

In Loving Memory of Casey Feldman

April 6, 1988 - July 17, 2009

Casey Feldman, 21, of Springfield, Pa., a senior at Fordham College at Lincoln Center and news editor of The Observer, died July 17 at the Atlantic City Memorial Hospital from injuries sustained when she was struck by a van in Ocean City, N.J.

Soon after arriving at Fordham, where Casey majored in communication and media studies, she joined The Observer, getting her first news bylines as a freshman, becoming an assistant news editor as a sophomore and news editor as a junior. In June, she was named a finalist for the 2009 Chandler Award for Student Writer of the Year in Religion, sponsored by the Religion Newswriters Association. During her time at Fordham, Casey secured internships at am New York, The News of Delaware County and Philadelphia Style. She was to begin an internship at New York 1 television station this fall semester.

As a student at Fordham, Casey made time to volunteer at the West End homeless shelter, Momentum Soup Kitchen and Animal Haven Shelter in Soho.

These pages are dedicated to Casey's memory and are a reflection of the enormous impact her life had on The Observer staff and Fordham College at Lincoln Center as a whole.



“As fellow journalism majors, editors on The Observer and roommates, Casey and I spent a ridiculous amount of time together. Our times together were always fun, never predictable. In the three years that I knew Casey, I never ceased to be endlessly entertained by her.

Though Casey and I shared many things, there was one thing in particular that we shared that was a nuisance to us both: our inability to read lips. This made it especially difficult to communicate during Observer Editorial Board meetings when we wanted to let the other know something from across the room. Fortunately, we turned to Blackberry Messenger to fix our problem.

The last weekend that I saw Casey, we spent a greater part of the Observer retreat BBM'ing each other back and forth, commenting on the ridiculous things people had to say, expressing our disappointment in not meeting Dr. Stone's boyfriend, and planning our journey from Dr. Stone's house in Montclair, NJ, to Rosa Mexicano for dinner. The second the meeting was closed, we said goodbye and ran out the door into the rain, arms linked, feeling on top of the world and headed for the place that had been our playground for the past three years, the place that both of us felt at home: New York City.

— Kelsey Butler, layout editor



“It is impossible to choose just one Casey story to remember her by. That girl was a character, and she never failed to crack me up. Always up for a good time, Casey and I did our bonding during The Observer trip to San Francisco for a college newspaper conference. When we arrived at the hotel, the first thing we Googled was places to visit in the city. We were the self-proclaimed social coordinators for the group. We did our job, and we did it well!

When she wasn't calling me sketchy, a cow and/or chold, she was playing along with my sarcasm, and we were being as politically incorrect as possible. I really miss her. One thing that I'm glad about is that I know she constantly found a way to be happy and have fun. It's comforting in some way. Casey, I'm gonna miss you, boo!

— Craig Calefate, former photo editor



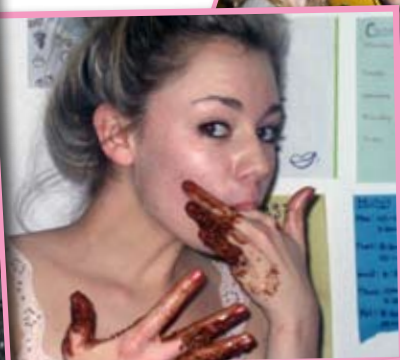
“From the moment I met her during summer orientation before our freshmen year, Casey was always wondering. As we walked past Lincoln Center that hot August day, she was wondering what the other incoming freshmen would think of her Facebook profile picture—her in a sombrero. I vividly remember her asking me if we could bring toasters, actually. She was always thinking—constantly curious about the world around her and the people in her life.

As our relationship grew over our three years together at Fordham, Casey continued questioning: Can you go out with us tonight? Do you have any pencil skirts I could borrow for my interview? Do you want to go to Animal Haven this week? Why weren't you at The Observer meeting? She was always asking me questions, and now I can see more clearly that it was because of her naturally inquisitive mind and her genuine love for the friendship we shared.

Despite her internships, classes, and editorial board role at The Observer, Casey always kept her friends as her top priority. She would send me BlackBerry “PING” messages, whenever she randomly thought of me. She would “tag” me in pictures of things that reminded her of me, like a penguin she saw at the zoo or a drawing of Cinderella in a coloring book. She would always ask me, “How's your life, boo?”—wanting to know every detail of any story.

Casey lived beautifully and effortlessly with love every day, and we can all learn a great deal from her values and her life. She was always a great friend to me, but now she's an even better angel.

— Brooke Burdge, former layout editor



“What's exhilarating about being faculty advisor to The Observer is I actually get to see the grass growing, as people slowly evolve over the two or three years they spend at the paper. Casey would have been starting her fourth year on staff, and I have many memories of her sitting in class or in my office, twirling her hair, propping up her chin with her knee, or texting me at any hour of the day or night, always with a perfectly appropriate journalistic question. Once she even texted me during my class. She happened to be in that class, sitting barely 10 feet away, but she she had some information to convey and didn't want to say it out loud.

