

## **Alumni Pride: Journalism grad sports dream job**

**by Sheng Lee - Monday, September 19, 2011**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/14205/alumni-pride-journalism-grad-sports-dream-job/>

After graduating in 1988 with a journalism degree and minors in radio-TV-film and political science, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus Patrick Stiegman climbed his way up the corporate ladder to land a dream job at ESPN as vice president and editor-in-chief of digital media.

“Patrick came through our program at a time when students used typewriters and pencils and paper in journalism classes,” said Mike Cowling, chair of UW Oshkosh’s journalism department. “The fact that he took those basic skills and had the fortitude to morph into a leader in digital journalism is an amazing accomplishment.”

However, his career as an Emmy Award-winning executive producer did not come without years of hard work.

Before joining ESPN in 2004, Stiegman spent nine years as vice president and director of Internet operations for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and Journal Communications. During his time there, Stiegman created award-winning websites, including JOnline.com, Packer Insider and Badger Plus Online.

After joining ESPN as senior director and executive editor for the Insider, Sports Nation and editorial integration, Stiegman was promoted to vice president of digital media in 2006. In 2007, he was assigned the responsibilities of executive producer.

“Stiegman is one of the most creative, dedicated, hardworking and influential people on the editorial side of ESPN Digital Media,” said John Kosner, senior vice president and general manager of ESPN Digital Media Inc. “His commitment to continuous improvement and leadership is matched only by his ability to make those around him better.”

Stiegman has made numerous visits back to his alma mater to give seminars to students and faculty in the journalism department. He helps the department stay current on developments in digital media and gives students first-hand experience at new techniques in digital communication.

Because of his dedication to UW Oshkosh and his innovations in digital media, Stiegman will receive the Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest award from the Alumni Association, at a reception and dinner on Friday, Oct. 21, during Homecoming 2011.

“Patrick was a highly motivated student,” said Gary Coll, professor of journalism emeritus. “He is truly a trailblazer.”

**In his own words:**

**Activites/hobbies:**

I have attended and lived to tell about 105 Bruce Springsteen concerts, am a wannabe percussionist, consume sports of all stripes from cricket to football, fail the test of objectivity regarding the Wisconsin Badgers, know far too much about "iCarly" and Irish dancing thanks to my lovely and talented 10-year-old daughter, have taken up running over the last year and thanks to the world's most tolerant wife, have been happily married for 20 years.

**Describe the achievement(s) you are most proud of.**

Emmys and a score of other awards for online journalism, digital innovation and sports business journals are warm recognition from my peers, but the ability to lead a team of nearly 300 online journalists, who are some of the smartest people I've ever encountered, is a professional honor without comparison. It is literally life-changing.

**What is your favorite UW Oshkosh memory?**

There are so many from which to choose, but as an aspiring sports journalist, working on a thesis project with Gene Hintz as he regaled me with tales of being one of the two primary beat writers covering Vince Lombardi during the Packers' glory years was inspirational beyond imagination. Oh, and meeting my future wife. That's important too.

**What does your UW Oshkosh education mean to you?**

To borrow a sports cliché, it provided the foundation on which all success is built. I perfected my editorial blocking and tackling in the lecture halls of the journalism department, and discovered my journalistic instincts — instincts later forged with experience into a true editorial voice and perspective.

**What advice would you give today's UW Oshkosh students?**

The criteria upon which I judge all job candidates, not to mention my existing staff from the lowest-level editor to the most prominent national analyst, are known as the "Four E's:" energy, enthusiasm, experience and execution. Will you outwork others? Will you approach each day as the best? Will you commit to learning everything possible to improve? And can you deliver a quality effort day after day? In the immortal words of Bruce Springsteen, are you willing to "prove it all night?" That makes all the difference.

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