



# News



Directors Guild-Producer Training Plan

welcome

## Class of 2011

The DGPTP welcomed our 14 newest trainees with a beautiful dinner hosted by Warner Bros. Studios on July 21.

Our trainees, board members, executives and special guests all gathered in the Executive Dining Room at Warner Bros. Studios to welcome our Class of 2011. This year's trainees were chosen from more than 600 applicants, and the dinner officially kicked off their journey to becoming a 2nd assistant director.

*(Continued on next page)*



*Class of 2011*

(L-R) back row are Bryce Hudson, Richard Welch, Alexandra Lambrinidis, Alejandro Mora and Rishi Chitkara, and in the front row are Jinny Parron, Sydney Alford, Kirisa Gavrin, Keisha Ansley, Tara Nicole, Donna Davenport, Corinne Wedlake, Christina Lee and Gina Triola

# Class of 2011

(Continued from front page)

Notable speakers included Paula Case, AD, trainee graduate and DGPTP trustee; Ruby Little, executive director, Labor Relations, Warner Bros. Pictures and DGPTP trustee; Mark Higginbotham, 2011 DGPTP board chair and director, Labor Relations, NBC Universal; and Steve Papazian, president, Worldwide Physical Production, Warner Bros. Pictures.

Steve shared a story about how when he first began, he was not a trainee, but he worked with two trainees who went on to greatness: Howard Kazanjian, Class of 1965, and Alan Rudolph, Class of 1967. Steve reminded the group that they earned the right to be here and encouraged them to work hard, network and persevere.

Janet concluded the evening with a special thank you to Warner Bros. Studios for hosting the evening. She also thanked Ruby Little for all her hard work pulling this event together.

Please join us in welcoming our trainees:

- Sydney Alford**
- Keisha Ansley**
- Rishi Chitkara**
- Donna Davenport**
- Kirisa Gavrin**
- Bryce Hudson**
- Alexandra Lambrinidis**
- Christina Lee**
- Alejandro Mora**
- Tara Nicole**
- Jinny Parron**
- Gina Triola**
- Corinne Wedlake**
- Richard Welch**



DGPTP Class of 2011 tries out the green screen during their Warner Bros. tour.



DGPTP Board members who attended the welcome dinner from left from to right: Richard Rothschild, Krysten Brennan, Thomas Bliss, Tom Joyner, Darrell Woodard, Ruby Little, Ed Lammi, Sam Wolfson, Liz Ryan, Mark Higginbotham, Ellen Rauch, Duncan Henderson and Paula Case

Warner Bros.

WARNER BROS. STUDIOS  
WELCOMES  
DGPTP TRAINEE CLASS OF 2011

# Introducing the *Class of 2011*

**Our 14 trainees in the Class of 2011 come from all over the country—and the world—and have studied everything from economics to psychology to cinema. Read on to learn more about our newest trainees and what led them to the Training Plan:**

*Sydney Alford* – Las Vegas, Nev.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in film/television/radio, Sydney Alford worked her way up from assistant to production coordinator. Meanwhile, she has been waiting for her chance to enter the Training Plan! "I love the storytelling aspect of the industry, but my role has always been in the details," she explains. "I thrive when given the opportunity to organize creative chaos." Her most memorable industry experience so far: watching the sun rise while shooting a commercial on a rooftop in downtown Los Angeles. "The beauty of that moment, spent with close friends and colleagues, was something that far surpassed anything you could find on screen."

*Keisha Ansley* – Tallahassee, Fla.

"I've always believed that media shapes culture and influences us, and that is what initially attracted me to this industry," explains Keisha Ansley, who was raised in Tallahassee but now resides in Los Angeles. Keisha graduated from film school at Florida State University and has worked in development for a feature film producer. The experience taught her invaluable lessons about the nuts and bolts of the business and working with different personalities, but the AD role is her calling. "The gratification of unifying many people and elements to accomplish a gargantuan task continually appeals to me."

*Rishi Chitkara* – New York, N.Y.