But primarily it's the arc of my memories of Casey, rather than any single memory, that stays with me most strongly. When I met Casey her freshman year in my Introduction to Journalism class, I thought of her as a strobe light. Really high wattage when she was “on” but that could readily be eclipsed by a moment of distraction. She was elsewhere. Who knew where? And then, seconds later or a minute later, or the next day, she was again back “on.” During the ensuing three years, Casey seemed to consider how her light was spent. By the middle of last semester, Casey had come into her own: her strobe had become a warm and steady beam, and Casey had become a trusted and exceptional editor and reporter, fully in charge of her talent.

— Dr. Elizabeth Stone, advisor to The Observer

“Getting ready for the new semester, I just stumbled on the original, hand-written sign-in sheet from my Writing TV and Radio News class last semester. At the top of the list, in bold letters, taking up two lines: Casey Feldman. That was Casey: bold, determined, enthusiastic. I remember a news development breaking during one of our classes and Casey volunteering she'd have to write something about it right away. I questioned when her deadline for The Observer was. She responded “Not for a while,” but she'd write the story for The Observer's Web site because it was important to get the news out quickly. That was a real reporter exhibiting the highest form of journalistic responsibility, if not compulsion. The people's right to know and the reporter's need to tell them.

— Professor Fran Stern



“Casey had been my assistant news editor my senior year when I was co-news editor, and she was a sophomore. We had a great working relationship. She was extremely driven, and never complained about any last minute work. It wasn't until after I graduated that I got to know her better outside of The Observer.

One night this past winter, we met up for dinner to catch up on each other's lives. She told me about her internship at amNew York where she had just interviewed some girls from a reality show. She told me to pick up the paper on Mondays and Fridays to see her articles—which I always made sure to do on my way out of Penn Station in the mornings. I always made Casey fill me in on the latest Observer gossip. We joked that since Fordham isn't your typical college (or “real college” as she called it), The Observer was kind of our sorority experience that we could compare to our friends. We decided that if The Observer were our sorority, then Casey is my “little sister” and I was her “big sister.” Although she was a couple years younger and a couple inches shorter, I learned a lot from Casey, and I looked up to my “little.”

— Meaghan Dillon, former news editor



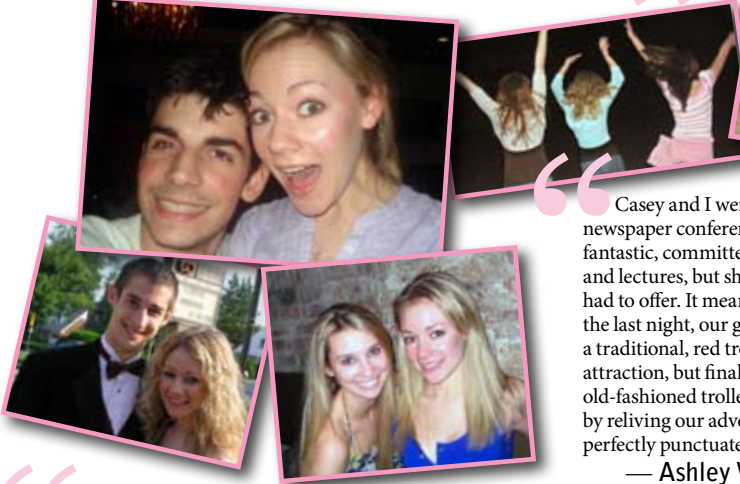
“Casey, you are a gift. It was MY HONOR to be Casey's professor. I first encountered Casey in my Spring 2007 Introduction to Communication and Media Studies course. Casey's giftedness as a writer, editor and class leader was clear from our first conversations. She never, never let life pass her by— she was an ACTIVE PARTICIPANT.

Friends, take a page from Casey's book, DON'T LET LIFE PASS YOU BY! LIVE, LIVE, LIVE every moment to the FULLEST. Thank you, Casey for being such an inspiration for us all.

— Professor Monique Fortuné

Casey was such a smart and talented girl, so I was a little intimidated when I became one of her assistant news editors. When I did my first edits and sent them to her, I was so nervous about what she would think of my work. A few hours later, I got a text from her that said, "Wow! I'm so impressed that you weren't afraid to be mean to people in your edits! You're a champ, thanks boo." Coming from Casey, that was such a compliment. I was thrilled, and kept the text for the rest of the year. I never told her, but I would read it every once in a while when I was feeling unsure of myself. Casey had that kind of effect on people, she could make you feel better even when she wasn't there. Her positive energy is still with me now.

— Kathryn Feeney, managing editor



Casey and I were two of the editors selected to attend a college newspaper conference in San Francisco in spring of 2008. Casey was a fantastic, committed reporter. We had three days packed with seminars and lectures, but she was determined to experience everything the city had to offer. It meant very little sleep, but we managed to do just that. On the last night, our group had one more item to check off of our list—ride a traditional, red trolley. We got lost on our way to the popular tourist attraction, but finally arrived to find a line of people waiting to ride the old-fashioned trolley winding through a park. We enjoyed the hour wait by reliving our adventures of the past three days. The trip was a whirlwind, perfectly punctuated by a lot of laughter and a fun red trolley.

