



Every group of graduates is special, and Boise State's Class of '98 was no exception. Here are a few stories behind those who donned caps and gowns and received their diplomas from BSU this spring.

**IPT GRAD VISITS
BSU CAMPUS
FOR THE FIRST TIME**

By Bob Evancho

On the afternoon before she received her master of science degree from Boise State, Bonnie Spencer walked across the school's rain-soaked campus, dodged puddles and admired the Quad's lush, green lawn and the blossoming dogwood trees alongside the Math/Geosciences Building.

But Spencer's stroll wasn't one last trip down memory lane before her college days ended. Despite her impending graduation from BSU with a master's in instructional and performance technology (IPT), the 49-year-old Las Vegas resident was visiting the university for the first time. "This is a lovely campus," Spencer commented as she walked past a flower garden near the Hemingway Center. "It's a lot greener than I imagined."

A Boise State graduate who has never been to Boise?

Thanks to the IPT program's

distance-learning option, first-time visitors/graduates are an annual occurrence at commencement. That's because those students can earn their master's via computer conferencing — a process that allows them to enroll in the program, "attend" class at their convenience, study anywhere they can take a laptop computer and complete the program without having set foot on campus.

Including Spencer, six of the

10 IPT graduates from the Class of '98 were from out of state. Grads from Phoenix, Minneapolis and Fort Worth, Texas, also traveled to Boise to participate in the May 16 commencement. In previous years, students from as far away as Asia and Europe have taken IPT classes through BSU.

Administered by the BSU College of Engineering, the IPT program is designed for professionals in fields such as

instructional design, job performance improvement, human resources and training.

For Spencer, a human resources manager for a U.S. Department of Energy contractor, IPT provided just the training she sought. "This program has been one of the most rewarding professional experiences I have ever had," she said.

Spencer said the IPT program's most beneficial aspect was its flexibility. "I could spend whatever time online on evenings and weekends and work around my job and other responsibilities," she said.

And the burden to perform is on the student, she added, because with IPT's projects and online discussions, the instructor will easily notice if someone is silent.

"With online courses, there is more of an impetus to contribute on a regular basis — much more than in a regular classroom," she said.

Spoken like a true IPT graduate. □



Spencer

GRAD EARNS DEGREE ONE CLASS AT A TIME

By Amy Stahl

Blame it on a cherry-red mustang. In 1965, Judy Aitken fell in love with the sporty new car and had to get a job to make the payments. So much for attending college full time.

But she was determined to earn a college degree. So she started taking classes — one course at a time.

Marriage, two children and several jobs later, Aitken, 51, reached her goal in May when she received her diploma in management/human resources. She finished just in time to join her 24-year-old daughter Tracy Fuller, who graduated in communication/secondary education.

When Aitken started taking classes in the 1960s, she didn't have a major. "It was just kind of a hobby," says the field services manager for the Public Employees Retirement System.

While climbing the career ladder, however, she felt something was missing. "I realized early on that on the job I was learning how to do the business, but I didn't know the philosophy," she says. "Plus, I felt like I could carry on a conversation at a cocktail party a lot better."

College also gave her an edge with her children. "The course material and meeting people helped me keep in touch with my kids. I worked on projects with kids my daughter's age."

Tracy Fuller and her brother, a freshman at the College of Southern Idaho, grew up with Boise State.

"I was always exposed to collegiate life," Fuller says. "I



Fuller and Aitken

presentations.

They took disparate approaches, however, to their classwork. "She always got A's and was a studying fool. It made me mad," Fuller says, laughing. "I was more for going out and having a beer."

Aitken was more serious about her coursework — and is wistful about the end of this era in

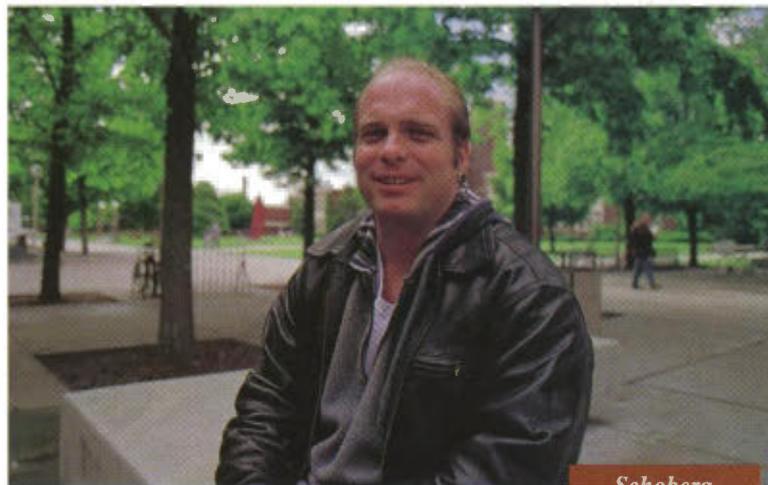
thought it was normal to go to college."

