“When spring came, even the false spring, there were no problems except where to be happiest. The only thing that could spoil a day was people and if you could keep from making engagements, each day had no limits. People were always the limiters of happiness except for the very few that were as good as spring itself.”

- Ernest Hemingway
The Only Thing You Leave Behind is People’s Memories of You...

Dr. Robert Schneider, School of Theatre and Dance, interviewed by Juan Molina, sophomore fine arts major

The honors program keeps adding new, honors-only courses each semester. This spring, THEA 203: Introduction to Theatre was offered for the first time. The course is taught by Robert Schneider, a man of much personality and many talents. He has been a dramaturg, reviewer, playwright, and occasional actor. You can definitely tell he is passionate about his craft. The passion is there, it’s something that is obvious from the way he talks and presents himself in the classroom. He is by far one of the professors with the most personality I have had the pleasure of meeting at NIU. I mean I’m not aware of how many professors come in everyday and say, “How are you this afternoon, my lovelies?”

I was able to sit down with Dr. Schneider for an impromptu interview. When I asked if I could interview him he said yes. When I asked when he said, “why not now?” I wasn’t really prepared, but I found myself in his office thirty minutes later. This is a portion of the talk we had. I wish my readers could see and hear him as he speaks to get a sense of his personality. Every word carries personality -- he elongates some, changes pitch when he pronounces others. This is just what I was able to scribble down in my notebook:

**How did you get into theatre?**

Junior year of high school, I was cast in the role of Cléante in *The Miser* by Molière. The costume was so extravagant that I got a laugh just coming on stage! For an awkward teen not knowing what to do, theatre is wonderful: if you rehearse it all, you know exactly what to do. There is no tension at all. Once you have the scaffold you can hang stuff on it. The play is about a young lover who is in love with a young woman. He wants to marry, but her father is very greedy.

**Where did you do your undergrad?**

UC Irvine with a BA in Drama. I met a professor that was a real inspiration there. I think I wanted to do what he did. Emulation is a big part of education. That is the danger with online courses; you don’t get to meet anyone who you like.

**What was your professor's name?**
The professor's name was Robert Cohen. Very famous, wrote a textbook used by many colleges.

(He picked up the textbook and showed it to me, proof. He is famous.)

What is about him that was inspiring?

He seemed to be genuinely excited about ideas and theatre. He genuinely seemed excited about teaching. He was. He still is. He is still teaching.

Did you always now you wanted to be in theatre?

I wanted to be an actor. That's the way most people get into it.

Where you ever discouraged?

Well, I wasn't very good! Maybe I was too cerebral to be an actor. I thought about being a director, but I didn't have the personality for that. So, I went to Europe.

Was that for a study abroad or to visit?

It started out as a trip, but then I met someone, we had kids... We lived near Paris for ten years. One thing leads to another. I taught English as a foreign language. Some things you can't really plan for...

Do you see a major difference between American and French education?

French education is more rigorous and formal in primary and secondary school. University is haphazard. Students aren't followed as closely by their teachers, but it's a lot cheaper. America is all about selection. Self-selection and more choices, but it's also insanely expensive.

Do you see a difference between your honors and your regular intro to theatre class?

Yes, it's quite striking. The written work that my honor students do is all impressive in terms of writing and grammar. My honor students are better prepared in language skills, but they're shyer and afraid of making a fool of themselves or saying something that isn’t exactly right. For theatre this is a disadvantage. My regular section has more characters. Over time, the honor students begin to relax and play the game.

(He apologizes for the clutter in his office and explains how everything must be packed and shipped. The Stevenson building is getting renovated and everything is being moved.)

Are you excited about the move?

Our entire building is going to be packed and shipped and moved. Our Director keeps reminding us that this is a problem we wanted. We wanted a building that wouldn't leak, that would heat up in the cold... We are getting a new theatre so we are very excited but have challenges such as finding temporary places to perform.

(He gave me a tour of the building and I was blown away. I never knew so much went into each
production. They have a woodshop, sewing rooms, prop room, people working on sets, washing machines, people dying costumes, a room full of lighting instrument, and much more... He talked about all the new things that will come with the renovation among them “a new black box with a fully-trapped stage [that] will be really neat and just fabulous!” He mentioned how they used to play softball games against the Anthropology department which I though was pretty cool, how the hallways of the building are sometimes crowded with people screaming and crying, rehearsing for emotional roles... “The NIU police is so used to it they don’t bother coming to inspect.”

You didn’t finish the story about how you became a professor...

