

# ALLEGHENY

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## OPENING MINDS THROUGH CREATIVITY AND RIGOR

*Faculty members personify academic excellence*

DON'T TELL LLOYD SEGAN '80 THERE'S  
NO TIME TO PAY IT FORWARD

FORMER TEAMMATES BAND TOGETHER  
IN A LIFE-SAVING GESTURE

# A CAREER CONNECTION MADE FOR



★ SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION ★  
WITH LLOYD SEGAN '80

by  
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campus photos  
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Lloyd Segan '80 gives a talk to students during Reunion Weekend.

If there were a living, breathing advertisement for why alumni engagement is so impactful, it would come in the form of **Lloyd Segan '80**. Bursting with infectious enthusiasm for the College and a conviction that alumni simply *must* give back, Segan is as part of the fabric of Allegheny now as when he was a student. He is the algorithm for liberal arts education leading to profound career success. Full stop.

Segan is a prominent creative talent and producer whose television series and films have engaged a billion people across the globe. Through his company, Piller/Segan, he works with A-list writers, actors, directors, producers, and others across Hollywood and the media landscape. His connections are the stuff of dreams. And even dreamier, he shares those connections with Allegheny students, understanding that who you know is important. “We have alumni who are titans in their industries, whether it’s education, law, medicine, politics, STEM fields, Wall Street — and every one of them would take a call from a student. We have to take advantage of who we know, who we are, and our collective accomplishments,” he says.

He’s been doing his part to share those connections with students through his teaching with Professor of Communication, Media, and



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*Allegheny College President  
Ron Cole '87, Ph.D.*

Performance Ishita Sinha Roy, Ph.D., in her Media and Cultural Studies class since 2006. In addition to embodying the excellence an Allegheny education delivers, he is an inspiration for where a liberal arts degree can take you. He has a knack for breaking down the complexities of news, entertainment, and popular culture, relating it to just about every major there is, making Dr. Sinha Roy’s classes a hot ticket.

His reverence for truth and understanding of the media landscape

is reflected in the guest speaker roster he’s lined up for Dr. Sinha Roy’s class. They are from the highest echelons of his world, most recently including Phil Griffin, the former president and founder of MSNBC who delivered a timely and critical message about the state of journalism; Allison Lee, PEN America’s Los Angeles director and former chief development officer for TIME’S UP; and screenwriter Billy Ray (“Captain Phillips,” “The Hunger Games,” and many more), who talked about getting the facts right in one of his movies, “Richard Jewel,” about a real-life person wrongly accused of a major crime.

And because Segan is desirous to emphasize the accomplishments and connections that our alumni can bring to students, he recruited the help of alumni from many different classes, representing their expertise. For example, when he wanted to include a more local perspective on the profound changes happening in professional sports, Segan reached out to **John Meyer '04**, a former reporter and weekend sports anchor. Meyer introduced Segan to **Ted Black '87**, former president of Buffalo Sabres, who joined the class as a guest speaker.

When Segan wanted to recruit expertise about domestic and global cyber security threats, he sought the help of retired general **Jon Davis '80**, who made the



Segan signs an autograph for a student during Reunion Weekend.

introduction to former NSA officers Tim Kosiba and Luca Taylor, who became guest speakers.

All imparted their wisdom and real insight to their experiences.

“This is not something all students at liberal arts colleges get exposed to,” says Allegheny College President Ron Cole ’87, Ph.D. “The idea that an alumnus operating in his field at the highest level is making time to teach a class, to give back to our campus community, and to bring in peers with significant global achievements is a remarkable reflection of the lifelong impact of an Allegheny education.”

### CRITICAL THINKING

There is a common throughline among Segan and the guests he brought in to speak this past semester: They all talk about the balance between story dynamics and authenticity. “The perception of truth and the reality of truth are two different things, but they also can be conflated. Because perception is reality in our world, we need to understand and be able to discern the difference. All of the people

that we’re bringing in are speaking to that,” says Segan.

Because of Dr. Sinha Roy’s emphasis on global perspectives, media and cultural literacy, hands-on projects, and community-engaged learning, she and Segan were a match made for students to flourish. The two met when Segan was visiting Allegheny College during the “Celebration of the Liberal Arts” weekend in fall 2002. Dr. Sinha Roy says, “I had the pleasure of talking to him about what it had been like when he was an undergraduate at Allegheny, and how the idea of media studies has shifted since then, and continues to evolve.

“We marveled, for example, at how videoconferencing (the brand-new technology back in 2002) could help folks connect time zones and transform the entire classroom experience by incorporating professional insights. This conversation led to a discussion about the videoconferencing seminar room we had just launched in Murray Hall, and all of a sudden the two of us were shaking hands over the exciting prospect of co-teaching a class on television studies, even thousands of miles apart.”

This has led to a series of virtual co-teaching adventures, and on-site workshops, which are now the norm.