A former Boise State debate team member, she hopes to combine her love of theater and communication as a high school teacher.

Although they never managed to take the same class, the mother and daughter attended plays together and saw each other on campus. Occasionally, they helped each other with homework — Aitken fixed run-on sentences in papers; Fuller offered tips on

her life. "It's starting to catch up with me," she says. "I've got too much time on my hands. I'm watching way too much TV."

Nevertheless, she's glad for the experience, even though it took longer than she may have liked. "This was my own little world. This was my time for me." □



Schoedinger

Providence, R.I.

"The faculty is absolutely ecstatic about this," says Andrew Schoedinger, chair of Boise State's philosophy department. "Ancel has taken his studies very, very seriously and has worked extremely hard. He's found his fit, and as a result, all that work has paid off."

A Boise High graduate, Schoedinger spent 10 years in California pursuing a career as a rock musician and holding down odd jobs such as a bicycle messenger in downtown Los Angeles.

On a trip to Boise to attend his 10-year high school class reunion, Schoedinger decided to move back to his hometown and enroll at Boise State. He was 29 when he first enrolled in 1994.

Schoedinger says he realized early on that he would have to

excel in his studies if he wanted a career in philosophy. Being an older student probably helped, he says. "I had reached a point in my life where it was important to make something work. I had a strong desire to learn."

"It's been a great experience," Schoedinger says of his years at Boise State. "The faculty has been incredibly supportive."

Schoedinger says he is particularly interested in metaphysics and logic and will pursue those studies at Brown.

And while some may consider the study of philosophy a bit esoteric in the technology-driven '90s, Schoedinger disagrees.

"It is the foundation beneath our lives," he says. "We can utilize it in many ways." □

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO LIFE PAYS OFF FOR GRAD

By Janelle Brown

When Ancel Schoedinger signed up for an introductory philosophy class during his freshman year at Boise State, he didn't know it would change his life.

"I fell in love with the

subject," remembers Schoedinger. "I looked at the professor teaching that class, and I thought, 'That's what I want to do.'"

Schoedinger, who majored in philosophy, is well on his way to reaching his dream. He is the recipient of a \$35,800 fellowship to attend graduate school at Brown University, in

COOMBS ENGINEERS PROMISING CAREER WITH BSU DEGREE

By Amy Stahl

Valerie Coombs is one of those people with a knack for home repair — mechanically adept and able to take things apart and put them back together. So it was logical that the 1998 graduate would gravitate to engineering.

“I was looking for a career that combined a love for math and science with creativity,” she says.

Now Coombs, this year’s top electrical engineering graduate, is working as a manufacturing product engineer with the Laserjet division of Hewlett-Packard Co.

Previously, Coombs logged more than a decade in administrative support for companies in financial services or banking. But she knew that she couldn’t get where she wanted to be without a college degree.

In 1987, she started taking general business classes and then transferred into the

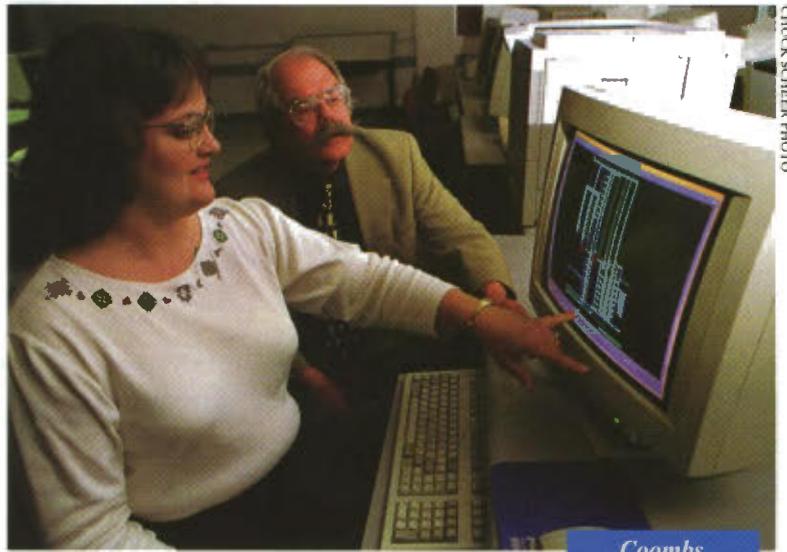
cooperative engineering program operated by BSU and the University of Idaho. In 1996, the program split, and BSU launched the College of Engineering.