In 1991, I returned from Europe to go to grad school as an adult. It gave me insight into the difficulty grad students and untraditional students face when returning to school.

Where did you attend grad school?

Yale, like Robert Cohen. I really followed in that man’s footsteps,

Do you still keep in contact with him?

Yes.

Does he know how inspiring he was to you?

Oh yeah, I think so. His publisher put on a little thing to honor him and I was invited to speak. So he has heard me sing his praises.

How do you define success in life?

Bertrand Russell once said that “the good life is inspired by love and informed by knowledge”. There is that Woody Allen movie where the man stands next to the skeleton and says that when he’s gone he wants to be well thought of. I guess the only thing you leave behind is people’s memories of you...
To Lead is to Learn
Lauren Sikes, senior nursing major

I am a college student and I work with college students. It is sometimes strange to be a leader among my peers. Often, other students think I’m a “real adult” that works full time at the university. Perhaps it’s the way I carry myself or the tone of voice I use. They are surprised to hear that I am an undergraduate student just like them, but I do my job just like any “real adult” would. I push my students to perform to the best of their abilities, I hold them to high expectations, and I don’t treat them any different because of where they come from.

The Huskie Service Scholars program provides a tuition waiver to students who qualify as first generation or low income. I learned quickly that working with this demographic of students presents unique challenges. What took me longer to see was the inspiration these students provide. Their dedication and hard work has taught me more than I could ever teach them in one meeting each month.

Many of the students I work with are the first in their family to attend college. The fact that they even made it to campus is an accomplishment. It takes guts to leave home, and it is especially difficult for first generation students. They are under pressure from back home and often lack the support they need.

Rising above all of these challenges, the Huskie Service Scholars students not only survive but thrive in the university setting. They build relationships with their team, peer mentor, and site supervisor. They perform 300 hours of community service. They excel academically and socially.

These students want to be doctors, engineers, and business entrepreneurs. They have big dreams and are willing to work hard to get there. All they need is for someone to invest in them, someone on campus to care about their success. That is what the Huskie Service Scholars program is trying to accomplish.
Growing up in a family of seven children had a mix of advantages such as never being lonely and always having someone to play with. However, it also brought on challenges. Specifically as a middle child, I was always in the shadows, never really noticed. I was the “black sheep” of the family in more ways than one. But there was always one person who never forgot about me and told me that I could do anything I wanted. My older sister, Danielle, is six years older than me but even with a large age gap, she has inspired me.

My sister showed me how by simply reading a book I could be transported into another life, another era, a place where I could make friends with characters from these stories. I was just entering middle school when my sister left for college, Northern Illinois University to be exact. Even though it was only a little over an hour away it was not the same living in the house. My sister was the first person in our family to go to college, and later the first to graduate, so there was a lot for her to learn about the process and finding ways to pay for it. While at school, she worked two or three jobs while going to school full time. To a naïve teen, it looked easy and fun to go to college. Whenever I spent weekends up at her school she would take me to her classes and I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. I would sit there and take notes even though I knew nothing about Faulkner or how to dissect a sentence. Danielle allowed me to be myself, allowed the nerd inside of me out. In our home it wasn’t the norm to be into academics the norm was sports.

When I was a senior in high school, Danielle decided that she was going to teach English abroad, she was going to Korea. It was devastating to hear that she would not only miss my eighteenth birthday but also my graduation, something she had a huge part in. I always strived to do the best in school because I wanted to be just like my big sister. Without her, I wouldn’t of graduated in the top 15% of my class, I wouldn't of gotten into all of my top schools, or have the confidence to move away to go to school.

Now that I am older, I depend just as much on my sister if not more. She taught me all about applying for financial aid, how to take out loans to pay for school, and how hard it really is to work two jobs while going to school full time. This past year I decided to take an internship for a semester working for Disney down in Florida. If it weren’t for Danielle, I probably would not have followed through. Knowing that she has spent the last four years living in Korea, a whole new country and only seeing us once a year, gave me the confidence I needed to make the move. Even on the days when I was extremely homesick, I would Skype with her and she would tell me that it was all worth it no matter how hard it may seem.

