

## COLUNAS



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## In Celebration of James Alan Heffernan

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There are people that you know for only a short time that change your life forever.

That is how we in the Aberje-Syracuse International Corporate Communications program feel about the impact that James had on each of us: the professors, the program managers, and most importantly the nearly 300 hundred students that he individually interviewed and admitted to the program.

For those of us from Syracuse, we first had the opportunity to meet James in 2004-2005 as we were planning the launch of the program in April, 2006. James' involvement, guidance and program management was critical to the development of this new and very selective program for Brazilian communicators.

His knowledge of the American university system and the Brazilian corporate communications profession made him the foundation that both organizations required to develop and launch this unique educational initiative.

For the instructors who came from the United States and Canada to teach, James was the consummate host, tour-guide and personal safety manager. Each one of us have special memories over the years of the conversations over dinner that we shared with James about Gianpaola and Jessica. Whether it was in Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, we never had to worry about logistics or schedules, as James was always there to make our time in Brazil as enjoyable as possible.

While some of us only saw him on an annual basis, a number of the professors stayed in regular connect with James via Skype to talk about new programs or initiatives that he was always developing. You could always tell when he was calling from Sao Paulo – busy, always on the go, focused and strategic – or when he was calling from the beach – much more relaxed and enjoying life (a trait that he only recently came to embrace).

In April, when Maria and Terry arrived to kick-off the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the program, a small limp was noticeable in his left foot and leg. "Not to worry," he said as he rushed around the airport, the hotels, the offices in preparation for the opening ceremony. It was just a pinched nerve he thought, caused by doing an exercise he read about in the *New York Times*.

Over the course of the last six months, while the Aberje-Syracuse program was in session, James stayed connected to each of us, even though he wasn't well enough to attend the last three modules. He was always curious to know how it went, how the students responded and how we could make it better for the next year.

James has had a profound influence on each of us. His eagerness and enthusiasm is what brought all of us together and for that, we are certainly all the better for having James in our lives.

To Gianpaola, Jessica, the Heffernan and Guidotti families – we thank you for sharing James with us over the last 8 years. He is our friend, our mentor and our colleague. His friendship will last forever.

The Aberje-Syracuse International Corporate Communications Program Team:

- Paulo Nassar
- Maria Russell
- Professors
  - Terry Flynn
  - Gary Grates
  - Shel Holtz
  - Angela Sinickas
  - Bill Smullen
- Aberje Staff

Apoio:

