Elliott receives inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award

“Six Steps that Helped Me Make a Difference”
May 9, 2009

Good morning and thank you for allowing me to be part of this special occasion in your life.

You know, I envy you; to be who you are; to be where you are in life. To know that even in these tough economic times, you possess the ability to accomplish anything you want to accomplish, and that you can be as successful as you want to be.

Preparing for this opportunity to meet with you today was, in many ways, more difficult than other talks I’ve had to give over the years. But, while trying to figure out what to say to encourage you, to motivate you, and help give you some insight on how to be successful, I came to one very interesting and I think important, conclusion.

At close to 55 years of age and 32 years beyond the exact point in life where you are today and much closer to the end, than the beginning, of an exciting and fulfilling career in the railroad industry, we — you and — are really not all that different.

Think about it. I have the same education, from the same department, from the same university as you do. And like some of you, I sat where you are today, but only on May 8th of 1977, not sure of what I was going to do next week, let alone 32 years from now.

And much like today in 1977 this country was in an economic downturn every bit as tough as what we’re facing, with unemployment approaching 8 percent and the prospect for college graduates less than optimistic. But, two things are clear. The economy will get better, and you can’t stay here forever.

And, while I wish I could tell you that the pathway to your success will come easy, it probably won’t. But, I hope that what I share with you in the next few minutes will let your journey to success be a bit easier than mine.

There are six simple steps that I’ve learned over the years that have helped me find great satisfaction and good fortune during my career: six steps that helped me to make a difference.

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From the chair

Many developments and accomplishments in 2008-09

Alumni newsletters typically begin with a statement from the department chair, with a brief update on the status of the department and reminder to graduates that they come from an exceptional place. I am very pleased to let the evidence speak for itself. This past year’s accomplishments easily support the claim that our department continues to be an exceptional one.

Our department is exceptional for the manner in which students continue to gravitate to our courses and highly value our offerings. With approximately 600 majors and minors, we continue to be one of the largest departments on campus. Our range of courses is expanding, as we offer new classes in hot fields like psychopathology, critical race theory, and developmental criminology as well as in emerging fields like environmental justice and crime mapping. Yet, we still offer traditional criminal justice courses on topics such as theories of crime, juvenile delinquency, corrections, and prosecution. These offerings reflect our department’s strong, historical commitment to making a place for the study of criminal justice in a solid liberal arts education.

We also are exceptional for the manner in which our faculty champion multidisciplinary efforts. Our two recent faculty hires reflect that commitment. Professor Bruce D. Sales, who is widely recognized as the “father” of the modern psychology and law movement, joined us this spring. He will add to our multidisciplinary efforts, as indicated by his prior academic appointment. For nearly three decades, Sales was professor of psychology, sociology, psychiatry and law at the University of Arizona. Also joining us this fall is Nathalie Fontaine, an expert in many areas, including neuroscience, criminology, and psychopathology. We are very excited to have both on board, as they no doubt will help move our department in new directions while still ensuring our strong commitment to liberal arts.

As I am certain you know, we already have very talented faculty who are second to none. This year, we were very pleased to learn that Kip Schlegel and William Alex Pridemore both had reached a high level of research excellence and achieved international reputations. But Schlegel and Pridemore are also leaders in their service to our department and are known for their quality in the classroom. Schlegel, a former department chair, now serves as director of graduate affairs. Pridemore serves as director of graduate affairs. Both also are recent recipients of the IU Trustees’ Teaching Award. We look forward to their continued leadership as full professors.

Our staff members also are exceptional. This spring, Kristie Herndon won the College of Arts and Sciences Advisor of the Year Award. Similarly, Andi Gitelson won the Territorial Outstanding Academic Advisor Award. No other department has ever accomplished the unusual feat of having both winners at once. Also impressive is the manner staff members stay with us even though they could readily move to other departments or places of employment; for example, we recently recognized Chris Stanley’s decade of outstanding service to our department. These accomplishments help explain why our department shines in serving its students and attracting new ones.

Our current students are thriving. You will see much evidence of that in the pages that follow. I would like to highlight, however, the results of the department’s external review that was conducted last spring. The external reviewers — leading experts in the field of criminal justice, law, and psychology — reported that they were extremely impressed by our undergraduate program. This is a significant recognition, as it is a challenge for departments in leading research institutions to maintain a strong undergraduate presence.

There is no doubt that the high regard for our program benefitted from the reviewers’ meetings with some of our star students who volunteered their time to meet with them: Tia Arthur, William Burton, Megan Cotton, Dawn Dassell, Patric Davis, Leah Duker, Lydia Karjaka, Sara Reist, Joe Sobek, Jill Spencer, and Erika Wiley. We also would like to thank the graduate students who met with them: Scott Ingram, Chris Magno, Cindy McNair, Heather Pruss, Judith Schept, Steve Tillotson, Sara Walsh, and Stephanie Whitehead. These students helped the reviewers understand what we have said all along, which is that we have incredibly talented students who are being well trained and who have what it takes to make a difference in the world.

Our graduates continue to distinguish themselves, too. We were very pleased to learn, for example, that Michael Koryta, BA’06, won this year’s College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Young Alumni Award. Koryta is an award-winning mystery writer who has written several fantastic books. His most recent title, End the Night, recently captured the LA Times Book Prize. For those of you who enjoy reading engaging and fast-paced novels, I would encourage you to pick up his books.

Despite the successes of our students, it only dawned on us this year that we should recognize some of our outstanding alumni. We created and presented our first Distinguished Alumni Awards at this spring’s graduation celebration.

I was very pleased to present this year’s award to a good friend of our department and a highly distinguished colleague, Skip Elliott, BA’77. Elliott was the obvious choice for our first award, for he exemplifies what a liberal arts education can do and has shown a deep commitment to serving others. We were so impressed by him, and so pleased that he and his wife, Jackie, could join us, that we devote much of this issue to printing his address to the graduates.

As a department, we have had a wonderful and highly rewarding year. But we expect that we know only a tiny bit of our graduates’ successes. We would like to encourage you to get in touch with us and consider sharing your accomplishments. Keep in mind that our alumni newsletter is for alumni, and that we count on each of you to tell us how well your education has served you and to update us on what you have been doing.

In a world where observable accountability increasingly matters, remember that, especially for current students and recent graduates, much of the value of your education rests on our department’s continued success and reputation, not the least of which is our ability to showcase our alumni.

— Roger J. Levesque, Chair

Watch a video interview with Michael Koryta, BA’96, winner of the 2008 IU Outstanding Young Alumni Award. Go to: http://www.iub.edu/~college/alumni/office/youngawd.shtml.
Department awards honors and scholarships

Undergraduate awards

Isiah Thomas Scholarship, Stephanie Burgess
This scholarship is presented to a criminal justice junior and is based on their academic scholarship and career goals. Criminal justice alumnus Isiah L. Thomas III, BA’87, endows this scholarship.

Bill Selke Heart of Justice Award, Danielle Rosner
The department gives this award to an undergraduate senior, in honor of Bill Selke, a former colleague who died in 2001. The award recognizes outstanding effort in service and leadership within the field of criminal justice or social service related to criminal justice. It is given to a senior who strives to better local, national, or international communities.

Outstanding Senior Award, Leah Dudderar
This award recognizes a student who has achieved academic excellence, made significant contributions to our community, and shows promise for continued excellence and contributions.

Richard Steiner Scholarship, Brandy Queen
Richard Steiner, BA’65, a criminal justice major and Little 500 Working Scholarship recipient, created this scholarship given to an IU Undergraduate Student, with preference to those majoring in criminal justice.

Graduate awards

The Forensics Studies Hue and Cry Award recipient, Stephanie Whitehead
This award was devised and subsidized by master’s alumni Mark Cooke, David Flynn, Curtis Hunt, Steve Shank, and Bob Skillman. Their criteria for the award include academic merit, teaching skills, and concern for the welfare of the department and its students.

The Robert F. Borkenstein Award, Julia Scott
Named for and in honor of former Professor Emeritus Borkenstein, this award is presented each year to a student who exemplifies superior work at the graduate level.