If it was not for my older sister, I would not be where I am at today. She has taught me everything from how to wear makeup to learning that you should never give up on your dreams and most importantly don’t lose sight of what you love to do. Through all our fights and yelling matches, in the end we are sisters and friends for life. A sister is supposed to be a role model to their younger siblings and Danielle was the perfect one for me. I just hope I have successfully followed in her steps and serve as a role model for our two younger sisters.
A Modern Tragedy
Ashley Cox, sophomore undecided major

Dramatis Personae (in order of appearance)

Katie Spatta, 18   Elder Child
Connor Spatta, 11  Younger Child
Mr. Spatta, 38     Father
Police Officer 1, 25  Arresting Officer
Police Officer 2, 32 Second Officer on Scene

place:  Teenage Bedroom

time:  Modern time, late evening

at rise:  katie sits on bed preoccupied with laptop and WEARING headphones. The sound of rap music can be faintly heard.

(Connor bursts open door into bedroom and jumps onto bed.)

Connor

Katie! Katie!

Katie

Connor! Seriously, didn't we just talk about you coming into my room without knocking?

(Katie removes headphones, music fades out, and sound of offstage yelling begins)

Oh...they are still going at it, huh?

Connor

They have been Katie. Ever since you talked to Mom. What'd you say? Why'd you have to make her so mad?

katie

You're too young to understand. Now go on, get out. I'm upset enough without your input.
(The yelling suddenly ceases, both are visibly puzzled)

Besides, it sounds like they're done. And you don't wanna be here when they come to talk.

Connor

But...But...they never just stop. Something is ----

(A huge crash is heard offstage, followed by the screams of a woman.)

katie

Goddamnit! Not again! Connor, call 911 – NOW! And stop crying, I don't have time to deal with that shit!

(Katie rushes out the door, much yelling heard offstage)

CONNOR (picking up the phone)

Hello? Operator? I....I...need the police...or an ambulance...or both....Yes it's an emergency....hurry please....please....I'm scared....yes this is him...yes, same address....I'm not sure what happened, there was a loud noise and mom and dad were fighting and I think mom is hurt Katie went to help but please hurry....yes....yes....I hear them....thank you....

(As Connor puts down the phone, sirens are heard approaching quickly and the yelling quiets down a bit, Katie re-enters scene, followed by a very angry looking man, their dad.)

Father

You called them Connor! I know you did it! You good for nothing piece of crap excuse for a son! What do you want? You want your dad to spend his life in prison because your shit excuse for a mother doesn't know how to discipline her children? Well, that won't be a problem anymore. Enjoy your lives, I can't put up with this family anymore. I'm getting my suitcase.

POLICE OFFICER 1 (heard offstage)

Where do you think you're going? Back it up sir. Let's have a chat.

(Police officer 1 and father enter scene)

katie

Dad what'd you do? For all you care mom could be dead right now: you pushed her down the stairs! What the hell is wrong with you? Why can't we just be a normal family?

Father
Why can't we be normal? This coming from my drug-dealing and now apparently gay daughter? You're the one who deserves to be dead — you're a disgrace! Your mother thinks this little “lifestyle” you are trying out is okay. Well I'm not having it! You've lived under my roof dealing out my back door for long enough — I will NOT have a gay here!

(Police officer 2 appears at bedroom door.)

POLICE OFFICER 2

Mr. Spatta, are you going to come peacefully or do we have to do this in front of your children?

FATHER

You're arresting me? For what crime?

(The two officers look at each other in disbelief.)

police officer 2

Mr. Spatta, you are being arrested for domestic battery. Your wife told us everything.

(Connor clutches Katie and begins crying. The police approach and arrest the father.)

Police officer 2

Mr. Spatta, you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you. Do you understand these rights I have just read to you?

father

(to Officer 2) Yes, sir.

(to himself) I should have left years ago...

(to Katie, as exiting scene) Just remember. This is your fault.

(Father and Police Officer 2 exit)

police officer 1

(Addressing Katie) How old are you, dear?

Katie

18, sir.

Police officer 1
And you, son?

Connor

11, sir.

Police officer 1

Alright kids. I know this has been a hard day, but we need to get each of your sides of the story. We'll have to separate you, at least for now. This sounds like it has been an on-going problem, since we have responded to this house 4 times in the past 6 months. Now son, child services is waiting outside for you. I'll stay and talk to your sister.

(Katie and Connor look at each other, share a hug, and Connor exits the scene)

katie

This is all my fault.

Police officer 1

How could this possibly be your fault?

KATIE (ranting, hysterical)

It's my fault they were fighting. It's my fault dad was giving up on us. It's my fault mom went insane. It was about me. I drove him to it: mom was just trying to help me. I shouldn't have pushed him any farther. I knew this would throw him over the edge. But mom said she had to tell him....

