



# ON THE RECORD

## RECORDING ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY PROFESSOR **BRIAN BOYD** BRINGS REAL-WORLD STUDIO EXPERIENCE TO THE CLASSROOM

“Liberty’s in Solon ... Maple Heights ... Brunswick ... Parma Heights ... Vermilion ... ah-ooooom!”

If you’ve heard the ubiquitous radio commercial for Cleveland-based auto dealer Liberty Ford, you’ve heard the work of Tri-C Recording Arts and Technology professor Brian Boyd.

It’s been a long road for Boyd, with plenty of twists and turns. But he’s managed to do what many can only dream of – he’s made a living doing what he loves.

Growing up in Deerfield, Ohio, Boyd played drums, guitar, bass and keyboards, creating his own primitive audio mixes using multiple cassette recorders. He enrolled at Kent State University with the goal of becoming a stockbroker, but ultimately pursued a bachelor’s degree in secondary education.

He worked as a substitute teacher before taking a position at Portage County Opportunity School, a high school for kids expelled from regular schools. Before long, it became clear that the environment just wasn’t for him.

Boyd took a job at a medical supply company while contemplating his next move. His wife, Cristine, urged him to consider turning his old hobby into a career.

“She said, ‘You’re really into this music thing – why don’t you pursue that?’” said Boyd. “It hadn’t occurred to me that I could make a living at it.”

The couple soon packed up and hit the road to find the best audio engineering program. They settled on Full Sail University in Winter Park, Florida, where Boyd earned



STORY BY **Beth Cieslik**  
PHOTOS BY **Tamara London**

TRI-C FACULTY PROFILE

Boyd, who received tenure in fall 2017, sets the bar high for his students and exemplifies the work ethic needed to make it in the competitive audio recording industry.

**“I’M NOT INTERESTED IN MEDIOCRITY. I PUSH MY STUDENTS TO BE THE BEST. A LOT OF THEM PROBABLY FIND ME TOUGH AS AN INSTRUCTOR, BUT THEY APPRECIATE IT LATER ON.”**



One example is RAT-2300, the last course students take before the program’s internship component. Class is run just like a professional studio, with students responsible for booking talent, “renting” gear, meeting strict deadlines and attending regular production meetings.

“At the end of each module, students invoice me as if I were the executive producer at this imaginary record label,” Boyd said. “Their grade is then based on what they can afford to buy with the ‘money’ they’ve earned.”

Boyd also helps organize a recording workshop for RAT students each fall, where a local band comes into the studio for a recording project that starts on Friday and ends with a final mix on Sunday.

Though music is still his first love, Boyd sees himself now more as a teacher than an audio engineer. He earned a master’s in education from Lake Erie College in 2013 and seizes every opportunity to learn new techniques from adjuncts and other industry professionals.

“Records don’t sound the same in 2018 as they did in 1970,” he said. “As engineers, our job is constantly changing.”

Boyd lives in Edinburg Township with his wife and their two kids, Daniel, 16, and Lauren, 11. He is currently building a home recording studio, which he will mainly use as an office.

As an audio engineer, Boyd has done it all. But these days, his purpose is to support others in their pursuit of a career in this fierce, yet fascinating, industry.

“I would probably never tell a student to do what I did, even though that’s kind of what you’ve got to do. You can’t just expect a job to fall into your lap.

“The technical aspect will develop as you go, but the bottom line is, you’ve got to be someone your client can trust. You need to help them achieve what it is they’re hearing in their mind.

# GIVING BACK

## TRI-C STUDENT TRACY BELLUM HONORED FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON CLEVELAND’S EAST SIDE

STORY BY **Erik Cassano**  
PHOTOS BY **Tamara London**



For more than a decade, Tracy Bellum has been organizing projects that allow her students at Andrew J. Rickoff Elementary to help elderly, disabled and underprivileged residents in Cleveland’s Mount Pleasant neighborhood.

The mission changed many lives — including that of Bellum, now a standout student at Cuyahoga Community College.

She was honored earlier this year with a Newman Fellowship, given to high-achieving college students who are active in their communities. She joined an exclusive group of 268 students nationwide in earning the fellowship.

The community work that led to the award reflects Bellum’s upbringing.

**“MY MOTHER AND MY GRANDPARENTS TAUGHT ME FROM AN EARLY AGE: IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP SOMEONE, DO IT. YOU MIGHT TURN THEIR DAY AROUND THROUGH EVEN A SIMPLE ACT OF KINDNESS.”**

Bellum, a special education teacher’s assistant at Rickoff, said she found fulfillment in taking students out of the classroom to serve others and make a difference.

She arranged for the students to partner with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, where they learn how to fix porches, mend fences and do other tasks.

Bellum also organized spring and fall cleanup days at the homes of elderly and disabled residents.

“It’s funny, some of the students hear that they’re going to be doing yardwork, and they kind of grumble,” Bellum said. “But then they get to know the seniors they’re helping, and by the end of the day they’ve made new friends. It starts out as work, but it doesn’t feel that way when the day ends.”

The work ethic and resourcefulness that served Bellum well in organizing community projects positioned her to become a successful student. She enrolled at Tri-C in 2016 to earn an associate degree and advance her career. The Mandel Scholar is on track to graduate in 2019.

As a Newman Fellow, Bellum will have the opportunity to attend a variety of learning and networking events with other community-minded college students during the coming academic year — including the Newman Civic Fellows National Conference.

Bellum credited her professors at the College for putting her in a position to earn the opportunity. Tri-C President Alex Johnson nominated Bellum for the fellowship.

“If it hadn’t been for the support of the people at Tri-C, I don’t know if I’d be sitting here as a Newman Fellow right now,” she said. “I’ve felt genuine support here.”