

Journalism takes alum trotting around the globe

BY JOSH WRIGHT

As thousands of children and families lined the dusty, debris-filled streets of Mogadishu, the country was in utter chaos. Everyone wanted food, but no one could get it.

Somalia was in the midst of one of the worst famines the world had seen in years. Years of civil war had decimated the once peaceful and prosperous country. Even the most daring journalists questioned being there. Yet through the viewfinder of a camera, Bill McMillin witnessed much of the action.

"It was so heart wrenching," he says. "A million people are starving. There is no functioning government, just warring factions fighting against each other ... the capital city [Mogadishu] is divided into two."

As a nationally respected cameraman, McMillin has

covered some of the most stirring and controversial events of the past three decades: the beginnings of the Gulf War in Baghdad, tumultuous presidential elections in Columbia and the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado.

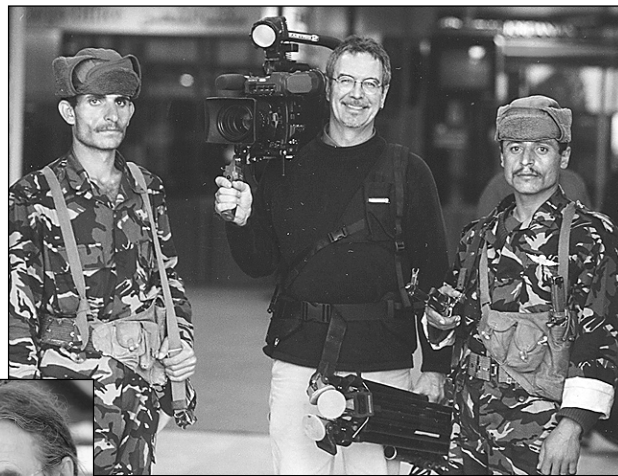
But he says the Somalian famine of the early 1990s is one event he takes the most pride in shooting.

"That whole event really sticks out to me," says the 1976 UI graduate in radio and television production.

McMillin was in the Eastern African nation shortly before the events portrayed in the widely acclaimed movie "Blackhawk Down" took place.

"The movie was pretty accurate," he says. "It was a horrible situation for everyone."

The 54-year-old freelance photojournalist is based in



Bill McMillin is a nationally recognized freelance cameraman. (photo courtesy of Bill McMillin)



BILL MCMILLIN

Seattle and credits UI for giving him the necessary skills to be able to cover such important events. In particular, he says the experience he had at KUID-TV, a PBS campus-based PBS channel, was especially useful.

"I don't know where else in the country that I could have got the experience I had at KUID," he says. "Idaho gave me a really great start in the industry. I got great hands-on experience."

Originally, McMillin was

interested in still photography. But after he and a group of friends started making short films on the weekend, he knew that TV and film work suited him best.

"I liked the group aspect of film making," he says. "Still photography is essentially a one-man game. But teamwork is really important in film work. I saw a lot of possibilities in it."

He was able to shoot several documentaries as a student, working for UI's football

SEE MCMILLIN, PAGE 13

Vandal turned NYC news anchor took baby steps and giant leaps

BY JENNY SUE ANCHONDO

From the mailroom in Boise to the sports anchor desk in New York City, Otis Livingston has proven consistently to be one of the best at what he does.

Livingston, a sports anchor at WNBC-TV in New York City, graduated from UI in 1991 with a degree in telecommunication. His career in sports broadcasting was a logical step from the Kibbie Dome court, where he was the starting point guard for the Vandal basketball team.

Livingston's athletic accomplishments include All-Big Sky First Team, Newcomer of the Year and third in the Nation in Assists.

He also set the UI record for assists in a game and a season. Livingston was on the squad, the last UI team to make it to the NCAA tournament, along with his friend Leonard Perry, now the UI men's basketball coach.

On campus, Livingston was constantly busy with KUID-TV. He worked on his reporting skills and learned about the production of newscasts. "I just volunteered to be the talent for every project

we had," he said.

However, with all of the excitement of television and basketball, he said the most beneficial aspect of his college years were the friendships he formed. "I have people in my life now that have been there since then," he said.

"That's comforting to know that in the world I live in now, I still have genuine friends that care about me and my family."

His first job in television was working at the front desk, security and mailroom at KTVB-TV, NBC's Boise affiliate.

At KTVB, he was able to turn into an unofficial weekend sports editor/writer and work on his demo reel. He landed his first

reporting job three months later in Rockford, Ill.

After a year and a half, he was ready to move and went to Philadelphia to cover the Seventy Sixers, Eagles, Phillies and Flyers. He made it to the No. 1 market two years later at WOR-TV and now works at the No. 1 station in the No. 1 market, WNBC-TV.

Confidence has never been a problem for him, as he's competed in sports his entire life. "I believe I was blessed with talent and opportunity, but the things

that have made me successful are my faith in Christ and my work ethic," he said.

He is also thankful for his wife, Nikki, and his five children. "Nikki believed that I could achieve these things before I believed I could achieve these things," Livingston said.

Livingston has plenty of advice for aspiring sports anchors and broadcast journalists.

"Don't be afraid to move. If you have your mind set on starting in New York, you're probably setting yourself up for disappointment," he said.

"There will be times when someone doesn't like a particular story the way you did it. Believe in yourself and continue to do what you feel is right."

Livingston said the big city is a great place to be. "I love the heartbeat of the city. You can feel it even at 4 o'clock in the morning when I'm going to work. Times Square is always alive."

He recently returned from Tokyo with the Yankees and said travel is one of the best parts of his job. Writing his own material and using his creativity is another perk.

"People are actually interested in what I have to say about a particular event. That's pretty cool," he said.



OTIS LIVINGSTON