2009 Graduate degrees
Mohammad Salahuddin, PhD
Aleksandra Snowden, MA

Phi Beta Kappa inductees
Election to Phi Beta Kappa honor society is generally considered to be the highest honor an undergraduate student can achieve in the liberal arts and sciences. Our department has had a handful of students receive this prestigious recognition.

2008: Cassandra Mellady
2009: Kelsey Daluga, Leah Dudderar, Lydia Kardjaka, and Chelsea Walters

Alpha Phi Sigma
Alpha Phi Sigma is the national honor society for criminal justice students. Eligibility is based on academic success in criminal justice as well as all other undergraduate work. Our local chapter here at IU Bloomington is Beta Kappa.


Criminal Justice Student Association
Thank you to Brittany McDaniel (president); Danielle Rosner (vice president); Nichole Wells (treasurer); and Naomi Rubin (secretary) for their service to the mission of the Criminal Justice Student Association in 2008–2009.

Six Steps
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And, I’d like to share these with you because, unlike the hundreds of books with advice on how to succeed in business by people I don’t know, I do know that these steps worked for me. And knowing that my journey started very much like yours, I truly believe they can help you too, no matter what career path you decide to follow. Now, certainly, there are other factors and influences that will come into play as well. Things like luck, good and bad bosses, and a supporting family. All of these are important to varying degrees, but I will tell you that there are only a handful that will constantly define who you are and what you can become. Let me touch briefly on these six simple steps.

1. Work hard and watch for defining moments.
The first step is to me the most important one. Work hard and watch for the defining moments. These are critical moments as you move through your career. They are significant to your ultimate success.

For those of us in the railroad business it’s like a switch along a railroad track. You can go one way or the other, but not both without an uncertain outcome. However, the problem with defining moments is that they can be hard to see as they happen to you.

Let me tell you about my first defining moment to illustrate my point. It was right here at IU and occurred the first semester of my freshman year. When I started college, my older brother was already in school working on a PhD in International Communications. Now, proudly, during my younger formative years, I was the Elliot that could be expected to be outside getting into mischief and generally raising hell, while my brother was inside building short-wave and ham radios and talking to people from exotic and far away countries. So, when it was my time to go to college, I don’t think my parents expected another PhD in international communications. And, I certainly did my best those first few months at IU not to let them down.

That was, however, until I received a letter from the university in early October of 1973. It was a mid-term warning from the university saying I wasn’t doing too well in my classes — no big surprise there. But, I can remember how I felt, like I was living up to the expectation that I would never be

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as smart as my brother. More importantly, I remember feeling for the first time in my life like I was letting myself down.

So, I changed, and change wasn’t easy. I started spending hours at the library every night and on the weekends as well. I realized that I wasn’t blessed with the same genetic traits as my brother and if I wanted to do well, I had to work long and hard and there simply wasn’t any way around it. And you know what? It paid off.

With the help of some understanding graduate advisers who took the time to work with me, I finished that first semester doing okay and did even better the second semester. After that, I made the Dean’s List each of the following semesters I was at IU.

So, you see, that mid-term warning was my first defining moment. I didn’t know it at the time, but it played a significant role in my being here in front of you today.

I could have easily gone another way and no one would have been surprised, but something told me to make a change.

Ladies and gentlemen, start your careers with a good work ethic. It sets a strong foundation for your achievements and future opportunities. Remember too, bosses simply like people who are hard workers.

And always, be on the lookout for your defining moments. They may be subtle, but I’ve found that they feel very different, that something inside says take a chance — make a change. Looking back on mine, I wonder how many of you have already experienced your first defining moment along your journey to success.

2. Maintain integrity in all that you do.

Let’s talk about the second step — maintaining integrity in all that you do. Folks, in today’s work and business environment, and with life in general, you must adhere to squeaky clean ethical standards. It defines the trust that others will have in you to always do the right thing. And, there is no halfway or do-over when it comes to your integrity. No matter how hard you work, no matter how successful you might be. Once you compromise your integrity and lose your ethical compass, you can never be truly successful, and I don’t believe you can ever be truly respected either.

