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HUE	ELS	MAGMAS
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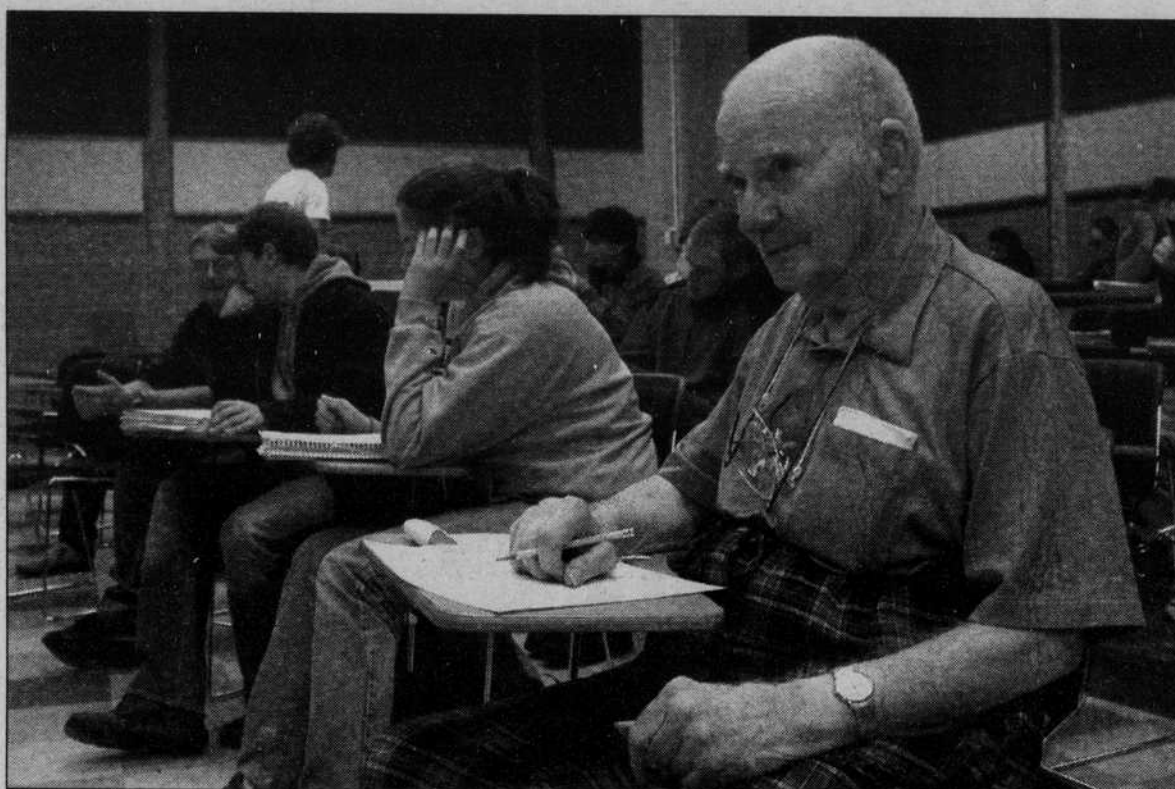
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Adam Amato Emerald

J.J. Albi, a 75-year-old University student, audits classes regularly to keep learning and to improve his writing skills.

From glamour to grammar

Formerly a publicist for movie stars, 75-year-old J.J. Albi now furthers his passion for writing by taking University classes

Roman Gokhman
Freelance Reporter

J.J. Albi loves to write. So much so that although he has a bachelor of arts, master of arts and a doctorate equivalency, he continues to attend the University — at age 75.

Albi, who will turn 76 later this month, has been auditing classes at the University since 1988. He earned all his degrees at the University of Washington but has attended five other schools as well. He says he has been learning for 70 years, although it has not always been easy.

"It's still a lot of work — maybe now more than when I started," he said.

Because he audits classes, Albi does not have to pay tuition. University Registrar Herb Chereck said students older than 65 who are not seeking a degree are exempt from paying tuition.

"He is still counted (as a student), though," Chereck said.

The average age of students this semester, including undergraduates, graduates and others, is 24. The oldest student is 92 years old, according to Assistant Registrar Jim Blick.

While he usually takes a few classes each term, Albi is only enrolled in a political film class this term.

Political science graduate teaching fellow Kevin Pirch said he is pleased to have Albi in the class.

"It's kind of inspiring that some people are still interested in pursuing their education further," he said. "It is a little intimidating."

Albi said he doesn't mind taking classes with younger people. "I get along with everybody," he said. "I'm used to it by now."

Albi spent much of his life in his birthplace of Spokane, Wa., until he moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington.

"Life is so short. I want to keep going for another 75."

J.J. Albi
student

In 1960, Albi began his writing career as a public information practitioner for the Port of Seattle and the Seattle-Tacoma Airport. In 1965, he decided to continue in public relations on his own.

Over the years, he worked with more than 200 agencies and corporations including ABC, NBC and CBS, as well as movie studios Warner Bros. and Paramount Pictures. He also was a publicist for celebrities such as Lucille Ball and Bing

Crosby, another native of Spokane.

He has outlasted many of the stars he worked with.

"Everybody but me is dead," Albi said.

Albi and his wife, Gordie, moved to Eugene in 1988 to be near their two sons and four grandchildren. But he was not about to slow down.

"(I want) to impress the public with my writing ability," he said.

He might be done working with big stars, but not learning and writing. This is why he enrolled at the University, and he says he only takes classes that involve writing.

"I have nothing against arithmetic, but writing is better," he said.

Albi said if he could change one thing about the University, he would have the school hire more professors.

"I want more individual attention in classes to get better teaching," he said.

Albi also said University students' attitudes have changed since he first started college in 1944. He was astounded by the riot in the West University neighborhood in September.

"I didn't do that when I was young," he said. "It's no good. There are not enough (police officers) to supervise riots here."

He said he has seen many things in his lifetime, but he is not done living. He still serves as a public relations practitioner for several local restaurants. He wants to continue working, writing, and if he has the money, do some traveling.

"Life is so short," he said. "I want to keep going for another 75."

Roman Gokhman is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

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