

Molly Qerim is a pioneer in the mobile broadcasting field.



STUDENTS

Sports-centered

Grad student 'phones it in' for a living *By Helen Martin*

Graduate journalism student Molly Qerim loves to play sports and watch them. She now gets paid to talk about them as well.

Qerim is a mobile broadcaster for ESPN. She tapes shows that are viewed on mobile phones and other handheld communications devices. Viewers subscribe to the service and get regular videos on all sorts of sports topics.

Qerim considers herself and her colleagues to be pioneers in the mobile broadcasting field, creating original programming specifically for new media. "In the future, all the 'net-generation' will know is digital media," she says.

Qerim hosts at least 10 segments a week, covering football, college basketball, baseball and the fantasy versions of those sports. Some of the segments she hosts are *The 411*, *This Month in History*, *Hit & Run* and *Sports Trivia*. Despite landing a job that would be

the envy of many new graduates, Qerim is unwavering in her attitude toward continuing her studies.

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"The education I am receiving is invaluable. I am gaining practical experience in all aspects of the industry, both on and off camera, and building a network of relationships in media." She thinks her master's degree will provide her with a competitive edge.

"I believe the more skills you have, the more marketable you are. It is important to me that I can be a one-man band and write my own scripts, shoot and edit video. That's what this degree is teaching me. I like to edit the scripts for my shows myself,

and I'm working on my writing skills. I like to be challenged in order to become a better reporter."

She also spends time honing her skills in front of the camera, learning from Kenneth Venit, a part-time professor in the School of Communications and an experienced broadcasting coach.

"He gives such good advice," says Qerim. "I feel lucky to be able to have his attention when I need it. I've had great support from all the faculty, and I'm only in my second semester."

Venit says, "Molly combines her intellect with ambition, taking direction and quickly implementing what she learns. She was hired by ESPN despite the fact she lacked experience or extensive sports expertise. To its credit, ESPN determined that she had what it takes to become an excellent broadcaster and is willing to invest the time and energy it takes to polish a 'diamond in the rough.'"

From the ages of 6 to 18, Qerim played tennis competitively. She considered going to college on a tennis scholarship before deciding it was time to concentrate on her studies. While working on her undergraduate degree in communications and business at the University of Connecticut, she did four internships, including one at ESPN. When the network asked her to audition for a host spot, she jumped at the chance.

Free time is an unfamiliar term to Qerim, who works seven days a week between school and her job. "I'm very focused, and the harder I work, the more opportunities I seem to get. My dad tells me to 'out work 'em!'"

Hard work is paying off for Qerim, and it's given her some unique experiences. "I reported on the Heisman Trophy selection from Times Square, interviewing the candidates, and I did presentations from the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where ESPN was showcasing new products."

If Qerim could pick anyone to interview, tennis player James Blake would be high on her list, along with Dallas Cowboys receiver Terrell Owens and New York Yankees short-stop Derek Jeter.