

# A&W THE PERFECT TEAM

## Amanda Scurry '99, '01 and Wendy Opsahl's '00, '02

paths crossed several times while earning degrees from the UND School of Communication, yet they never really knew each other. After graduating, they both moved out to the East Coast, within three hours of each other. They both returned to Grand Forks a few years later and began working at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Only then, years later, they officially met.

Scurry is a public information specialist at the medical school and the Center for Rural Health. She promotes medical school and the Center for Rural Health activities through media relations and special events planning.

Opsahl became the marketing and alumni relations coordinator for the medical school in May 2005. She plans special events, assists with alumni development and creates marketing materials and promotional strategies.

They're known around the school as "A&W." They collaborate on a variety of projects, from

planning and promoting events, to branding, to tradeshow exhibit coordination. Last fall they launched a community open house at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences to kick off the school's centennial week.

The open house, a first for the medical school, included a celebration with hundreds of visitors, and a chance for the school's more than 600 employees to meet and learn more about what's happening where they work. The project went on to win state and national honors from the National Association of Press Women.

Both are members of the editorial committee for the school's publication *North Dakota Medicine*. They were integral in the magazine's recent redesign and also launched an online version. That's all in a day's work for this duo.

The pair have joined forces again for their biggest adventure yet. They both sit on the marketing and public relations sub-committee for UND's 125th Anniversary, 2007-2008.

"I love public relations," said Opsahl.

"Nothing fuels me like creating a promotional strategy and getting

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great results.

I'm always reading, writing and learning in this fast-paced industry. If you're not engaged and moving forward, you're not going to be successful."

"It is so exciting to connect all the dots and get really great coverage for a project or an event you really believe in," agrees Scurry. "I love being able to give credit to these projects that are really making a difference."

While living in the Washington, D.C. area, Scurry worked as a contracted editorial assistant and public affairs analyst at the Missile Defense Agency, U.S. Department of Defense. She coordinated daily news briefs, the employee newsletter and agency biographies. She assisted with Web site content, media research and activities, and special events such as the Missile Defense Conference and Public Service Recognition Week.

Opsahl worked as a senior publicist for Busch Gardens and Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, VA. She was responsible for promotions, media relations and special events.

"I'm so thankful for the network of SCOMM colleagues that I have across the country," said Opsahl. "It's nice to know that I can call Jenny in Minneapolis with agency questions, or Brian in Fargo with broadcasting questions, or John in St. Louis with newspaper questions."

"It is so great being back at UND so I can give back," said Scurry. "What I loved most about SCOMM was learning from the people who are actually out there doing what I wanted to do some day. Now, I am working with those people everyday and have become one of the professionals who gets to share her passion for the profession with students." ❀



Article submitted by Amanda Scurry (left) & Wendy Opsahl  
Photo by Megan Anderson