POLICE OFFICER 1 (cutting her off)

Hold on, hold on. Tell him what?

katie

It's stupid. Forget it.

Police officer 1

It's not my job to forget it; it's my job to help you. How can I do that?

katie

You can turn back time, and stop today from happening. You can turn me straight. You can get these drugs out of my system. And finally, you can stop me from doing what I'm about to do.

Police officer 1
And what is it that you are about to...

(Katie lurches forwards, grabbing the officers gun, and holds it to her head.)

Katie

This.

(The stage goes black, and a gunshot is heard.)

End of play
Who Inspires me to be an Honors Student and Student Athlete

Hannah Savage, freshman Biological Sciences major

Running has undoubtedly defined me for the last decade of my life. It has pushed me to perform on a different level in the classroom, on the cross country, and on the track. Being so absorbed in a sport for so long I have been surrounded by the professionals that have made their careers based on the sport. Many of these professional runners have acted as an inspiration for me during my everyday life. When things get tough, I look to them for the motivation to keep pushing. Steve Prefontaine is one of these amazing athletes from which I can always take motivation from. Over the years he pushed through odds to hold American records in 7 different distance events, from the 2,000 meters to the 10,000 meters. That is a huge range of distance. There is no doubt people did not believe him when he told them he wanted to be great in so many different distances. He proved them all wrong. He has always been an inspiration; he taught me that if you have tough mental strength and a strong work ethic you can do anything. This is the kind of work ethic and determination that guides me to strive to be the best I can be, on the track and in the classroom as well. Running may only take me so far, but my education will last the rest of my life. I take it very seriously. With the motivation and success of the many who came before me I am inspired to work wholeheartedly in everything I do. Whether it is fulfilling my duties as an honors student in the classroom or running for a victory in a race.
While pondering whom I most admire, I considered many people. Being a student of political science and history exposes you to a large number of inspiring people. However, for me it was an easy choice. The person I admire most is undoubtedly Hillary Rodham Clinton. This would come as no shock to the people I live with, as they often tease me: “You’re Hillary effing Rodham Clinton.” But all joking aside, she truly is who I try to model myself after; to appeal to something everyone understands, she’s who I want to be when I grow up. Though practically everyone in this country came to know her as a public figure when she was first lady of the United States, she is an accomplished individual by her own accord. She was a senator before heading up a national task force on health care reform. While First Lady, she was head of a national task force on health care reform, despite opposition from opponents, before even being a senator.

Yet, what I admire Hillary Clinton most for is her work as Secretary of State. She is a strong female role model. She is firm in her beliefs on what is correct, and has no qualms about taking all measures necessary to protect those ideals. Hillary Clinton never allows anyone to make her feel inferior, simply because she is a woman. It is instead a source of power in her life. It is perhaps because of this Hillary Clinton has made an effort to put women’s rights and LGBTQ rights at the forefront of her (and therefore the United States’) human rights agenda. Though it is important that we share the same values, and that I have unlimited respect for her as a person and a politician (Clinton 2016!) it is her beliefs and her drive that make her inspirational. I hope that one day I will be able to gain the respect that she has. I dream that one day my name may be known on an international scale, and like Hillary Clinton, I yearn to one day be a positive female role model myself.
Students that Inspire: An Interview With Daihee Cho

Daihee Cho, senior accountancy major. Interviewed by Juan Molina, sophomore fine arts major

1. I know you are an international student from South Korea, can you explain the challenges that come with being away from home? Was it hard being away from your family, learning a new language, new culture, new food?

It is my 5th year being in the United States. I came to the U.S. in high school, and I came to NIU after graduating my high school in 2010. Frankly saying, it is challenging to adjust to this new environment. In high school, I lived with my brother, and after graduating high school, I have been living by myself. I did not have the language skills the first time when I came here, and I had to do everything without my parents’ support. However, as time passes by, I have made great friends in high school and at NIU. With my friends’ support and friendship, I could overcome any hardship that I had in this new place.

2. What is the hardest thing or obstacle that you have overcome?

I would say the hardest obstacle that I have overcome would be the cultural difference. For example, when I was in Korea, I did not make eye contact when I talked to my teachers or anyone who is older than me. Also, in Korean culture, hugging was not very common among friends, but when I came to the U.S., hugging was very common among friends, and I had a hard time getting used to it.

