INTERVIEW WITH JEANETTE BEEBE
WINNER OF THE UCHV SHORT MOVIE PRIZE 2014

UCHV Where are you from, and what is your major?

JB I'm from Des Moines, Iowa. I'm an English major, and I'm pursuing certificates in Creative Writing and Gender and Sexuality Studies. My senior thesis, “An Instrument for Blinking”, is a book-length poetry manuscript that was advised by Tracy K. Smith.

UCHV When did you start making movies and how did you come to make "Beyond the Boys' Club"?

JB “Beyond the Boys’ Club: Faces of Feminism at Princeton University” is a film that explores themes that I’ve been fortunate enough to dig deep into these past few years.

As a student journalist, I try to find stories that will serve the public interest. I'm most drawn to reporting on issues relating to gender, sex(uality), and the LGBT community. I believe that journalism is a public service. Journalism has an obligation to public life, and I know that it can help empower communities. Journalism isn't just about giving information, or about "telling the news." It's also about serving and engaging communities by listening, researching, connecting, reporting.

For example, in Spring 2008, I worked as an assistant producer/editor on “Red Light Green Light”, a 40-minute documentary that profiled several lesbian couples nationwide (IA, CA, MO) and their struggles with same-sex adoption laws. That spring, I also shot a three-minute news report on LGBT youth in Iowa high schools. In Summer 2008, I made a 5-minute video news report at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Student Project. With the help of ABC producers in Washington, D.C., I profiled Diane Schroer, a transgender woman, and her claim of workplace discrimination vs. the Library of Congress. Last semester, in JRN450: “Audio Reporting” with S. Drummond (NPR), I filed a 5-minute radio news story on the impact of New Jersey's same-sex marriage decision on Princeton couples.

UCHV For those who have no idea about how to make a movie, could you briefly describe the process?

JB I tend to make movies like I make radio. First, brainstorming. Then, an idea. Then, a hypothesis (or perhaps a thesis). Then, a pitch (for editorial approval). Then, research. Then, shooting/recording. Then, transcribing — line for line — what the recorder has
captured. (This is called “logging”, I think.) Then, a frenzy of cut, copy, paste. Then, a story begins to take shape, and a narrative begins to emerge, and something is born. Then, a rough cut. Then, editorial feedback (once more). Then, edit, edit, edit. Then, repeat. And when there’s no more time, and the deadline chimes, then the film will be finished, and the first “play” will begin!

**UCHV** How would you characterize the movie's message?

**JB** “Beyond the Boys’ Club” is a six-minute documentary that profiles a handful of female leaders who have had an impact on Princeton’s history. The movie follows four women: Sally B. Frank ’80; Shirley Tilghman (Princeton’s 19th President); Alison Wood ‘08, and Emily Yasmin-Norris ’09. One of the film’s major themes is the question of how we, as female students, should try to enact change: that is, should we work “within” the system, or “outside” of it? The film suggests that gender is not incidental but rather integral when planning how to effect political/social change. Some advocate using “carrots”, rather than “sticks”, yet the film concludes with Sally Frank’s adage: “Change only happens if you demand it.”

**UCHV** Why did you choose this topic?

**JB** I’m interested in researching and reporting on stories related to gender, sex, and sexuality because these issues hold the key to so many freedoms: marriage, immigration, a fair workplace, adoption, state benefits, social inclusion. Gender writes the rules in the legal system, the educational system, and the boxes we check on applications, medical forms, tax papers and social media profiles. Gender is profoundly embedded in our society. “Beyond the Boys’ Club” is a film that seeks to spark conversations about the changing landscape of women’s leadership at Princeton: in the workplace, in the home, and on campus.

**UCHV** What do you plan to do after graduating from Princeton?

**JB** After three courses in Princeton’s journalism program (in feature writing, television news production, and radio reporting), three journalism internships (in video production, foreign markets reporting, and sports writing), and the type of hare-brained, youthful naïveté that accompanies graduation, I’ve decided to do something new: pursue a career in publishing, strategic communications, or public relations. I want to devote my attention, energy, heart, and future to making stories that will inform, impact, delight.