an inside look at specs howard school of media arts

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WHO IS SPECS HOWARD?

RADIO PIONEER  Specs Howard was born Jerry Liebman on April 8, 1926, in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. In 1948, he received a bachelor's degree in history/political science and radio speech and dramatics from Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania. That same year, he opened his own radio station in his home state.

In 1954, Howard moved to Cleveland and continued his broadcast career there with NBC and Westinghouse. In 1962, he joined forces with Harry Martin, launching The Martin and Howard Show, which remained on the air in Cleveland until the duo moved to Detroit in January 1967. The show aired for another two years in Detroit.

In 1970, Howard founded the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, which has since trained thousands of people for successful media careers.

As a result of Specs' long-standing history and dedication to the broadcast and media arts, he has been the recipient of a number of the industry's top awards, honors and accolades.

Specs still shows up for work every day at the school he founded over forty years ago. If you spot him in the hall, be sure to say “hi!”

Oh, and the name? He chose “Specs” as his professional moniker because of the trademark horn rimmed glasses he wore. “Howard,” however, was chosen randomly out of a phone book!

Specs with his Cleveland radio show partner Harry Martin, some time in the '60s.

Specs more recently (Photos courtesy of Mr. Howard)

Montez Miller
Director of Digital Video Content
Real Times Media

MONTEZ WAS first bitten by the television industry bug after working on a local dance show. It was then she realized she would take a detour from her original path and try out the broadcast field. She has worked throughout the industry for a number of prominent companies including BET and Polygram Records but one thing remains the same for Montez; she loves what she does. On a day-to-day basis you can find her writing, producing, directing, interviewing, editing, or even operating camera to create feature stories on a variety of topics, from the President to local newsmakers. She utilizes every part of her education and training from Specs and never says no to taking on additional responsibilities as she knows that in “this field, the more you learn, the more marketable you become.” Montez has been recognized for her success in the industry including a Beacon Award, five Telly Awards, and a Spirit of Detroit award.

Montez Miller
Director of Digital Video Content
Real Times Media

Amber Beitler
Regional Webmaster & Graphic Designer, Greater Media Detroit

THESE DAYS, working in radio doesn’t always mean what it used to. Just ask grad, Amber Beitler. Amber first came to Specs Howard with a desire to work at a radio station. She attended the Broadcast Media Arts program and interned for Greater Media Detroit in the promotions department. Keeping with her desire to work in radio, Amber saw an opportunity to work in the web department. She returned to Specs Howard to study graphic design, and now works as Greater Media’s Regional Webmaster & Graphic Designer.

Amber Beitler
Regional Webmaster & Graphic Designer, Greater Media Detroit
I ALWAYS HAD a love for movies and the way they could bring out certain emotions with images and music. I knew I wanted to do something like that but I had no clue where to start.

Once Andy began training at Specs Howard, he knew he made the right move and now shoots and edits footage for advertising agency Team Detroit, in addition to making short feature films and documentaries with The Detroit Journal. What he loves most about his career is “the freedom to create, the ability to tell a story anyway I want.” When he began editing at Specs Howard, Andy says that “it opened a door I didn’t know existed, it was very exciting.” And now that he’s in the business, he often works with fellow grads: “Specs grads are all over the place. I can always spot a Specs grad on a set because they are the ones asking questions, getting their hands dirty helping out with things that aren’t even their responsibility. I love having them around.”

Our History
Since its inception, SHS has been dedicated to providing hands-on training in the media industries.

1970: SHS begins offering programs in basic radio performance and federal licensing requirements.
1973: SHS incorporates its first on-air radio station, WNLD, as part of the radio program curriculum.
1978: SHS receives national accreditation. In 1983, the school is approved for federal financial aid programs.
1981: SHS adds its first TV studio, allowing students to study camera operation, lighting, directing and video editing.
1994: Keeping pace with new technologies, the school adds non-linear digital video editing to its curriculum.
2008: Due to demand for graphic and web design professionals, SHS adds the Graphic Design program.
2009: SHS opens its Farmington Hills location, at the Studio Center motion picture production complex.
2010: In response to increasing demand for web-based media professionals, the Digital Media Arts Program is introduced.