3. Lead with compassion.

Having and leading with compassion is the third step. This includes not only treating all people fairly, but believing in and developing a professional work environment that promotes diversity and inclusion, one that creates, as a integral part of your future role as a leader, a place to give other young professionals an opportunity to learn and grow. A place where it’s okay to feel safe about making mistakes and where you’re challenged to find out just how good you can really be.

As you move ahead in your careers and as you begin to manage other people, you need to practice leading with compassion as well. Now, it doesn’t mean not having to make tough personnel decisions, or having an occasional adult conversation with a colleague or an employee. I know this concept sounds simple, but look around you. Every day we see or know people who lack the ability to care about others as they move through their professional careers. Having and leading with compassion means that you care about people. You may not agree with them, you may not particularly like them, but you respect them and you treat them with fairness and dignity — always.

4. Be willing to take risks.

Are you willing to take a risk? That’s the fourth step. It’s also one that requires careful thought and an understanding of the difference between a calculated risk and a bad risk. Being a risk taker is not for everyone and that’s okay, but to be successful in your professional life you must develop a tolerance for taking risks. Now just as the word risk indicates, there’s a caution that needs to be heeded if you are to be a successful risk taker.

If you succeed, the reward or outcome should be good for the department, agency or company you work for and it should also be good for your career. Ideally, if you fail — and you will at some point when taking a risk — you hope to have correctly thought about the odds well enough to minimize the outcome. “Better luck next time,” from your boss or perhaps only a brief mental image of watching your career sail off into oblivion is the ideal outcome of a risk that didn’t work out.

As you advance in your career you will be faced with having to take risks that have significant consequences if things go wrong. And, as much as you might look for someone else to make the decision, it may ultimately come down to you. After all, that’s what leadership is about and it’s not always for the faint of heart. Let me illustrate.

In the summer of 2001 (just months before the tragic events of Sept. 11), CSX had a terrible derailment and fire inside a railroad tunnel in downtown Baltimore, Md.

At the time, I was running the hazardous materials team at CSX and was tasked with having to respond along with my team to the tunnel. As the fire spread it became apparent that someone needed to enter the tunnel and pull out the railroad cars that had not derailed.

Now keep in mind that this was a tunnel that was over a mile and a half long, the temperature inside the tunnel was over 200 degrees Fahrenheit and the smoke was so thick you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face. It was risky work that required taking a locomotive into the tunnel and pulling out rail cars a few at a time, while wearing self-contained breathing apparatus and other firefighting gear.

It required the trust of my team because no matter how much safety we factored in, there was still a much greater than average chance that something could go wrong.

The risk to take no action would have had a devastating or even catastrophic impact as the fire moved along from rail car to rail car some of them containing hazardous materials. The risk to go in and remove the rail cars came with the possibility of harm to human life — my team and me. On that day, this was my decision to make, my risk to take, and the responsibility for that decision belonged to no one else but me.

Now, I don’t expect that any of you will face a situation like this, but the point that I’m trying to make is that as you move through your career and attain higher levels of success, the risks will have greater consequences, if they succeed or if they fail.

5. Don’t be afraid to take a step back.

Step number five is: don’t be afraid to take a step back. This is really just about recognizing that moving straight ahead, along the shortest path in pursuit of achieving success in your career may not always be available to you.

Be willing to recognize that to get to where you want to be, you might well have to take a step back or a step sideways into a position or job that realigns you towards where you ultimately want to be. In a way, it’s like the strategy of many board or computer games. There may be a more direct path to the finish line, but it may not give you the same experience, knowledge, opportunity, and other rewards you need not just

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And finally, believe in your success. After 32 years in business, I’ve seen more talented people fail because they simply didn’t think they could be successful. Believing that you can be successful doesn’t happen by looking at some sign on the wall with a catchy phrase like “success is a ladder you can’t climb with your hands in your pocket,” or the ever popular “as you climb the ladder of success, be sure it’s leaning against the right building.”

Believing that you can be successful takes guts and confidence and comes from the heart not from a sign. But let me make it clear that what you’ve accomplished during your time here at Indiana University has already given you most of what you will ever need to be overwhelmingly successful in whatever you choose to do. Believe me, I know.