After graduating from Northwestern University in Chicago with a bachelor's degree in economics, Rishi Chitkara watched his classmates take jobs at investment banks and consulting firms. He tried to pursue that path, but his heart wasn't in it. Instead, he found himself drawn to the entertainment industry. His father once worked in independent film distribution, and he had grown up around cartons of masters and VHS tapes around the house. "I guess I subconsciously always wanted to work in this industry," Rishi says. "When I finally discovered what an assistant director did, I knew it was perfect for me."

*Donna Davenport* – Kansas City, Kan.

While studying theater at Kansas State University, Donna Davenport worked in many restaurants and inadvertently went into restaurant management. For the past six years, she has been working as an area field training manager for The Cheesecake Factory. Still, she has always wanted to work in the film and television industry. "The assistant director role is the perfect fit because it blends my passion for the industry with my management skills and background," Donna explains. Already, she's had two great internships with Echo Lake Entertainment and DiNovi Pictures. "I am so grateful to have worked with great people and to have developed lasting relationships!"

*Kirisa Garrin* – Carmel, Calif.

Why do people act the way they do? That's the question that interests Kirisa Garrin—and led her to get a bachelor's degree in psychology from UC Davis, with minors in English and neuroscience. "People are always saying how useful my degree must be in Hollywood!" Kirisa says. A lifelong fan of movies and television, she grew up fascinated with directors' commentaries and other extra DVD features. The role of assistant director especially appeals to her. "You get to interact with all the different departments that come together to make a movie," she notes. "It feels very collaborative."

Continued  
on next page

# Introducing the *Class of 2011*

## *Bryce Hudson* – Orlando, Fla.

At the age of 12, Bryce Hudson volunteered as a broadcast camera operator at a local church—and was hooked on a career in the entertainment industry. In high school, he participated in a top-notch program for television production, got a job at Universal Studios Florida and later completed a bachelor's degree in cinema studies at the University of Central Florida. "Just seeing something on screen is not enough for me; I need to know how it was created behind the scenes," Bryce explains. "The role of assistant director is the perfect position for someone like me who enjoys knowing every detail."

## *Alexandra Lambrinidis* – Bradenton, Fla.

Prior to being accepted into the Training Plan, Alexandra Lambrinidis was working as a freelance line producer in Los Angeles. She has also spent time as a set PA, a coordinator and a director's assistant, and has worked in nonfiction development for a small TV production company. And that's on top of her theater experience. "I'm happiest and most satisfied when on set, playing an essential role in the day-to-day production of a project," Alexandra explains. Her most valuable experience so far: working as a director's assistant. "It taught me how satisfying it can be to support a director's creative vision by providing logistical assistance."

## *Christina Lee* – Methuen, Mass.

Christina Lee first became interested in film and television production after a high school internship at a local public access station near her home in New England. She then earned her bachelor's degree in film and television production at Boston University. "I preferred working in production where I was hands-on, rather than the creative or writing side, where it was more office-oriented," Christina explains. Her best experience so far: working as an office production assistant on the TV series, "Pretty Little Liars." "When I saw my name in the credits on the television screen for the first time, I really felt like my career aspirations were going to be achieved."

## *Alejandro Mora* – Caracas, Venezuela

After moving to Miami at age 21, Venezuela native Alejandro Mora attended Florida International University and then worked as a controls engineer at a General Motors auto assembly plant in Kansas City. But the magic of film was calling his name. "When I moved to the U.S. I realized that I could be anything I wanted," Alejandro says. "I did not just have to be a doctor, lawyer, engineer, accountant or architect." In 2009, he worked as the 2nd AD in "The Zero Hour," a Venezuelan action feature film shot in Caracas. "It was an amazing experience, and I'm very proud to be a part of the highest-grossing Venezuelan film to date!"

## *Tara Nicole* – Sharon, Pa.

Tara Nicole began her career working as a stage manager in New York and as a special events coordinator at MGM Studios in Florida. But she still wanted more. In 2006, she moved to Los Angeles to try to connect with the top individuals in the entertainment industry and truly challenge herself. Her favorite experience so far: working on Disney's "Hannah Montana." "I became part of a great team of professionals that had worked together for 10-plus years on various shows," Tara says. "They served as great mentors early in my career. I look forward to more 'best experiences' yet to come!"

