

Board of Regents
University of Texas System
December 23, 2014

Dear Board of Regents,

It is my distinct honor to write to you on behalf of my most influential professor at UT Austin, Dr. Kris Wilson. I worked with Dr. Kris, as he is affectionately called, throughout my four years at our esteemed university. I credit my success as a professional in the field of broadcast journalism to Dr. Kris.

Not only was Dr. Kris my professor, he was and currently is my mentor. His lectures in class taught me more than any other professor on campus, but it's his hands on teaching method and mentoring abilities that make his students so successful. I graduated in May 2014 and had a job waiting for me after graduation, as did most other students in Dr. Kris' classes.

I was privileged to take 2 journalism classes with Dr. Kris, Audio Storytelling and Advanced TV Reporting. In both classes, I gained real-world experience. Dr. Kris has experience in the field his students hope to enter and uses that experience to teach us. Instead of using lecture and tests, he uses tools like script review, peer critiques and one-on-one meetings to help us better our work. In the Television Reporting class, he oversees the weekly student run newscast. He meets individually with each student every week to go over his or her work and give critique. He also requires each student to critique the newscast the next day, leading to lively discussions about what we can improve on and what we did right. Teaching in the broadcast journalism sequence isn't easy, it requires many hours of work beyond the classroom and Dr. Kris contributes that and more. He is completely invested in the success of his students.

Technology is a major part of our field and Dr. Kris uses it expertly in classes. He keeps in touch with former students like myself and shows their work in class. Getting to see their work and success helps younger students follow in their footsteps. Dr. Kris also knows when to step back and let others share experience. He invited in many guest speakers to help us grow.

The trait of Dr. Kris that stands out to me the most is his dedication to helping his students find jobs. In the world of TV news, it's not easy to succeed. You have to fit the exact profile a station is looking for at the right time. Dr. Kris spent countless hours meeting and emailing with me to help me find a job. He went beyond his duties as a professor to work with me on my resume and demo reel, a compilation of my best work. Dr. Kris helped me re-write scripts, re-word stories and re-work something that wasn't even a class assignment. He coached me on talking to news directors and getting hired and it worked. Dr. Kris is not only invested in his students, he knows how to help them be successful.

I cannot think of a person that represents the College of Communication, The University of Texas and field of journalism better than Dr. Kris Wilson. I am grateful to have had him as a professor and mentor, and even more grateful to continue my relationship with him well past my graduation date. Dr. Kris epitomizes the perfect professor and mentor and I am proud to nominate him for this prestigious award.

Best,
Risa Morris
Bachelor of Journalism, Class of 2014

December 16, 2013

Dear Selection Committee of the 2014 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award,

I've had the privilege of being a student in three different courses taught by Dr. Kris, and have known him for about five years now. He is without a doubt a professor who stands out in mind as being one of the best.

The first class I took of his was the radio news course my sophomore year. At that time, I was unsure as to whether I would continue with the broadcast news sequence and pursue a path in journalism, but that first class with Dr. Kris was what sold me. He helped make the radio class fun, exciting and educationally valuable. I was initially intimidated by and worried about having to produce weekly radio news segments, but his constant constructive criticism encouraged me, challenged me and kept me heading in the right direction.

Dr. Kris was always extremely patient with this class full of beginner broadcast journalists, and he remains the only professor I know who is able to command the attention and respect of the classroom without ever raising his voice. Dr. Kris was very well organized and prepared for class, and always made instructions clear. I believe this is just one reason why not a single student missed a deadline during this semester.

I came out of the course feeling extremely confident about my future in journalism. Dr. Kris continued encouraging me even after that first course was over. The following semester he (without complaint) wrote countless recommendations for me, and I received at least 10 scholarships as a result.

During my junior year, Dr. Kris instructed my TV Producing and Multimedia Newsroom courses. He continued to be well prepared for class, and maintained his even keel, even during our (potentially chaotic) weekly live TV show. Again, Dr. Kris went above and beyond his duties as a professor by providing weekly feedback on our pieces. He was always actively involved in the pitching process; he always edited and sent back our scripts in a timely fashion (every week for every student); and he would provide feedback on our finished product by the beginning of the following week. This was extremely helpful and I believe I was able to grow my writing abilities faster because of this constant feedback.

During my junior year, Dr. Kris encouraged me to apply for an internship with CBS News in New York City - an opportunity I'm not sure I would've had the confidence to apply for without his encouragement and recommendation. I got the internship and spent a summer working with the CBS Evening News' Investigative Unit, one of the most prestigious placements given to interns. While there I interned with two other students - one from Dartmouth and the other from the University of Southern California. I was told by the investigative correspondent that my journalistic abilities far surpassed those of the other two interns who were from "more prestigious" schools.

