

F o c u s

schmitt shoots!



Maxwell School Professor Kristi Andersen, who chairs the political science department, is known among colleagues and students alike for her talents as an administrator, scholar, teacher, and mentor.

“It takes a while for any group to get itself into the political system, but today we have a lot of women who are politically skilled and talented.”
—Kristi Andersen

A role model for future political scientists

When Kristi Andersen views America’s political landscape, she’s fascinated by how ordinary citizens participate in politics. And she’s especially fascinated by the roles women have played in politics, from the days of the suffrage movement to their impact on shaping issues in today’s rough-and-tumble political arena. “One of the most interesting changes over the last 20 years has been the vast increase in the number of women in political office, particularly at levels like the state legislature,” she says. “It takes a while for any group to get itself into the political system, but today we have a lot of women who are politically skilled and talented.”

Match such scholarly interests with an enduring commitment to students and colleagues, and it’s easy to see why Andersen is described as “one of a kind” by Robert McClure, associate dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

As an administrator, Andersen, who joined the faculty in 1984, chairs the Maxwell School’s political science department and serves as the department’s director of graduate studies. As an educator, she’s known as an excellent role model for graduate students interested in teaching careers, and has been instrumental in helping the University develop its acclaimed graduate teaching assistant programs, such as the Future Professoriate Project. As a political scientist, she’s received numerous grants and awards, including the American Political Science Association’s Victoria Shuck Award for the 1996 Best Book on Women and Politics: *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal*. “This is a person of scholarly accomplishment and productivity as well as an extraordinarily energetic and caring teacher, and a thoughtful and successful administrator,” McClure says. “Kristi is also a wonderful colleague—a person who gives good advice, who is receptive to the advice of others, and is always constructive. She’s a delight to work with—and that is something we all prize.”

On top of that, Andersen balances her active professional agenda with home-front responsibilities. She and husband Stuart Thorson, a political science professor and director of the Maxwell School’s Global Affairs Institute, have three children. An active community member and board president of the Cazenovia Children’s House, she credits her family, fellow faculty members, and staff for their support. Citing her ability to delegate, she says, “There is a realization that I can’t do everything all the time.”

Talk with Andersen about women in politics and she offers insights into how attitudes about women have evolved, how the political system has changed because of this, how women have heightened public awareness of such issues as child and elder care and abortion, and how women have expanded the public perception of what a political leader is. Consider, for instance, that even

after women received the right to vote in 1920, they weren't allowed to run for public office in some states until the 1940s. "The central metaphor I used in my book is the notion of boundaries—boundaries according to gender, such as how we socially construct what we think women should or shouldn't do," she says. "These boundaries shift over time; in a way, they're negotiated."

To assist students in sifting through the complex information blitz of political and economic data and surveys, Andersen helped develop MAX 201: Quantitative Methods for the Social Sciences. The course, which she also has taught, trains undergraduates to be critical consumers of data. "It's important to expose them to a variety of political and economic data," she says. "By learning to thoughtfully analyze carefully collected survey data, they can come to understand some things about the American public."

Among graduate students, Andersen is known for her research-design seminar that prepares them to write dissertations. Lynda Barrow G'98, who completed her doctoral dissertation, "Protestants and Politics in Mexico," last spring, lauded Andersen as her teaching mentor in the Future Professoriate Project. "She always has time to be an advisor or mentor to graduate students who need help, whether it's figuring out how to teach a class better, put together a syllabus, get a job, publish, or organize our graduate lives," Barrow says. "She really serves as a wonderful role model and mentor—and that's a pretty widely shared opinion."

—JAY COX

Nurturing relationships with students

It's 10 a.m. and William Glavin, a professor in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, is sitting at a table in the school's snack bar, Food.com, sipping a cup of coffee. A student approaches and asks him to sign forms for her upcoming internship at *Elle* magazine in New York City. He asks if she knows a Newhouse alumna who's an *Elle* staffer. She doesn't, but he encourages the student to meet her. "Tell her I'll be in New York in the fall at Lubin House," Glavin says. "And tell her to be there!"

This enthusiasm for reconnecting with a former student is typical of the magazine journalism professor who, in nearly 25 years of teaching at Newhouse, is one of the school's most beloved instructors. He has developed and nurtured a multitude of friendships with Newhouse graduates, old and new. Glavin has undoubtedly helped shape the career of many a magazine editor, and he's a pretty good fly fisherman, too. However, he counts as his biggest accomplishment being "part of so many wonderful relationships with former students."

Glavin began his career as a copyboy at *The Boston Globe*. The Northeastern University graduate then went to work for the CBS television affiliate in Boston. After attending Columbia University's graduate program in magazine journalism, he became an associate editor at *Good Housekeeping*. But Glavin longed to teach, and the opportunity arrived when a letter from SU seeking a magazine professor landed on the desk of his editor-in-chief. "Anybody got any friends?" the editor scrawled across the top. "Yes, me," Glavin replied.

He traded Manhattan's frenetic pace for the tranquillity of Central New York and hasn't looked back, reveling in teaching and casting his fly rod in upstate streams. "Some people would say I'm not ambitious enough, that I should have stayed in New York," he says. "I'm happy that I was right about what I wanted to do, that I dared to do it, and that I made it through the first couple years."

Initially, teaching proved more challenging than he'd expected. "For my first class, I wrote everything I knew about editing in a notebook and read it straight through without looking up," Glavin says. "I thought two hours had gone by, but it had only been 20 min-



schmitt shoots!

Newhouse magazine journalism professor William Glavin emphasizes to his students the importance of writing effectively. The Meredith Professor also maintains contacts with alumni, forging relationships that reflect his concern for their lives and careers.

utes." He dismissed the class early. "A group of extremely forgiving students kept me here," Glavin confesses. "I still get nervous before the first class of every semester."

He shouldn't. In 1995, the University awarded Glavin one of its first three Meredith Professorships, which recognize teaching excellence. It's no surprise then that Glavin remembers what those first students, the thousands who have followed them, and his mentor at Columbia taught him: the importance of respect and caring, recognizing that students are doing their best. Glavin's care extends to sharing advice with students, helping them with job contacts, and forging bonds that span the years. "When I first got here, the department had a lot of graduates who weren't really tied to the school," he explains. "I figured if people felt I did a good job with them, they'd be more eager to hire my students. I enjoy talking to and dealing with my former students, and I really care about them."

His conversations with alumni about the editorial decisions and ethical dilemmas they face often fuel his classroom discussions. Glavin's students also appreciate his emphasis on the nuts and bolts of writing effectively. "He's really good at teaching the fundamentals—it's a lost art I don't get from many other teachers," says Chris Chiappinelli G'98. "He's kind of a relic, but in a good way."

Has Glavin accomplished everything he set out to do the day he responded to his editor's memo? "There are students I haven't met yet," he replies. And you know he's looking forward to having them in class.

—LAURA GROSS