AS A KID growing up in Livonia, Jay Hud always tuned into 89X. Not much has really changed since then, Detroiters (and Windsor, of course) are still dialed in to 88.7 just like when he was growing up … but now it’s to listen to him. Jay rocks the alt. mic daily from 3pm-7pm. What many listeners don’t know is that Jay also spends his days building the station’s playlist. As the 89X Music Director, he explores new music, checks out new artists, stays on top of trends, meets with record reps and spends time deciphering audience research. For Jay it was a natural fit to work for 89X as he says, “I’m into the same things my listeners are into. Especially when it comes to music, concerts, sports, video games, bars/clubs, etc. I believe that is the reason I’m able to connect with them the way I do.” Jay Hud has won “Detroit’s Best Radio DJ” in Real Detroit Weekly three years in a row (2009, 2010 & 2011). He is also the Music Director for AOL Radio (powered by Slacker) where he oversees 18 different stations that play Alternative, Rock, Metal, and Hip Hop.

Joe Warner
Digital Designer, Clear Channel Communications

WITH A DESIRE to create and work in the media industry, Joe knew Specs Howard was where he should start. He was given the tools to prepare for his future. Now as a Digital Designer, Joe utilizes his skills, from designing web pages to shooting video, and creating motion graphics. Joe recognizes that “the work you do at Specs will set you up for your future, you just have to work hard and keep an open mind for where you might go.”
MEET OUR GRADS!

RaSean Reeves
Production Technician
Joseph Production, Inc.

STAYING HUMBLE is not a difficult task for RaSean. After taking the buyout from his factory job, RaSean was looking for his next step. "I had people telling me try it out, and they were right! I found my passion as soon as I came in. I knew it was right when I saw how hands-on Specs was." RaSean followed this passion, and is now shooting Red Wings games and Ford Motor Company events for Joseph Productions, Inc. as well as working on his own independent films. "I couldn’t imagine my life without Specs Howard, I would be another person searching for my goals and not knowing where to turn. Now I have a future, and a dream that can and will be reached!" RaSean hopes to use his skills to create a production facility where he can help teach people to keep looking for their passion.

Steve Linville
Custom Graphic Designer
Fathead

ORIGINALLY WORKING in automotive electronics, Steve knew that with economic changes he wanted to pursue a career that made him happy. He always wanted to do something creative, so the Graphic Design program was a natural next step. As a Specs student he says that “from idea conceptualization to constructive criticism of my work, I felt like I was in a real-world career situation in class.” Now Steve works on the Custom Projects team where he creates large scale murals, displays, and designs for universities, corporations, and various events. Everyday is different, and Steve wouldn’t have it any other way.

Jennifer Freel
Senior Manager
Universal Music Group

AFTER THREE YEARS in college, Jennifer came to Specs Howard: “The spark ignited — I finally felt like I was on a path of my own choosing, something I loved, and something that I really had a passion for.” Jennifer has worked on-air and in marketing and promotions at radio stations in Ann Arbor and Detroit, including WQCB, WJR and WDVD. In Los Angeles she headed up college radio promotions for indie record label Beyond and worked as a Production Coordinator for the Disney Music Group (DMG). She’s currently a Senior Manager at Universal Music Group - the world’s biggest music company. "If not for my education at Specs Howard, I wouldn’t be where I am today.

Gregg Phelps
User Interface Designer
Detroit Media Partnership

WE ALL CAN see how the web is shaping the future, but who shapes the web? User Interface Designers like Gregg are key to what you see when you go online. On a daily basis, he takes others ideas and makes them a reality with his graphic design skills. Gregg is grateful for his Specs Howard experience as “aside from learning the essential software,” he says, “I learned who I am as a designer and felt proud when I realized I was on an even playing field with my co-workers.” Gregg feels like he is prepared for whatever is thrown in his direction at work, which has allowed him to move up the ladder within Detroit Media Partnership.