I would venture to say that Dr. Kris is not only one of the best professors we have within UT's College of Communication, but also one of the best broadcast journalism professors in the country. I believe his

courses have prepared me well for a professional career in broadcast news and that his outside-the-classroom support continues to help me reach my personal goals.

I went on to intern with CBS News' London bureau for six months. Currently, I am working as an Associate Producer for "CBS This Morning" in New York City. At the age of 23, I have field produced major breaking news stories, including Hurricane Sandy, the Newtown shooting, the Boston Bombing, the West, TX explosion, the Zimmerman trial, the Moore, OK tornadoes, and many more. I have also "booked" exclusive interviews with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, NASA astronaut Karen Nyberg, and Nobel Prize winner Robert Shiller, to name a few. I also booked the American survivors of the Algerian BP oil facility hostage crisis and worked closely with "60 Minutes" on that story. I can honestly say I would not be where I am today without the support of Dr. Kris. I know at least a handful of other students who would say the same. If any professor should be honored with the 2013 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award it should be Dr. Kris. He is truly excellent.

Sincerely,

Nicole Sanseverino
CBS National News – CBS This Morning
nicoles@cbsnews.com
646-203-3094

KALEIGH A. SCHNEIDER
KaleighASchneider@gmail.com
(210) 364-3481

January 6, 2014

Attn: Selection Committee
2014 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Awards

Déar Selection Committee,

I am writing to support Dr. Kris Wilson for the 2014 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. Dr. Kris is deserving of this award for his ability to connect with, inspire and advance his students both in class and outside of class. Dr. Kris is extremely dedicated to imparting his immense knowledge of journalism and media to his students. Because of his vast experience in the field of journalism, he is able to create a learning environment and teaching methodology that inspires students to learn. His class lectures and discussions are interesting and inspiring. He uses his experience as examples to help students better understand how journalism works in the "real world."

Dr. Kris truly cares about the advancement and betterment of his students, both present and former. He is very approachable and his office is always open. He is also prompt in answering emails any time of day. Dr. Kris was one of the only professors I had at the University of Texas who answers emails outside of his office hours. He also offers periods of time where he will look over story scripts in order to ensure the students know exactly what is expected. These script approval hours even extend throughout the weekend, which is almost unheard of for college professors. The feedback Dr. Kris provides his students is insightful and thorough.

Dr. Kris is very engaging in class. He does not simply lecture on particular subjects. He engages the students in discussions such that much of the "lecture" is contributions by students. This makes the classes much more interesting and encourages students to think and participate in discussions.

I had the privilege of having Dr. Kris as a professor for two semesters. Even when I was not taking one of his classes, Dr. Kris offered to review my stories and read over my scripts. Dr. Kris' dedication and support did not end when I graduated from UT last spring. He still checks up on my progress in the industry and my career at ESPN. Dr. Kris is truly a life-long mentor and an inspiration to all his students.

I highly recommend Dr. Kris Wilson for the 2014 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award.

Sincerely,
Kaleigh A. Schneider
University of Texas Class of 2013
Broadcast Journalism, Sports Journalism

January 5, 2015

Selection Committee for the 2015 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Awards:

Please accept this letter of recommendation for Dr. Kris Wilson, an applicant for the 2015 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. Dr. Wilson was the professor of my "Advanced Television Reporting and Producing" class in the Spring 2013 semester. There is always one professor in every student's college career that stands above and beyond the rest; a professor who not only teaches the subject matter, but offers guidance and support in the crazy thing we call life. Dr. Wilson is undeniably my professor who went above and beyond, and he continues to do so to this day.

In this classroom setting, Dr. Wilson is, simply put, one of the best professors I've had while studying at the University of Texas. With a wealth of experience in the field of study, broadcast journalism, he not only teaches his students, but he inspires them. Dr. Wilson was always willing to answer the wealth of questions my classmates and I had each and every class, and gave personal insight into the world of television news, rather than just providing us with textbook answers. In my opinion, the difference between a good professor and a great professor is one who does just that: teaches the basics that are required, but also interjects with knowledge we wouldn't find in a textbook. These personal experiences helped us to truly understand the workings of a newsroom, allowing our own class newsroom to run a lot more efficiently.