So, there you have it: 32 years and a richly rewarding career summed up in six easy-to-remember steps to success.

And, whether or not you use these steps or others, find the basic building blocks of your success and stick with them — don’t change. But also know that these building blocks serve merely as a solid framework to your success. What you put inside of that framework will and should change time and time again as you grow and experience more of life and work.

It’s these basic building blocks that will give you the foundation and structure you need to succeed, but it’s going to be the scars you will get as you move through your professional career that will define who you are and give you the experience and determination you need to be as successful as you can be.

Ladies and gentlemen, congratulations and thank you for allowing me to share this time with you today. It is a great honor and I will cherish it forever.

Yes, I really do envy you. To be who you are, to be where you’re at in life.

To know that you can accomplish anything you want to accomplish and be as successful as you want to be.

Good luck to you all. This is your time and your call to action. Go out and make this a better world for all of us. Make a difference in someone else’s life. Believe in your success. Fulfill your dreams and find much peace and happiness along the way. Thank you.

Alumni Notebook

1970s
John R. Elliott, BA’78, retired as a sergeant with the Carmel (Ind.) Police Department in February after 30 years of service. He was a civilian inspector in the crime scenes and evidence room of the forensic unit. Elliott became a police officer with the IU Police Department in 1976 through the IU police cadet program. He also served with the 1974 military police detachment unit at Fort Sill, Okla., from 1973 to 1974. Elliott lives in Carmel.

Kim L. Quacke, BA’79, has been promoted to assistant sheriff in charge of the Court Services Bureau of the San Diego County (Calif.) Sheriff’s Department. She lives in Carlsbad, Calif.

1980s
“Like father, like son” has a special meaning for two generations of a military — and IU — family. In July, U.S. Army Reserve Col. Joseph A. Banich Jr., BA’84, joined his son, IU ROTC Cadet Nick Banich, in a parachute jump from Fort Benning, Ga. While Col. Banich had spent 10 years assigned to the Army’s airborne division, completing 78 prior jumps, he “hadn’t jumped in about 16 years.”

Nick, who is a sophomore at IU Bloomington, was making his first jump from an aircraft. Col Banich lives in New Palestine, Ind.

In November, the law firm Barnes & Thornburg named its firm management and office-managing partners for 2008–2009. The group includes three IU alumni, Andrew J. Detherage, BA’87, JD’90, of Zionsville, Ind., a partner in the Indianapolis office and co-chairman of the firm’s Insurance Recovery and Counseling Practice Group, was also named to the Management Committee. His practice concentrates on insurance coverage matters for policyholders, complex commercial disputes, and toxic tort defense.

Jeffrey S. Yarvis, BA’88, is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army and an assistant professor at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md. In 2008, Yarvis received the Uniformed Social Worker of the Year award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States for his research on post-traumatic stress disorder. He was also named U.S. Army Social Worker of the Year, inducted into the Order of the Military Medical Merit, and inducted into the Randolph (N.J.) High School Hall of Fame for his humanitarian efforts in Iraq, Bosnia, and Haiti. Yarvis also recently published his first book, Subthreshold Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Comparison of Veterans with Different Levels of Traumatic Stress and Implications for the Prevention and Treatment of PTSD. He lives in Fort Belvoir, Va.

1990s
David R. Mellon, BA’90, an attorney with the law firm Sirot & Permutt in Birmingham, Ala., has been selected for inclusion in the list of Top Attorneys published in Birmingham Magazine. He works in the firm’s labor and employment division.

Mellon lives in Birmingham.

Gillian T. Gaynair, BA’92, has written for five newspapers since graduating, most recently The Oregonian and The Virginian-Pilot. She served as a Peace Corps rural public health educator in Ecuador from 2001 to 2003, and later worked briefly in international development. Gaynair currently covers diversity issues and demographics for the Associated Press in Washington, D.C., where she lives with her fiance.

In November 2008, Kevin A. Beckner, BA’93, beat incumbent Brian Blair for the Hillsborough County (Fla.) Commissioner seat. A native of Michigan City, Ind., Beckner attended the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, graduating in 1990, and worked as a police officer while attending college. His professional background includes ownership of a musical entertainment business and work as a certified financial planner. Beckner lives in Tampa, Fla.

