

Alumni Newsmakers

Making it in the majors: Kimberly Ng, AB'90

As a child, Kimberly J. Ng, AB'90, spent hours playing baseball. "I have always loved the game," she says. "No one needed to teach me to like it, it was just natural to me." Armed with an MVP award from the U of C softball team and a diploma in public-policy studies, Ng has transformed her childhood love for the swing of a bat into the core of her professional life, joining the New York Yankees in March as assistant general manager.

She joined the Chicago White Sox right after graduation, as a special projects analyst in arbitrations and case contracts, before being promoted to assistant director of baseball operations. Last year, Ng went to the American League Office as its director of waivers and records, establishing herself as an expert on major-league rules.

As the Yankees' assistant general manager—the No. 4 position in the club's hierarchy after owner George Steinbrenner—Ng heads the team's operations staff. The staff's job, she says, "is to make the team better all the time and anticipate the best we can where the Yankees will be, depending on the market. This includes composing a good team, deciding on trades, and handling contractual negotiations."

Ng typically begins at 9 a.m., reviewing players' performances and searching the

Waiver Wire for players who've caught the eye of Yankees recruiters. She then reads press reports on the team's performance and administrative moves. Often, she says, the press provides good ideas about the industry and the Yankees' place in it.

Ng and the operations staff also work closely with the coaches, research potential trades, reschedule games, and negotiate contracts. "When I help in negotiations,"



In the house that Ruth built: Kim Ng, AB'90, of the Yankees.

she explains, "I research where to spend the Yankees' future money by discussing with the general manager where a particular player really belongs—whether or not he should join the Yankees—and working on different pay structures for the players."

Ng often gets out of the office and onto the field. "We are always with the players, the balls, and the bats during batting practice," Ng says. "We watch every single game the Yankees play, and we form our own

opinions about the players' styles and skills." That doesn't mean telling players how to play: "We talk to the coaching staff about that. We talk to the players about other things—usually social or business matters."

Ng's recent move makes her the first female executive inside the Yankees and the second woman to serve as assistant general manager in the major leagues. But, she says, "I take the gender issue out of the equation entirely. There is not a best male or female way to do my job. The best is simply the best and that's what I aim for." Nor does she give career advice in gender-related terms: "You have to decide what you want and work hard to get it. This advice goes for everyone. If you're looking to work in the major leagues, you're usually going to have to start out in the minor leagues and make very little."

Ng's own experience attests to the fact that a love for one's profession goes a long way. "You have to love the game to be able to translate the enthusiasm for the game into working hard and long hours," she says. "And I just love the game." —E.C.

Lincoln's modern job

Some 130 years after his death, Abraham Lincoln has a new career as a leadership trainer, thanks to Antigoni Ladd, AB'65. With her husband, Everett Ladd, she founded the Tigrett Corporation 14 years ago to teach leadership skills to business executives. Designed to demonstrate the arts of persuasion and compromise within the context of history, the program presents executives with a contemporary problem, shows how a historical figure resolved a similar one, and then lets the executives apply those insights.

In April, Ladd directed a "Lessons from Lincoln" seminar in Gettysburg, PA, for about 15 executives. After presenting the problem—working with difficult people—she explained how Lincoln would focus on his goal. As long as his "employees" performed their duties, he ignored their personality quirks and even their disparaging remarks about himself. The day ended with a battleground tour and an interview with "Lincoln," played by historian James Getty, about his leadership decisions.

Ladd got the idea of using historical figures to teach leadership from John Clemens, a Hartwick College professor who in the late '80s used literature—from the *Iliad* to Shakespeare—to provide such training. Ladd went a step further, first writing case studies using historical figures, then adding on-site locations to give a retreat-like feeling and help executives remember the lesson by tying it to a specific locale.

From Lincoln, the Ladds have expanded their offerings to include seminars on how three Civil War Union generals—John Buford, George S. Greene, and Joshua Lawrence Chamberlin—worked with limited resources. Tigrett also offers a London-based course on Winston Churchill, including a visit to the late prime minister's WWII war rooms to learn the language of leadership. Another trip, to Billings, Montana, teaches how to build alliances from the legacy of Sitting Bull.