In our class, my peers and I would broadcast a live newscast once a week, featuring stories written, filmed, edited and produced by ourselves. Dr. Wilson would offer frequent critiques and advice, providing us with constructive comments on how to improve our reporting and producing skills. Rather than simply giving us a list of things to change, Dr. Wilson would take the time to go through the comments with each student individually, allowing us the opportunity to truly understand why he was recommending such changes. Time and again, this feedback proved exceedingly helpful, and I know I speak for the rest of my classmates when I say that by doing so, Dr. Wilson helped us all to improve tremendously over the course of the semester.

As a student, it's always nice to know that your hard work is being recognized, and Dr. Wilson is always willing to give praise where praise is due. I was honored to be nominated by Dr. Wilson this past semester for the Hearst Student Journalism Awards, in which I placed second nationally. He also suggested I apply for a scholarship from the Radio Television Digital News Foundation, something I was not even aware of. Giving students opportunities like these is a sign of a professor who cares about the future of his students. There are many professors out there who don't even take the time to learn their students' names. Dr. Wilson, on the other hand, cares

for each student individually, asking about their goals and aspirations, and helping them on the path to achieving those goals.

I have met with Dr. Wilson countless times over the past year to discuss everything from how my resume looks to how my broadcast demo reel is put together. He was also more than willing to watch over work samples from an internship of mine, to provide critiques and advice on how to improve further. Dr. Wilson has written several letters of recommendation for me that I truly feel have helped to open up so many new avenues, and I am incredibly happy that I have the opportunity to recommend him so highly for your award today.

In my three and a half years so far at the University of Texas, I have never had a professor who cares as much for his students as Dr. Wilson does. He is patient, understanding and more than willing to put in time to respond to each student's specific needs. I cannot recommend Dr. Wilson highly enough for the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award.

If I can provide you any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Christopher Adams
Broadcast Journalism senior, University of Texas at Austin
Texas Student Television Assistant News Director
KVR News Executive Producer
(512) 574-7157
cmadams8@gmail.com

Selection Committee
2014 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Awards

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing you to give my support for Dr. Kris Wilson in your search for a recipient of the 2014 Regent's Outstanding Teaching Award. Dr. Kris has been by far the most influential professor I had during my four years at The University of Texas. Although I had a multitude of excellent professors during those four years, none made me feel as valued, respected, and encouraged as Dr. Kris.

Dr. Kris has a very calm, relaxed demeanor in the classroom, but he is not short of passion. This separates him from many professors I experienced in the College of Communication. Students respect him because there is a quiet understanding that he demands excellence, and that it is ultimately up to the student to strive to be the best. Dr. Kris was always extremely helpful and thorough in his teaching, giving us all of the necessary tools for success, but he was never overbearing. I believe that this was one of the most valuable lessons I learned from Dr. Kris. Hard work and self-sufficiency are keys in not just journalism but every industry, and you have to develop that work ethic without someone to hold your hand all the way through. Desiring excellence for yourself is key, and Dr. Kris teaches this.

Many professors do not spend the time that Dr. Kris does on each individual student. He goes above and beyond to take the time to critique all of our work in a timely, constructive manner. He goes through every detail of our stories with encouraging complements as well as constructive criticism and helpful suggestions. I have actually saved all of my rough drafts from his classes, as they are of utmost value to me because of his notes. He is available outside of the classroom to all students without exception. He is approachable for insight, and has an exceptional amount of advice and experience that he is always willing to share with us.

I want to share with you a short story of the above-and-beyond attitude Dr. Kris has for his students. During my senior year, I earned an internship with KXAN. On my first day, Dr. Kris happened to drop by the newsroom. He was not there to see me, even though it was great to catch up. He was there to welcome the new KXAN News Director, Chad Cross, back to town. Chad had been Dr. Kris' student years ago. Dr. Kris also brought him his old folder of packages, stories, and even a personal statement Chad had written during his senior year at UT. Dr.

Kris saves his students' work for this purpose, so that his students can see just how far they have come. It was just very thoughtful and encouraging, and a perfect example of the enthusiasm Dr. Kris has for his students.

I know that you will have a plethora of extraordinary professors to choose from for this award, as I have had many professors here of great value. However, none that I have experienced have poured their heart and soul into their students like Dr. Kris Wilson. I know he has been up for this award in previous years, and I do not believe anyone deserves it more than him. I encourage you to reward him for his passion not only in teaching, but also in guiding his students through their college careers and lives.

