

# Alumni Spotlight: Andrew Schwartz (A&S '90)

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Mary-Elizabeth Lough [mlough@tulane.edu](mailto:mlough@tulane.edu)

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Andrew Schwartz (A&S '90) is writing a book about the Grateful Dead. It's something he works on when he's not prepping Kristen Welker to moderate one of the most high-stakes presidential debates of our time, when he isn't busy leading a team of 45 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies as chief communications officer, when he's not doing a bit of outside media consulting work or bringing all of this wide-ranging knowledge to bear as a member of the Dean's Advisory Council at the School of Liberal Arts.

His book is meant to explore how the music of the Grateful Dead has extended into its third generation of fans. As for the band itself, Schwartz says, "It's uniquely American, and there is a spirit of adventure in it and a spirit of community in it that

doesn't exist really anywhere else."

Those traits are very similar to what first brought Schwartz to Tulane — where, incidentally, he first discovered the band. "I'll never forget it. The first time I visited there was a hurricane coming, the French Quarter scared the heck out of me, and it was oppressively hot." He continued, "Everything was foreign and yet it really called to me and my sense of adventure. There is nothing like Tulane and New Orleans. It really spoke to me even as an 18-year-old...It made me nervous, but it also made me really excited."

Schwartz embraced life at Tulane, where he pursued the political science major he'd intended since boyhood. Increasingly, however, he found himself drawn to the communications field. "My academic life at Tulane was amazing. At Tulane I learned how to learn. I was able to do these interdisciplinary things between communications and political science and have great relationships with professors."

As it turned out, Schwartz was able to forge a very successful career at the intersection of the two fields. One presaged by a telling moment during his undergraduate years. After his first year, Schwartz moved off campus with friends to a place in the 13th Ward just off Camp Street. It wasn't long before he discovered that the realtor's maxim that "location is everything" was more than true. He lived two blocks down from some of his heroes, the Neville Brothers.

"My junior year, I became affiliated with Tulane Students Against Apartheid. I knew that to get students on campus to be as passionate about it or have even a measure of that passion the best way to do it was to get people they looked up to to advocate for it. I figured Cyril Neville was somebody who believed in this kind of cause, so [I should] go to him and ask him. So that's what I did," Schwartz recalls. "For every show he played for the rest of my time at Tulane and even after he'd mention the Tulane Students Against Apartheid."

Schwartz's passion for music and commitment to academics helped inform his character in another way too. "One thing you learn at Tulane is how to multitask. You can't go see music every night if you can't get your work done. You can't achieve good grades at Tulane without putting in the effort. Learning how to manage my personal finances, my academics and my social life at Tulane set me up for being a pretty organized professional."

In addition to music, Schwartz's longstanding passion for political science continued to burn bright. During his time at Tulane, Schwartz interned for U.S. Representatives Lindy Boggs of Louisiana and Mickey Leland of Texas.

After graduation, Schwartz continued to work on Capitol Hill and expected to continue on to law school. But his experience at Tulane had changed him. "I started getting really into communications at Tulane. Then I started thinking maybe it's not law, maybe it's communications in some way. That broadened my thought about what I'd do with my life, and I started thinking about political communications. That's what led directly to what I'm doing now."

He went on to receive his Master of Arts in Journalism from American University in DC. Not long after graduation he began work at Fox News channel. Schwartz says, "When I joined it was a start-up. It was not a political channel like it is today. It was supposed to be a cool alternative to CNN, and for a while it kind of was. The experience I had for the seven years I was there was hard news — really just straight up 'this is the news.'" After Fox, Schwartz began work at the bipartisan think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

At CSIS, Schwartz didn't just rise through the ranks, he changed the culture around him, pivoting to reflect the accelerating news culture and evolving the think tank's reach to embrace websites, video, podcasts and social media, among other fields. Today, an internship at CSIS is among the most sought-after positions in the country, with more than 10,000 applicants vying for around 200 positions a year.

Schwartz routinely offers internship spots in his office to Tulane students. "I always thought that one of the most important things I could do as a Tulane alum was open up this kind of world for Tulane students. I know there are students who go to Tulane who are more than capable of doing this work, and who would do it with a spirit you might not see with students of any other school."

From the Grateful Dead to the Neville Brothers, from fighting against apartheid and working on Capitol Hill to building a think tank from obscurity to ubiquity, Tulane might just be the melody that runs through all of Schwartz's many successful endeavors. "Tulane meant a lot to me and I want to give back. I think it's really important that alumni are engaged with the school that they came from because it is only going to help bolster the school and the university in the end."