to learn about journalism while receiving practical experience in the field.

Harris said that working with students is what she likes most about her role at the Neuharth Center.

"It's neat to work around young people," she said. "They just get you energized, give you hope for the future."

Born in North Dakota, Harris was raised in Sioux Falls and attended the University of North Texas.

She did not graduate, however, and came back to South Dakota to work at the Argus, a position she held for 19 years.

"We were in charge of obits, weddings, anniversaries, the market page and we would confirm letters to the editor - just kind of a support staff to the reporters and editors," she said.

Although she has not worked there in more than a decade, Harris said she does sometimes miss the newsroom environment.

"Sometimes I miss the hubbub and the deadlines," she said. "When I first started in the newsroom at the Argus Leader, The Associated Press was still housed in the building on the same floor. They're not now ... but we would get all the wire stories on the machines and if an

Spotlight



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

emergency happened we were able to work together."

It was while at the Argus that Harris decided to return to school. Initially, she wanted to major in journalism, she said.

"Then I saw this employee assistant program certificate. You had to take beginning courses for alcohol and drug abuse, and I thought, 'That's interesting,'" she said. "I took a course and just fell in love with it."

She earned her bachelor's degree from USD studying alcohol and drug addition, taking most of her classes at the University Center in Sioux Falls.

After completing her degree, Harris facilitated support groups at the Sioux Falls VA for four years.

"It was really an experience, because I thought, 'I have a job, I have a family, a home.' Some of

these guys, there's no home, there's no vehicle, there's no job, there's no family support," she said. "It made me more thankful."

Her association with the Argus eventually brought her to Vermillion, Harris said.

"During my tenure there, one of my executive editors was Jack Marsh," she said. "I think he started here in 1998. ... He was hired as director down here and then he called me in December of 2000, and the next month I decided to join him down here. So I've worked for him 17 years."

Apart from her duties with the Neuharth Center and Freedom Forum, Harris also is the founder of Nikki's Fund 5K Run/Walk for Suicide Awareness, which takes place as part of National Suicide Prevention Week on the USD campus each September.



JANINE HARRIS

It was founded in 2006 in memory of Harris's daughter Nicole Vallie Harris, who committed suicide the previous year.

"I wish I wasn't a part of this club, but ... I think any time you can get the word out and talk about stuff, and try to let people know what's available if they need help," Harris said. "I'm just happy I'm able to do that, and I'm happy I was able to do that in Nikki's memory. I'm happy that I received (USD president) Jim Abbott and

the university's support to have that here."

Harris lives in Sioux Falls with her husband Mike, a retired member of the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Department. She has one grown son, Christopher.

She said she is glad she came to work in Vermillion 11 years ago.

"I'm very fortunate," she said. "I have a wonderful job. I work with great colleagues and young people. It's really nice."

Accounting students net jobs, internships with S.D. firms

The University of South Dakota Beacom School of Business announced that 40 students accepted internships and full-time positions at several prestigious state and other

Midwest accounting firms.

Last fall, 14 accounting firms conducted interviews on campus, resulting in 25 student placements in internships and full-time positions.

Additionally, 15 students were placed in internships or full-time positions through the Employment Services Office at the Beacom School of Business or through other

means.

Students and their placements: Heather Tjeerdsma of Springfield, at KPMG L.L.P.; Laurie Siegel of Burbank at King, Reinsch, Prosser & Co.,

L.L.P.; Abby Doorn of Vermillion, Erin Hasenbank of Elk Point, Derrick Martin of Wagner, at Williams & Company, P.C.; Carly Hayes of Vermillion at Deloitte; Caleb Lyle of Beresford at Ernst & Young; Randall Smith of Vermillion at Shuck, Bennett & Weber,

L.L.P.

For more information about accounting at the University of South Dakota Beacom School of Business, go to www.usd.edu/business/acc counting or e-mail bschoolstudentsvs@usd.edu.

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