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In Touch with the College of Business Administration

◀ **PROFILE**

Heidi Von Ravensberg

Blind business student has many career options

Heidi Von Ravensberg will graduate this summer with a bachelor of science degree in marketing from the University's business school. Along with the stiff competition and particularly trying classes dealt with by all business majors, Von Ravensberg faces an additional challenge. She was born with a genetic eyesight disorder and has been blind all her life.

The 25-year-old Eugenie has mastered efficient study methods with the help of her mother, classmates, friends and "some really fantastic professors," she said. Her mother tapes assigned readings and students pitch in with studying for exams.

"I also do a lot on my own," said Von Ravensberg, who tapes lectures herself in lieu of using University-provided note takers.

Von Ravensberg transferred to the University from Lane Community

College, where she tried studies in English, speech and psychology. But after a few business classes she knew right away she had found her niche. She said psychology and liberal arts are fields stereotypically designated for the blind, but her interests lie in business and law.

Fortunately, computers have made areas of business and science more accessible to the blind since the early 1980s. Von Ravensberg is thankful for the braille printer and speech-synthesized computer, which have helped to make a major in marketing possible for blind students.

Von Ravensberg will continue to successfully follow her pursuits this fall, when she starts classes in the JD MBA program. The JD MBA is a concurrent business and law degree, she said.

Her first year in the program will be spent in the law school, the next one in the business department, and the last two back in the law school.

Afterwards, Von Ravensberg said she plans to go into a career in big business. When asked what she thinks is her greatest anticipated obstacle, Von Ravensberg said that "just getting hired in the first place will be difficult because I'm blind."

Many problems facing blind students on campus are preventable. Su-

sy Cavender, a counselor for students with disabilities, said bicyclists cutting in front of blind students and unleashed dogs disrupting Guide Dogs are, unfortunately, all too common occurrences. Von Ravensberg couldn't agree more.

"People who slam doors in my face are also inconsiderate," she added.

Von Ravensberg usually makes her way around campus without severe difficulties, thanks to Puma, her Guide Dog. Puma has worked for Von Ravensberg for eight years and is getting ready to retire soon.

Puma, Von Ravensberg said, seems to have grown familiar with the daily routine of college classes. The dog almost immediately goes to sleep after getting settled in a classroom, and she knows when it's time to go by picking up clues from antsy students rustling papers and zipping backpacks.

When Von Ravensberg begins her graduate degree requirements in the fall, she'll probably have a new Guide Dog along with her new workload, she said. Despite the stressful atmosphere and heavy demands that accompany life as a business major, Von Ravensberg seems prepared and grateful for the opportunity to meet the challenges.



Photo by Stacy Anderson

—Sydney Waltons



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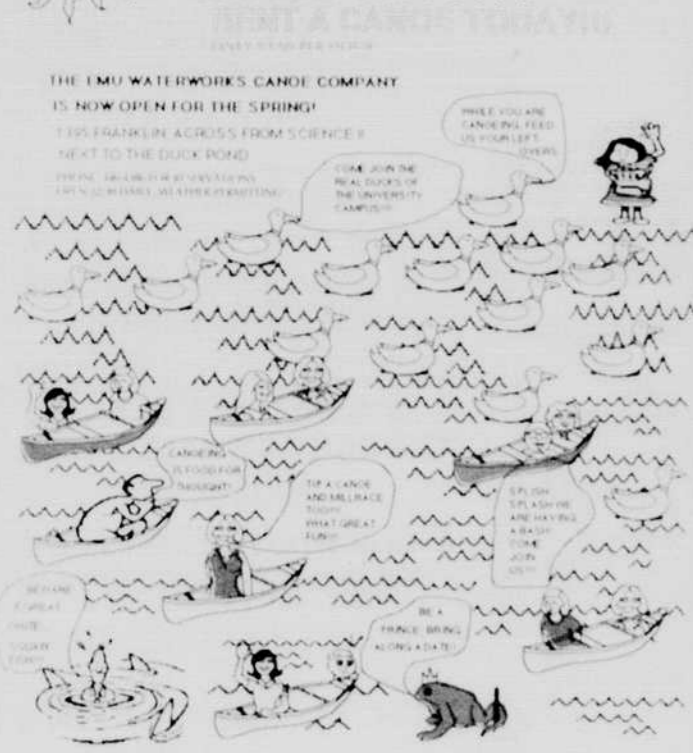
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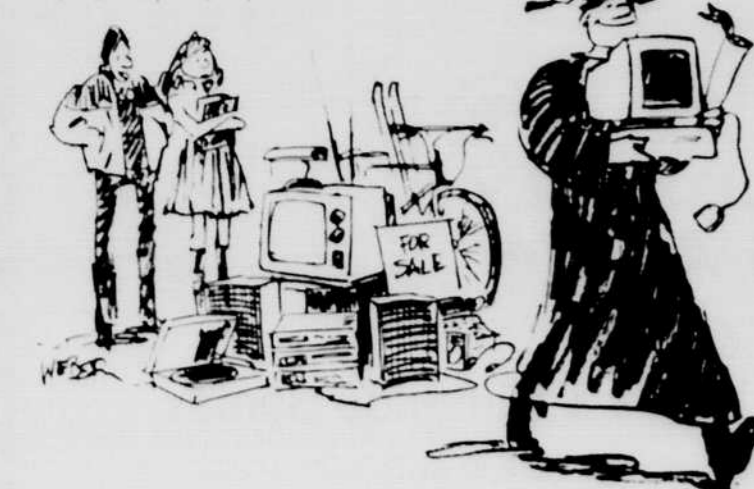
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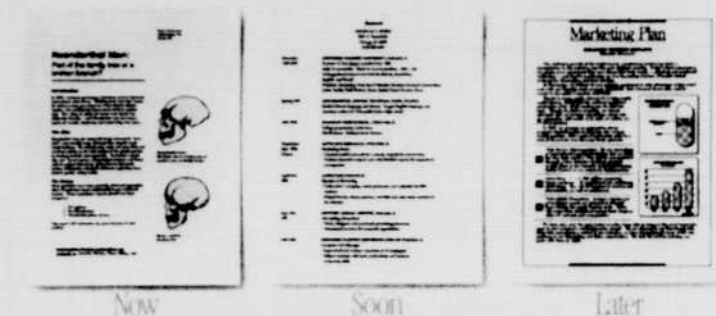
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