A single mother of three, the 38-year-old Coombs faced a decision: move to Moscow or remain at BSU. Her investment in Boise State paid off.

Coombs received several attractive financial aid packages, including a full-fee-paying Brown Scholarship. And she was active in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Society of Women Engineers, the Honor Student Association and other campus groups.

While Coombs has an aptitude for sciences, she admits to occasional bouts of self-doubt in her challenging engineering classes.

She got an unexpected boost several years ago as a participant in the Mentor-for-a-Day



Coombs

CHUCK SCHERER PHOTO

program sponsored by the BSU Women’s Center.

The program pairs promising students with women professionals. After a day with an Idaho Power engineer, Coombs was more optimistic. “Going out with her helped me realize that all of the communication, business and people skills I had learned for 15 years were applicable,” she says.

And now, when the next

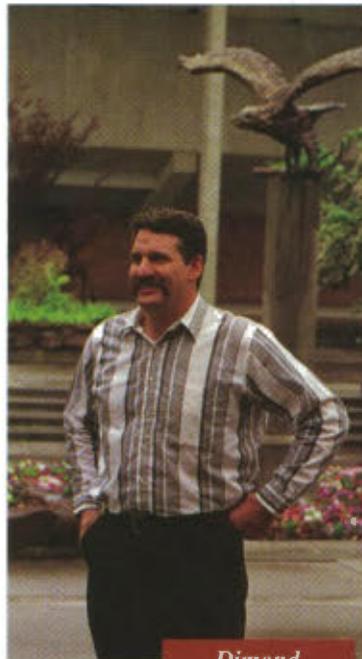
Mentor-for-a-Day program rolls around, Hewlett-Packard will have a new engineer ready to share her secrets with another generation of students. □

21 YEARS, 120 MILES DON'T STOP TWIN FALLS GRAD

Among his lifetime accomplishments, Val Dimond ranks becoming one of the first five graduates from Boise State’s Twin Falls program near the top.

Dimond wanted to earn his diploma earlier in life, but he attended Brigham Young University for only a semester in 1977. A torn rotator cuff at work in the fall of 1991 convinced Dimond, who is a maintenance coordinator, to return to college so he could build a career that depended more on education than physical abilities.

Dimond, 42, started at the College of Southern Idaho that spring for his lower-division classes. And when the BSU satellite program opened in fall 1995, he enrolled for upper-division courses in business administration.



Dimond

received his degree with the four other Twin Falls graduates during a special ceremony in May.

“I’ve set goals over the years for what I wanted to accomplish,” Dimond says. “This is definitely one that took the longest.”

In fact, it took 21 years from BYU to Boise State. He adjusted to homework after the two-decade layoff. He studied on campus, at work and in the Burley library in his spare moments. He took an accounting class with his oldest daughter. And his 19-year-old daughter was at CSI this year while he took his Boise State classes. “I never did see her, though,” Dimond says.

Despite the obstacles, Dimond achieved the means. Now he seeks an end — a new job and career. He says he wants to advance beyond the low man on the totem pole, but he admits that the surrounding

The single father of six, who drove the 120 miles round trip from his home in Albion as many as four times a week for classes on the CSI campus,

small communities offer limited opportunities for business graduates when compared with the Boise area.

“I hope I can get somewhere where I can use this,” he says of his diploma.

But he also is as determined to forge a business career as he was to graduate. It may take some time, but Dimond showed in earning his degree that even a late start can be overcome. □