*Jinny Parron* – Virginia Beach, Va.

Jinny Parron began her career in stage management—earning her master’s degree in stage management at UC San Diego and then working as a freelance stage manager in San Diego and Los Angeles. She also has a master’s in entertainment business. “The contacts I made kept fueling my stage management career, but I never met anyone who could help me get a job in television or film,” Jinny says. A graduate school classmate told her about the Training Plan. “She explained that ADs rely on the same types of skills that stage managers use,” she adds. “I am very interested in taking my skills to the next level and using them to become a successful AD.”

*Gina Triola* – Philadelphia, Pa.

“Assistant director was not an occupation listed in the results of my high school’s career aptitude tests,” notes Gina Triola. But she was attracted to the entertainment industry and moved to Los Angeles after college to take a job as a PA on a reality show. She was later promoted to coordinator, but realized she missed being at the center of the action. One of Gina’s favorite experiences was spent coordinating a travel show last summer. “I did not know that you could catch catfish with your bare hands, and I certainly did not expect to be pushing a vehicle out of the mud in the back woods of Alabama!”



*Corinne Wedlake* – Chenango Forks, N.Y.

Even as a kid, Corinne Wedlake never considered any other career path besides film. “Going to the movies was my escape, and learning about them was my passion,” Corinne explains. She studied film at Syracuse University and moved to Los Angeles after graduation. Since then, she has worked in various capacities in film and television production and has worked for Warner Bros. Domestic Theatrical Distribution. “Being an assistant director appeals to me because I excel at tackling a leadership role,” she says. “More than anything, I love being on a set and part of a crew.”

*Richard Welch* – Oceanside, Calif.

One of Richard Welch’s best industry experiences so far has been a phone call—from Janet Dyer Gould. She was congratulating him on being chosen for the 2011 class of trainees! A graduate of UC Santa Cruz, where he majored in film and digital media studies, Richard has been working in production in Los Angeles. “What drew me to this industry were my love for storytelling, a fascination with the moving image and a desire to be a part of cinematic history,” he says. “I am attracted to the tremendous opportunity assistant directors have to grow as leaders within the industry.”

cheers!

# Ready for the *Future*

**A**fter 400 days of dedicated training, the Class of 2008 celebrated their graduation in style at a special dinner in their honor at Delmonico's Steak and Lobster House.

The dinner, which took place April 10, was sponsored by Entertainment Partners and attended by DGPTP alumni and special guests. The festivities began with Janet Dyer Gould, DGPTP administrator, asking all attending board members to stand and introduce themselves.

In addition, 2011 Board Chair Mark Higginbotham, director of Labor Relations for NBC Universal, addressed the graduates. "It is now up to you to take what you have learned from each of your experiences and decide your path and take this experience with you," he told them. "You are now ambassadors of the program; help those who follow you and welcome them to this industry."

Mark then presented Trustee Ruby Little, executive director, Labor Relations, Warner Bros. Pictures, with a special award for her tireless work on the DGA Safety Pass Programs. You can read more about Ruby's award on the back page of this newsletter.

Also congratulating the graduates were Franklyn Gottbetter, Entertainment Partners representative and assistant director; Jon Larson, associate western executive director, DGA and DGPTP trustee; and Yudi Bennett and BJ Cotton-Jeffords.

Jon quoted the great Assistant Director Chico Day in inspiring the graduates. "The perfect assistant takes care of every detail...If he is unwilling to dignify the position with the imagination and dedication it deserves; he has no claim to the name."

Thanks to everyone involved for a wonderful evening, and congratulations again to the Class of 2008!



(L-R)  
BJ Cotton-Jeffords,  
Yudi Bennett and  
Franklyn Gottbetter



*Class of 2008*

(L-R) back row are Mark Ballou and Sarah Olivieri, in the middle row are Allison Rushton, Steve Windle, Craig Langus, Christine Danahy, Cindy King and Linde Sayles, and in the front row are Redelia Shaw, Angie Read and Sam Luu

## Mark Higginbotham



Mark Higginbotham

Assistant directors work the line where business meets art in the collaborative—yet hierarchal—sphere of motion picture and television production. In teamwork with the director and producer, the AD must facilitate production with all departments in a collaborative effort and prioritize with the ultimate result in mind: to finish the job in the time allotted within the resources available.