Dr. Sinha Roy says of Segan’s contributions, “I have always been inspired by the words of Martin Luther King Jr. who said, ‘The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character — that is the goal of true education.’ In every course I have co-taught with Lloyd, he has modeled this to students. Whether we were discussing media ownership, debating how the First Amendment applies across various contexts, deliberating about how AI will shape creativity and affect human labor and artistic rights, or examining the future of media technologies and new worlds, Lloyd always brought discussions back to ethical considerations and the human impact in each session.”

Segan consistently stresses the importance of citizenship above the sole pursuit of financial success. Dr. Sinha Roy says, “I think the ultimate compliment came from a student who said to me, ‘I hope that one day I’ll be good enough like him, so you’ll invite me to teach a class



Segan and actor James Cromwell on the set of "The Bachelor" in 1998.



Segan posing by a promotional poster for season 2 of "Private Eyes" in downtown Toronto, 2017.



Segan posing with Snoop Dogg for their supernatural horror film "Bones" in 2000.

with you. I want to, some day, inspire students too.”

The connections Segan has so generously made for students and alumni reads as a who’s who of American life. Among those connections that turned into career opportunities are **Jackie Strahota ’10**, who received an internship with Marc Advertising in Pittsburgh; **Jackie Spirer ’08**, who worked as a production assistant with the Sesame Street Workshop; **John Meyer ’04**, mentioned earlier; and **Matthew Dickey ’04**, who landed the role of social media manager for Piller/Segan. In recognition and appreciation of Segan’s outstanding service to the College, he received Allegheny’s Blue Citation alumni award in 2010.

### COMING HOME

At the end of the spring 2024 semester, Segan flew in from Los Angeles to celebrate with Dr. Sinha Roy and the students in the COMM 125: Media & Culture course. When he bounded into Vukovich 111, he exuded energy and goodwill. He noted the robust Phi Delt representation in the audience with infectious *joie de vivre*. Segan’s investment in the students is so authentic that one can’t help but wonder: If he could, would he hire every single person in the room?

He confers an amiable confidence to the students, making them feel comfortable asking him questions like if he’s ever read a certain book or seen a certain movie. Because he still recalls the influence of great teachers throughout his own life, he takes his role as an educator seriously. “My mates and I were together for seder this year talking about our fourth grade

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*Ishita Sinha Roy, Ph.D.*

teacher. I’m in my sixties and it’s still important how much she meant to us. And with Allegheny, I regularly recall several professors who had a lasting impact on me. It matters!” he says.

He remembers his own freshman year as rocky and cites the various professors who helped him through his entire academic career. Reflects Segan: “Paul Zolbrod (English) taught me to look beneath the texts of the writing. ‘Skipper’ Knights (History) was very paternalistic and caring. Nels Juleus (Speech and Communications) gave me confidence to eventually become a good public speaker. Professor Michael J. Stevens (Political Science) exemplified the meaning of public service, as he eventually became Meadville’s mayor. Professor ‘Brownie’ Ketcham (Philosophy) encouraged my critical-thinking skills and served as the commencement speaker at my

graduation. And finally, Dr. Richard Chafey (Academic Advisor) became my greatest advocate for all the things I wanted to explore during my tenure at Allegheny College.”

### A CLASS ACT

During Segan’s visit, the students wanted to know how one could make the near-impossible leap from Meadville to Hollywood, back in the eighties, when you seemingly had to be in L.A. to be in the entertainment business. “My experience at Allegheny helped prepare me for being a producer. Critical thinking is essential. Living in a fraternity house caused me to learn how to navigate a range of personalities. Learning how to communicate, thinking creatively, being expansive in your approach, understanding your community, and having grit to tough it out — these are all components of being a producer,” he says.

He also emphasizes that the friendships and experiences he had at Allegheny instilled the lifelong notion of the importance of being part of something greater than yourself. The formative years of college are utterly critical, believes Segan. He is a tireless champion of the critical thinking the liberal arts provides. He talks about the influences that started him on his pathway to a creative career, primarily, being engaged in the campus community. It’s engagement with others and the world around him that he says propelled him forward to carve out his role as a producer.

Segan is evangelical about the idea that anything that is creatively worth pursuing has to be in your heart and to



Segan and partner Shawn Piller (far right) posing with the leads of "Wild Cards" (L to R: Giacomo Gianniotti, Vanessa Morgan, Jason Priestley) at the 2024 Cannes Festival in France.



Segan and Piller with the cast of "Greek" during the pilot shoot in 2006.



Segan on the set of "Blown Away" with Jeff Bridges in 1993.

have the courage of your convictions. He points out that some of the most innovative things in our lives are not at all what people were thinking about. "Think of the iPhone; no one thought we needed that. Think of Hamilton. Who thought we needed a musical about the first Secretary of the Treasury? That's what liberal arts thinking is all about. Having the liberty and opportunity to do whatever you want. Exploring all the other avenues that are available to you. It will make you much better as a human being and on your career path," he says.

As is his way, Segan shared practical advice, too. "I've hired thousands of people over my career. I want people to come in with different points of view and ideas that may not mesh with mine," he says. Segan wants people he hires to be community builders who have the courage to express themselves. He strives to find people who are open and expansive, things he feels people learn at Allegheny.