LARRY BURLEN PHOTO

FAMILY AFFAIR AT BSU FOR THREE TORRES BROTHERS

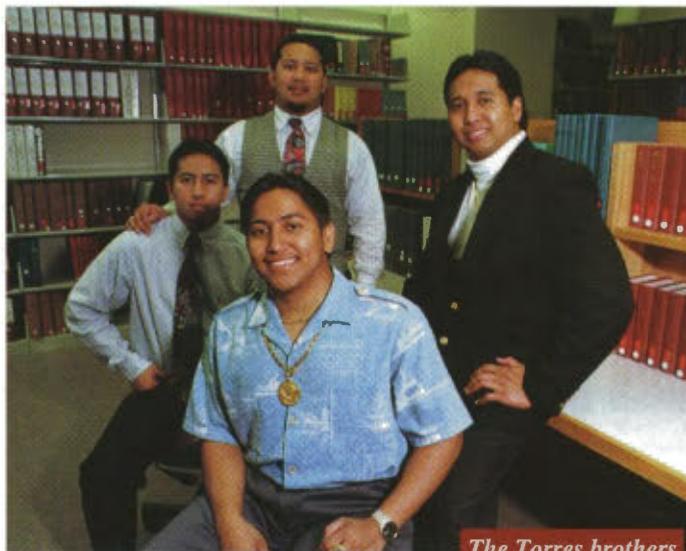
By Amy Stahl

"All for one and one for all" is more than just a catchy phrase for the Torres family of Saipan. Three brothers from the tiny Pacific Island recently graduated together from BSU. Now they plan to attend law school — together of course.

In May, Vincent received a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies, and Victorino and Joaquin "Jack" earned bachelor's degrees in English/communication and associate degrees in criminal justice.

The Torres brothers moved to Boise with their entire family — brother Ralph, a BSU sophomore; parents Vicente and Primitiva; and two younger siblings.

The Torres brothers were sold on BSU's quality education, Boise's low crime rate and



The Torres brothers

CHUCK SCHEER PHOTO

clean environment by their Uncle Eddie, who earned an MPA from BSU in the early 1980s. Vincent followed; then the rest of the family came.

"Our parents support us tremendously in our daily activities," says Vincent. "They put everything into their

children." Their mother is a retired teacher, and their father a retired civil servant.

Respect and family unity are a cornerstone of their culture, the brothers say. While Americans prize independence, islanders value group decision-making and collabora-

tion. Their decision to attend BSU was reached in a family meeting. "Everything we're doing is planned," says Vincent. "We instituted a constitution in the family. We wrote it down in black and white."

"Our eventual plan is to return to our homeland and help our people," says Vincent. A family law practice in Saipan is their ultimate goal.

The Torreses believe that their family-first philosophy will be an advantage on the tiny island.

"Some [non-native] attorneys face difficulties because they don't understand the culture," Vincent says.

While the brothers plan to return to Saipan, expect the family tradition to continue at BSU. "When I have kids I want them to come here," says Vincent with a smile. His brothers nod in agreement. □



Page

CHUCK SCHEER PHOTO

GRAD'S HONORS COULD FILL A PAGE, HELP WIN TOP JOB

By Janelle Brown

Jamie McGuire Page once dreamed of soaring through the clouds as a fighter pilot or playing football for the Dallas Cowboys. While those childhood aspirations eventually faded, her passion for excellence remains.

Page compiled an impressive array of honors and scholarships during her four years at Boise State. The accountancy major is the only student enrolled in an Idaho university to win a national Arthur H. Carter Scholarship in Accountancy.

Page was also named a Top Ten Scholar, received an Idaho Governor's Cup Scholarship, a Boise State Presidential Scholarship and several other

scholarships, and she maintained a 4.0 grade-point average through college.

In addition, Page spent countless hours as a volunteer with Rake-Up Boise, the Boise River Festival, the American Cancer Society and many other community projects and offered free income tax assistance to local citizens through a program run by Beta Alpha Psi, the national accountancy fraternity.

"She's both a terrific student and a great person," says business professor Gordon Pirrong. "Jamie is very well rounded. She does everything well."

Page, who graduated first in her class at Borah High School in 1994, credits her mother, Vanna Kay Donovan, for instilling in her a can-do attitude.

"From day one my mother always told me she expected me to do my best, whatever that was," Page says. "I've always been active and motivated."

Page served two business internships while enrolled at

Boise State and says the many ties between the College of Business and Economics and the local business community greatly enhanced her education. A week after graduating from Boise State, she started work as an auditor for the Boise office of Arthur Andersen, the world's largest CPA firm.

"It's a great fit for me," Page says of her new job. "I'm very excited about it."

Page describes herself as a detail-oriented person and a perfectionist, traits that serve her well in her chosen field of accountancy. But that doesn't mean she's abandoned her adventurous side that once dreamed of football and flying.

In her free time, Page enjoys riding her Harley Davidson motorcycle, a passion she shares with her husband of four years, Jarrod. "It's pure fun. It's freedom," she says. "You can relax. There's nothing else like it." □