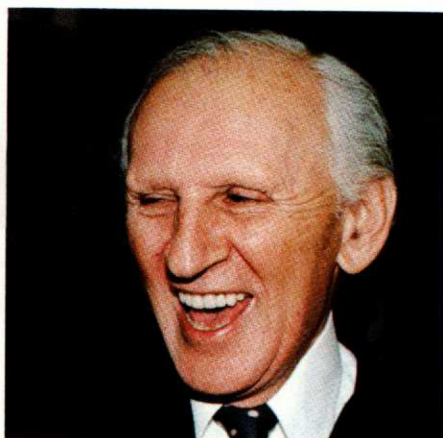
Ladd estimates that 1,000 individuals from 100 different companies in businesses as diverse as banking and telecommunications have been trained using the programs. "The analogy of Lincoln and the Civil War became an eye-opening view of my organization," noted one executive on a postseminar evaluation. "The program was a unique way to examine issues in a non-threatening environment that could then be readily related to the job."—Q.J.

Capital work

After completing his 24th term and almost 50 years in Congress, Sidney R. Yates, PhB'31, JD'33—at age 88 one of the oldest members of the House of Representatives—will retire at the end of the 105th Congress.

Some of Yates's biggest accomplishments include obtaining the federal land for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and, early in his career, pushing for D.C.'s first black policeman and fireman. Known as "Mr. Arts" on Capitol Hill, he more than once rescued the National Endowment for the Arts from extinction.

Born on Chicago's North Side in 1909, Yates did not anticipate going into politics while a student at the University of Chicago and a forward on its basketball team. Back then, he wanted to be a lawyer.



Congressman Sidney Yates, PhB'31, JD'33.

"I considered politics a possible advance for a law career," he says. "The practice didn't have the intellectual pursuits that I hoped for. Certainly, Congress did."

In 1939, he made an unsuccessful run for one of the city's aldermanic posts. "I tried to crack the machine," he says, "and the machine cracked me." He won his first congressional seat nearly ten years later, in 1948, after serving in the Navy during World War II. Ever since then, he has represented Chicago's 9th district—except for a two-year hiatus, when he unsuccessfully ran for the Senate in 1962 against Senator Everett Dirksen and then became U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Yates has seen five fellow congressmen rise to the presidency—Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Bush—and has served under nine presidents, starting with Truman. When his last term ends in January 1999, he'll retire in Washington, D.C., where he plans to listen to music and reread *Cyrano De Bergerac*. He says he'll most miss helping people and hopes to be remembered for serving the 9th district: "My time in Congress has been gratifying."—S.G.

Dance devotee

Through years of persistence and dedication, Selma Jeanne Cohen, AB'41, AM'42, PhD'46, has translated her love for dance into the art form's first comprehensive worldwide history. A six-volume, 4,000-page compendium, the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* represents 20-plus years of work by more than

650 contributors from 50 countries. "The importance of this dance encyclopedia is immeasurable," wrote dance critic and historian Janice Ross in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. "Its existence means that from now on, discussions about dance in America can proceed to a higher level."

The founding editor and editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia*, Cohen has long been interested in such high-level discussions of dance. Amid years of childhood instruction with Chicago dance teacher Edna McRae, a performance by the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo turned the young Cohen into a dance fan who would eventually borrow every book in McRae's dance library. By the end of high school, she'd decided to become a dance historian and followed the subject while studying English language and literature at the U of C.

Her Ph.D. in hand, Cohen took her first English teaching job at UCLA, meanwhile crafting her first article on dance, published in 1950 in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Encouraged, Cohen began to follow a pattern she described years later, in her preface to the *Encyclopedia*: "Individuals, unwilling to settle for other careers, obstinately pursued their goals in their own ways. Eventually, they found one another." Just so, Cohen moved to New York in search of other enthusiasts and met ballet instructor Lillian Moore, who invited her to teach a dance history class at the High School of Performing Arts, paving the way for teaching jobs at Connecticut College, the U of C, and the University of California, Riverside, where she taught from 1983 to 1989 and became a distinguished scholar in 1990.

Outside the classroom, Cohen cofounded *Dance Perspectives* magazine in 1959 and was editor until it closed in 1976, when she began assembling dance critics and scholars from around the world to plan the *Encyclopedia*. Slowed by the emergent nature of dance scholarship and the *Encyclopedia's* ambitious scope, the project would pass through three publishing houses and nearly two decades before landing, in 1991, with Oxford University Press, which issued the series in March.

Cohen's next inquiry will be somewhat lighter on its feet. Inspired by her cat, Giselle, she'll explore the question, What makes the movements of a cat so beautiful?—C.M.