3. Any tips on being so successful? (time management, passion, what’s the secret?...)

When or if people ask me how I become “successful,” I truly think that I am not successful, but I am just a hard worker. I have my goals that I would like to accomplish in my life, and for my goals, I am working harder and harder. My only secret to be a hard worker is having a visual calendar. I have my tablet, and I use it to keep track of my schedule for a day. When I start my day, I look at my calendar, and I briefly plan for the day, and it really helps me for managing my time.

When I was asked this question, I do think of my top secret to being passionate and being happy. It might sound a little cheesy, but my top secret is my friends. Since I am a human being, sometimes, I get upset, sad, or depressed with my schedule and classes. However, when I am not in the best mood, my friends make me happy. They encourage me to keep working hard, and they make me smile. No matter what I do, I believe that my friends are precious than any of my work, and they are my top secret.

4. Just so people get a sense of how involved you are can you let us know all the organizations you are in this year?

My involvement includes:
Director of Student Life, Student Association (SA), 2012-Present
Northern Light Ambassador, Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning, 2011-Present
President, Beta Alpha Psi Honors Accountancy Society, 2012-Present
University Honors Fellow, University Honors Program, 2012-Present
Dean’s Student Advisory Board, College of Business, 2011-Present
Besides these regular involvement, I also serve on numerous different committees.
I also go to the Hope Haven on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays to volunteer.

5. What is your major? What do you plan to do with it after you graduate?

I am an Accountancy major with minor in Finance. I will be graduating in December, 2012, and I will be going to NIU Masters in Accountancy Program in January, 2013. Before I graduate with my Master in December, 2013, I also would like to take CPA (Certified Public Accountant), CIA (Certified Internal Auditor), and CMA (Certified Management Accountant). Upon my graduation, I would like to work for a public accounting firm for about 10-15 years, and I would like to go to a law school with an emphasis on business experience. I would like to become an international lawyer with my background. After working as an international lawyer, I would like to become a politician.

6. How do you manage to do it all?

I guess I am really good at managing time. But, I truly think that everyone is available to do anything if they put enough time, effort, and their passion. I always want to emphasize that I am not special, but I am just a hard worker. I am not the smartest person, and I am not better than anyone. But, I can confidently say that I want to be the hardest worker. I am a big pusher, so it might scare some people away (I have heard that people were scared off by me, so please make sure that I do not sound too crazy!), but I sleep 5 hours a day. I go to bed at 11 PM and wake up at 4 AM everyday. If I have an exam that I need to study or any other occasions when I need to study more, I usually wake up at 1 AM and study. I truly think that students at NIU are here for education primarily. Even though I am highly involved in school, I want to make sure that I put my education first.

7. I've heard countless people say, "Daihee? Everybody knows Daihee!" can you explain why you think this is so? Why are you so well known?

First of all, I appreciate anyone who said it. I am very fortunate to get to know a lot of people on the campus. I think the biggest “secret” is that I am highly involved on the campus. Because of that reason, I could get a chance to meet a lot of people on the campus. Also, as I mentioned before, I truly think that my friends are precious than anything else. So, when I get to know someone or make friends, I make sure that I really get to know them and build up a friendship with them.

8. Is there anyone that inspires you? How have they affected you personally?

There are so many people who inspire me. To be honest, I was once very full of myself. I was doing very well in my classes, and I was highly involved on the campus. Everything was going very well, and I thought that I was the smartest and hardest worker. However, I found out that I am not the smartest or the hardest worker. There are numerous students who work harder, who are smarter, and who are humble. I was inspired by them. Whoever is the smartest or hardest worker does not matter. I think the only thing that matters is self-improvement and being humble. I always try to improve myself in anything, and I also try my best to be humble, because I know that I am not the smartest or hardest worker. No matter how much I work or study, there are always some people who can do better.

Also, I am very thankful for my friends. The first time when I came to the U.S., I did not have any friends, but now, I am very fortunate to have great friends who always support me and encourage me. Having a
friend is truly precious, and I want to make sure that I put my friends before anything.

9. Do you have any advice for others that look up to you or are wishing to emulate someone like you?

The biggest advice that I would give anyone would be “start now.” No matter what you would like to accomplish, it will require your effort and work to get there. Even though you are still young, you will eventually need to get there, so why not start now? Also, if you want to get involved or have any questions, contact the person who are already involved with it. If you have any question, just ask other people. Also, ask more than one person. Even though you might get the same answers, but if you ask numerous people, you will get answers with diverse situations.

If you want to talk to me and ask me any question, please contact me via email (daiheecho@aol.com). I truly want to help other students, and I have so much free time to answer your questions!