It is not for the faint of heart. But in the process of helping someone else's story come alive, every AD has stories of adventure to share.

The Assistant Director Training Program is unique in that it seeks to provide education and opportunity for those who aspire to the job of DGA-member assistant directors. Acceptance into the program provides paid "on-the-job

training," as well as mentorship throughout training. By nurturing our future Directors Guild members, we in turn nurture the motion picture and television production industry itself.

I joined the Board of Trustees in 2004 and consider it a great honor to serve on not only the Board, but also as the 2011 board chair. Each year, I look forward to the arrival of the next class of trainees as they embark on the path of discovery and learning. Not all who start the program will finish, but those who complete the journey are provided with the tools, knowledge and guidance to become a successful assistant director.

As with all learning, it is up to the graduate to take the knowledge that has been provided by the program and work to find his or her place as an assistant director.

*Mark Higginbotham is the 2011 board chair and director, Labor Relations, NBC Universal*



Important  
DGPTP  
News and  
Requests

### CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

We are seeking volunteers to assist with the creation of a new ADTP marketing video. Want to help out? We would love to hear from you! Please email us at [mail@dgptp.com](mailto:mail@dgptp.com).

### PRINT OR EMAIL?

The Training Plan is considering distributing our newsletter electronically. Please email us at [mail@dgptp.com](mailto:mail@dgptp.com) and let us know if you would prefer an email version or hardcopy mailing. We value your feedback!

### UPDATE YOUR INFO

We are planning a computer system and website upgrade—and we need your updated contact information!

Please email us any updated email, cell and telephone numbers and mailing addresses you would like in our system. Having an appropriate email address in our system will ensure that we can assist you with any paperwork if you are working with trainees or participating in ADTP functions, such as our trainee advisor program or seminar events.

When complete, we hope to have a cloud-based system that will allow the management of applicant submissions, trainee paperwork, progress and survey functions in a more user friendly environment.



Please email  
us your updated  
information at  
[mail@dgptp.com](mailto:mail@dgptp.com).  
Thank you!

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Look for our next newsletter to spotlight a past graduate class to see where they are now!

*cheers!*



Ruby Little

## Thank You Ruby Little!

**C**ongratulations to Ruby Little, executive director, Labor Relations, Warner Bros. Pictures! Ruby received a special award at the Class of 2008 graduation dinner to honor her work facilitating, implementing and completing the Los Angeles and New York DGA Safety Pass Programs.

Ruby's continued dedication and hard work resulted in the successful project management and rollout of both these programs. She also continues to work with CSATF to roll out the mandatory DGA Safety Pass Training program that was negotiated in the recent DGA contract agreement.

Ruby was surprised and speechless when presented with the award. She thanked everyone involved and stressed that this success was a group effort. Congratulations, Ruby!

*in memoriam*

**All of us at DGPTP are saddened at the passing of Gil Cates. Gil passed away on Oct. 31, 2011, and our thoughts go out to his family. His contributions to the film industry and DGA were tremendous and he will be missed.**

**We send our sympathies and sincere condolences to the family of Robert Yannetti, Class of 1980. Robert passed away suddenly on April 15, 2011.**

**The DGPTP is sad to report the passing of Scott Adam, Class of 1969, and his wife, Jean, in February 2011. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Scott's and Jean's families. They will be dearly missed.**



**Directors Guild-Producer Training Plan**  
15301 Ventura Blvd. Bldg. E #1075  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

**Fall 2011 Edition**



You may contact the ADTP by emailing us at [mail@dgptp.com](mailto:mail@dgptp.com), calling us at (818) 386-2545 or writing us at: DGPTP, 15301 Ventura Blvd. Bldg. E #1075 Sherman Oaks, Calif., 91403.

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