Nicole D. Rouse-Bradley, BA’94, is an author and publisher based in Gary, Ind. She writes, “I have written and published my second novel, Love Don’t Live Here Anymore, under the pen name, Jazhara.” Rouse-Bradley teaches high school in the Gary Community School Corp., is a certified clinical massage therapist, and the owner of Tranquil Moments, a publishing company that specializes in health and wellness. Her previous novel was Contradictions. For more information, visit her Web site www.jazharawrites.com.

Erik M. Zakrzewski, BA’94, is a system architect for Sun Microsystems in McLean, Va. He and his wife, Penny (Henderson), BA’96, have two children and live in Lorton, Va.

For the past three years, Cheryl A. Koch-Martines, BA’95, has been manager of the Arizona Department of Health Services’ Office of Human Rights in Phoenix. The office provides legal advocacy to people with serious mental illness to aid in promoting recovery and autonomy. She lives with her husband, Ricardo, and son, Max, in Tempe, Ariz.

In March, Kari L. Niblack, BS’95, was appointed chief human resources officer for Indiana Health Centers Inc., an Indianapolis-based network of community health centers that provides medical and dental care to uninsured and underinsured clients. She was formerly a vice president with SIIEO Insurance Services, vice president of client relations at Key Benefit Administrators, and director of alumni programs at the IU Kelley School of Business. A licensed attorney, Niblack is an adjunct professor at the Kelley School of Business. She lives in Avon, Ind.

Jeffrey A. Adams, BA’96, a partner at the law firm Cohen Garleck & Glazer in Indianapolis, has been selected to serve as co-chairman of the Jewish Community Center’s Early Childhood Development Education Department. He also serves on (continued on back page)

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www.indiana.edu/~crimjust.
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the JCC’s board of directors. Adams concentrates his legal practice in the areas of business and tax planning, taxation, estate planning, probate administration, real estate, and employee benefits. He lives in Noblesville, Ind.

Jeffrey S. Fischer, BA’97, is a senior vice president for Universal McCann, a media communications agency based in New York City. He oversees print advertising for the Johnson & Johnson account. He writes, “For perspective, J&J is the third largest print spender in the U.S.” He lives in Marlboro, N.J.

2000s

Rachel B. Clark, BA’03, JD’07, of Chicago, is associate general counsel for the Illinois Education Association in Chicago.

Gregory G. Justis, BA’04, is an instructor of criminal justice at the University of Southern Indiana. He lives in Evansville, Ind.

Matthew T. Rugg, BA’05, writes that he was inducted into the Indiana Bar Association in 2008. He lives in Valparaiso, Ind.

Allyson K. Smith, BA’08, writes that she has finished a yearlong fellowship with the University of Maryland, sponsored by Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, as a juvenile case worker. She is a service coordinator with the Choice Program working with juvenile offenders in Baltimore, Md.

Criminal Justice Alumni: What’s new with you?

The IU Alumni Association is charged with maintaining records for all IU alumni. Please print as much of the following information as you wish. Updates are used as class notes and help keep IU’s alumni records accurate and up to date. Attach additional pages if necessary. Mail to the address above, or fax to (812) 855-8266. To update online, visit http://alumni.indiana.edu/directory.

Name ____________________________ Date ____________
Preferred name ____________________________
Last name while at IU ____________________________
IU Degree(s)/Yr(s) ____________________________
Univ. ID # (PeopleSoft) or last four digits of SS # ____________________________
Home address ____________________________
Home phone ____________________________
City ____________________________ State ________ Zip ____________________________
Business title ____________________________
Company/Institution ____________________________
Company address ____________________________
Work phone ____________________________
City ____________________________ State ________ Zip ____________________________
* E-mail ____________________________
* Home page URL ____________________________
* Please indicate clearly upper and lower case.

Mailing address preference: ☐ Home ☐ Business
Spouse name ____________________________
Last name while at IU ____________________________
IU Degree(s)/Yr(s) ____________________________
Your news: ____________________________

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