Segan is emphatic that the liberal arts prepare you for anything. "The reality of life is you are not, and should not, be one thing. Einstein was not just a physicist — he was also a philosopher, a writer, and incredibly creative. Be engaged. Get involved in the world around you. Be inspired by yourself." And again, he told the students, "Take full advantage of alumni. We have an extraordinary cadre of people who graduated from Allegheny. Reach out to them. They are productive, successful people who are more than happy to hear from you. They want to know how they can help you — offering an internship, externship, advice, or even a job."

In addition to his pragmatic advice, he also shared where he's coming from creatively. When asked what kinds of stories he likes to tell, he says he prefers to "live in joy." As such, the shows he produces always have a happy ending, which sounds about right when you meet him. Part of this relates to an important theme in his teaching: Don't ever start an argument or get ugly to make a point. Make sure you can *make* your argument. But also, explore and embrace different points of view.

He thinks this has always been important, but even more so in a presidential election year. "You cannot exist in a world where you only hear your own point of view," he says. He encouraged people to consume multiple media sources, noting, "Once you've educated yourself in a rounded way, your perspective is all the more salient and credible."

It's as if Segan has a visceral distaste for incuriosity. He says, "Failure is not a mistake — it's an opportunity to learn. We don't know what we don't know. Give yourself the strength to step out of your comfort zone."

His work with Dr. Sinha Roy has a media literacy focus, particularly with our current world of streaming and online information sharing and entertainment. A deep believer in free speech, he is very concerned about our addiction to the internet. "While it's important to have, we need to encourage personal responsibility for the content that is put out," he says. His own creations, of course, are part of this universe now, which he ensures are responsible and positive.

## THE ALLEGHENY AMALGAM

Segan could have attended college just about anywhere. He was smart and grew up in a well-to-do family who valued education. The foundational aspects of his life had been culturally indoctrinated through a childhood filled with music, theater arts, film, and television. He says, "When I got to Allegheny I had rooted interests, but I had to navigate a totally new environment."

To be sure, he made a conscious choice to put himself in a foreign environment. And Segan's journey from privileged Jewish suburbs to being a minority in the middle of northwestern Pennsylvania informs much of who he is today. "When I got here, I was one of 60 Jewish students. There were an equal number of Black students. It was so far out of my comfort zone, but that is what I wanted," he says. No big surprise that he trusted his instincts. Calling on his intellectual and social curiosity was crucial to his success and to his ability to challenge students now.

Segan also champions the idea that no college student in the world should have to know what they want to major in from the beginning or what they want to "be." Heck, he doesn't think a senior needs to know. His point is that studying a certain thing does not prepare you to do that thing for a living. Rather, it educates you in a track, but it's everything else you study in a liberal arts college that prepares you for the future. "Taking a bunch of courses in something doesn't make you an expert. It's exploring and learning a variety of subjects, exploring in real life, and getting into different social settings that make you grow."



Segan takes a selfie with President Ron Cole '87 and others in the Vukovich Center for Communication Arts.

## GIVING BACK

Enlightenment is part of a liberal arts education. Part of that is to share what you know, and who you know, with students. Segan is emphatic about this point. “We have to inculcate citizenry to all students, so they know to reach out and then later, that they must be responsive to those reaching out to them,” he says. He wants every student to have an advisor and a person to curate their skills and mentor them and let them know that there is an ecosystem out there for them to join.

Segan challenges fellow alumni to give back as he does. “Imagine the connections that our alumni can provide to graduating students. There are so many incredibly successful alumni who would be willing to connect,” says Segan. That pipeline and access is something that can make a life-altering difference in a person’s career path. Because, as he understands first-hand, career paths are not necessarily straight. The more alumni engage with students to help them in their career choices, the more valuable the investment they and their families make in a liberal arts education. And, let’s face it, the cost of education imbues parents with the expectation of their child landing a good job.



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*Lloyd Segan '80*

The list of alumni that Segan rolls off the top of his head is a who’s who of an incredible diversity of fields. For example, he cites members of his graduating class alone who have careers as the current chief of orthopedic surgery at a world-renowned Los Angeles-based hospital, a senior manager in hospital administration, a CEO of a high-profile east coast ski resort, an owner of an insurance brokerage firm, a leading endocrinologist who has been at the forefront of counseling transgender youth, a real estate developer, a psychiatric social worker, a geologist, a former chair of the urology department at a leading clinic in the Pacific Northwest, a partner in a global accounting firm, the head of a trading floor of a major Wall Street firm, a president of a large regional

bank, a former three-star general who is now a technology entrepreneur. “Any of these people would take a call from an Allegheny student any day of the week,” says Segan.

Segan is determined to recruit other alumni to sell the value proposition of an Allegheny education via their personal influence and connections in the world of work. He says, “Look, kids today are thinking, ‘How will I get a gig when this is over?’ And that’s a fair question. I am saying our alumni exist to ensure these students come out with a job.”

And just when you think Segan could not brim with more excitement about the connection between alumni and students, he offers this: “These young people can also pay it forward, once they get out into the real world. Imagine? It’s a tradition that never stops.”