Sincerely,

Madeline D. Hays
Graduate May 2013, Broadcast Journalism

To whom it may concern:

It is without hesitation that I write to you in support of Dr. Kris Wilson's nomination for the University of Texas Regent's Outstanding Teaching Award. The classroom environment Dr. Kris created with his combination of high expectations, encouragement, and a keen editorial eye was both comfortable and challenging. Time spent in his classes was among the most valuable and enjoyable I spent on the Forty Acres.

On the first day of a class with Dr. Kris you realize that attention to detail, even things as small as linking verbs, will make you a stronger writer and a better reporter. Dr. Kris let us know that he expected everything we produced to be as close to perfect as possible. He backed up those expectations by creating an atmosphere of constant constructive criticism. Scripts always went through multiple edits, regardless of whether you were working on a small radio wrap or a half-hour TV broadcast, your final product was reviewed and critiqued by the entire class.

Editing and peer review can be a destructive process. Dr. Kris' voice manages to toe the line between demanding and disarming, and when he imparts both advice and admonishment you know that his sole motive is the success of his students. Dr. Kris pursues that goal first and foremost as a classroom instructor. In his class I learned how to write, gather audio, edit, and other skills necessary to be a strong broadcast journalist. Dr. Kris imparted knowledge in a way that was practical, hands on, helpful, and really stuck with me.

In every internship I held while in college, and again when I took a desk at my first job, I was able to accomplish more and work more quickly than my contemporaries thanks to the skills I learned and the standards I was held to in Dr. Kris' classes.

There are plenty of good teachers who excel in the classroom, but what separates the good from the great is what they do outside those walls. I feel so comfortable recommending Dr. Kris for this award because he is not only a great teacher, but a true mentor and confidant, always available for students to share ideas, discuss their futures, or hear advice from someone who spent years in the broadcast journalism industry.

The roles of instructor and mentor were perfectly combined in Dr. Kris' role as executive producer of our weekly news magazine show Texas Newswatch, the broadcast journalism sequence capstone course. His presence was both challenging and calming as he simultaneously pushed us to perform to the best of our abilities and gave us the tools to do so.

I had many outstanding teachers at the University of Texas, but none had the influence on me both professionally and personally that Dr. Kris Wilson did. I cannot think of a more deserving teacher for this award.

Sincerely,

Ben Freed
University of Texas at Austin class of 2012
Bachelors of Journalism
Bachelor of Arts – Middle Eastern Studies

September 9, 2012

Dear Glenn,

I am writing to you on behalf of one of my mentors and friends, Dr. Kris Wilson. I want to offer my most sincere support to Dr. Kris, as I have been made aware that he has been nominated for the College of Communication Teaching Excellence Award. I want to share a few thoughts with you as you consider him for this prestigious honor.

I am a 2001 graduate of the UT Broadcast Journalism sequence. I was fortunate to have Dr. Kris for two of the three classes in the sequence- Radio and Television Producing. Not only did Dr. Kris lay the foundation for my basic knowledge as a journalist, he also taught me about teamwork- how a newscast doesn't come together with just one person- but that every person has a job to do that is essential to the success of the newscast. As a result, our small class of 12 became very close and I even got my first job as a reporter in Sherman, Texas after one of my sequence mates landed a job there and recommended me for an open position. I credit Dr. Kris with teaching us to network- even though we didn't realize that is what he was doing at the time.

It isn't about the textbook for Dr. Kris. Yes, he absolutely teaches the fundamentals. But he teaches life lessons, as well. I learned more in his classes than in any other during my four years at UT.

I returned to Austin- to KXAN-TV in November 2006 and have enjoyed a successful career here. To my joy, Dr. Kris has twice invited me to speak to his classes about my experiences as a journalist. He wants to make sure his students are up on the latest technology and what is happening in the real world of reporting and producing today. Some of my colleagues have also been invited to speak to his classes and the feedback I have received is that this is an invaluable experience for them. Many of them become interns at KXAN and it is such a joy to hear them share their positive experiences with Dr. Kris- just as I remember them, as well.

Dr. Kris taught me about accountability and professionalism. He runs his classroom like a real newsroom. Work hard. Be on time. Never miss deadlines. And most importantly- he taught us that the story is about the people. That's what I learned from Dr. Kris- to find the people who are impacted and tell the story through them. It has served me well in my 11-year career and I thank him for it.

Thank you so much for your time. I hope I have helped you understand what a special teacher Dr. Kris has been to so many students at UT over the years and how his contribution has helped create some incredible journalists.

All my best,

Shannon Wolfson

KXAN-TV / Anchor-Reporter