

## Alumni Newsletter | Summer 2020

### Message from the Director

Dear School of Communications alumni:  
I hope this newsletter finds you with strength and inspiration in meeting current challenges. As communications alumni, we are fortunate to have received some training and experience in creative problem-solving. Our faculty and staff are now teaching classes and conducting meetings remotely. I am constantly reminded that we are not just teaching our regular classes and doing our regular business online. We have the opportunity to re-imagine how we teach and work. I believe we can find new and perhaps even better ways to do certain things, while I also realize that some things are not ideal in the current environment.

One trait that works well right now is empathy. I try to understand what it's like for my students to develop their knowledge and skills not only in a pandemic but also with the economic and social challenges around us. As communications professionals, we know the importance of understanding our audiences and meeting their needs as far as messages go. I am committed to understanding individuals and communities that have different backgrounds and experiences than my own. I have learned from many of you. I appreciate how you represent and support the BYU School of Communications. I hope you enjoy the newsletter, and I hope it helps us stay connected to one another.



**Ed Carter, Director**

Best wishes,  
Ed Carter  
Director, BYU School of Communications

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# Featured Alumni

## **Dianna Douglas**

Print Journalism '02  
Podcast Creator  
Freelance



### **Why did you choose to study communications?**

I wanted to become a journalist! I was really drawn to the power of words.

### **Which current industry trends excite you?**

I feel like podcasting is a beautifully democratic medium, because the barriers to entry are so low. It takes no money at all to create a good podcast. It just takes a great idea and some basic audio editing skills.

### **What is a rewarding experience that you've had as a result of your study of communications?**

My most recent podcast was called "Zion's Suffragists" for the Deseret News, about the Utah women who led the charge for women's voting rights in the United States. The early suffrage leaders of Utah were a huge inspiration for me, and I felt like sharing their story widely would give everyone in Utah more sense of possibility for what women can accomplish. I feel like the opportunity to share an obscure history in a way that's accessible to the general public is a highlight of my work as a journalist.

### **Communications is a constantly-changing field. How have you adapted to these changes within your profession?**

I'm developing a Spanish-English bilingual podcast for children. It was inspired when the pandemic quarantine showed me how desperately families need high-quality educational materials for their kids. I feel like Spanish language podcasting and podcasting for children will be growth areas in the future, especially as schools change in response to

the pandemic. The basic skills of effective communication will always be in demand, even if the mediums change.

Dianna Douglas has reported, produced, and edited for public radio for over a decade, at Morning Edition and on the National Desk for NPR, and at NPR station KUER in Dallas Texas. Dianna has created podcasts for Slate, the Washington Post, The Atlantic, and just finished the first season of a new podcast for the Deseret News. She embedded with the 101st Airborne Division in Kandahar, worked as the NPR Baghdad Bureau Chief during the surge of troops in Iraq in 2006 and 2007, and is the recipient of multiple awards including the Edward R. Murrow Award, a Salute to Excellence Award, and a DuPont-Columbia University Award. Dianna lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband and four children.

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**Aya Watanabe Hales**

Advertising '16  
Brand Strategist  
TBWA/Media Arts Lab (MAL)



**Why did you choose to study communications?**

There were three main things I looked for when finding a major: 1) A field I could think creatively, 2) A career that I could interact with people and 3) A job that would help me continue to learn throughout my career. Being a strategist has done all three of those for me.

**Which current industry trends excite you?**

As I have worked for some of the biggest brands like Nike, Coca-Cola and now Apple, I love seeing what innovative and creative things small local businesses are doing—especially on social. They have a way of connecting with people in a simple, intimate and cheap way that is hard for bigger brands. I learn a lot from watching them.

**What is a rewarding experience that you've had as a result of your study of communications?**

Well... by far the best experience from my program is meeting my best friend and now

the program itself or connecting with alumni after graduating. The industry is small and you will run into classmates and friends almost anywhere you live. It's an amazing network.

### **Communications is a constantly-changing field. How have you adapted to these changes within your profession?**

The evolution of technology, social media, and pop culture have a direct impact to the things I do everyday. But, as you live in the world and keep using these new tools and staying up to date on what's happening in the world you adapt quite easily. If you are a part of culture you adapt naturally with the world so it doesn't ever feel like a big shift.

I currently live in LA with my husband who is an Art Director. Despite living in a city— and currently being locked inside—I love the outdoors; camping, running, biking, rock climbing and skiing. Working from home has been quite the adjustment since COVID-19, but honestly it has been quite nice. I feel blessed I still have a great job that I love during this crazy time.

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## **School News**

### **Student Project Promotes Diversity Awareness at BYU**

During the Winter 2020 semester, A group of BYU students used skills developed in class to highlight their unique experiences and promote diversity awareness among BYU students and faculty.

[Read more.](#)



### **Faculty and Students Work Together on First Vision Project**

As the 200th anniversary of Joseph's Smith First Vision approached, journalism professor [Kris Boyle](#) saw an opportunity to do something special. After discovering that advertising professor [Jeff Sheets](#) had been contemplating similar ideas, the two initiated a collaborative project in September 2019 that would include faculty representatives from three of the



school's sequences — advertising, public relations and journalism — with public relations professors [Chris Wilson](#) and [Pamela Brubaker](#) joining the project. But the efforts would soon extend to communications students as well.

[Read more.](#)

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## Alumni News

### **Alumnus Called as Area Seventy**

Emmy Award-winning reporter and anchor [Arthur "Art" Rascon](#) (Broadcast Journalism '85) was [sustained as an Area Seventy](#) during the recent General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held on April 4, 2020. Rascon previously served as the president of the Houston Texas Summerwood Stake. A Texas native, he has been reporting and anchoring with ABC13 in Houston since 1998.



### **Public Relations Alumnus Elected to ACEJMC Committee**

Communications alumnus [Joseph Tateoka](#) (Public Relations '07) was recently elected to the [ACEJMC](#) Committee as a professional member. Tateoka is a Vice President of Talent Acquisition at [Edelman](#) in Chicago and serves as a [PRSA board member](#) in the Chicago chapter.



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On a scale from 0-10, how connected do you feel to Brigham Young University?

Not at all Connected  
(I rarely think about BYU)

Somewhat Connected  
(I'm aware of BYU news)

Extremely Connected  
(Loyal, Strong and True)

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