— Ashley WennersHerron, editor-in-chief

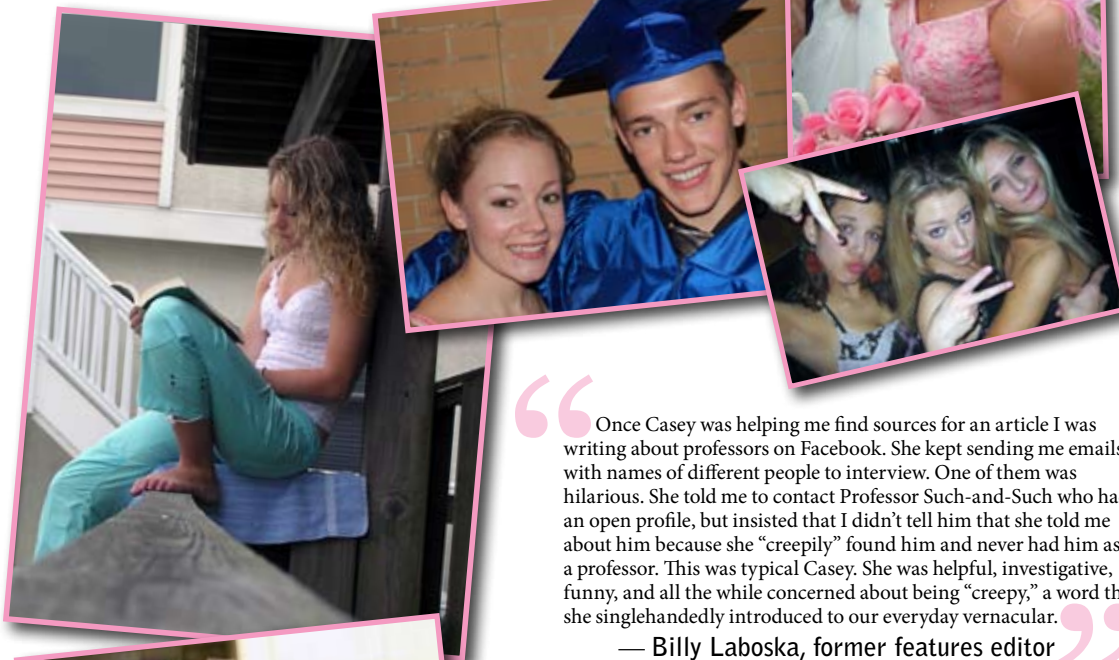
Without a doubt, Casey was The Observer's rockstar. I'm not going to lie—Casey definitely intimidated me the first time I met her because of how professional and fastidious she was with her stories, but I quickly learned that she was always approachable. There were a number of times during workshop when she'd ask our sports editors questions about certain technical references made in their stories. Undoubtedly, some of the writers in the room would chuckle at her "simple" questions, but I was always secretly grateful and relieved because I, too, had no idea what those terms meant.

One thing that I regret is not having told Casey how much she had an effect on me. If there was one person's work ethic I wanted to adopt, it was Casey's. Whenever I'd start to get complacent about my work, I'd think of her and try to become the journalist that she inherently was. The influence she left on all of us will make us strive to keep turning out a newspaper that she would approve of.

— Rachel Weinick, arts editor

Casey was an exceptional reporter and editor. She possessed both the sharp instincts and respectful manner that are so highly valued within the profession. She was brilliant—you could always see the wheels turning behind her eyes. Casey's wit made everyone laugh, even during serious meetings, and visitors to The Observer office were likely to find her hovering over galleys while singing along to late-nineties pop and hip-hop. She was wonderfully curious and endlessly surprising—who would have thought such journalistic voracity could come from such a small, sweet, funny person? She was, is and always will be an inspiration and sorely missed.

— Kathryn Cusimano, former editor-in-chief



Once Casey was helping me find sources for an article I was writing about professors on Facebook. She kept sending me emails with names of different people to interview. One of them was hilarious. She told me to contact Professor Such-and-Such who had an open profile, but insisted that I didn't tell him that she told me about him because she "creepily" found him and never had him as a professor. This was typical Casey. She was helpful, investigative, funny, and all the while concerned about being "creepy," a word that she singlehandedly introduced to our everyday vernacular.

— Billy Laboska, former features editor

Casey, in my mind, will forever be perched atop an awkward space that probably was never meant to be sat upon. She made Gumby-style seating look easy and she always paired such positions with the eager smile she wore everywhere—the one that proved that she wasn't just a girl who wrote: she was a reporter through and through. Everything that seemed simple to the rest of us was another opportunity for her to widen her eyes and start asking questions, as any good reporter might, because it was just who she was.

For whatever reason, the memory that always comes first to my mind is one of her visiting my room early last fall. She came to have a discussion with me about the goals for the News section for the year, and she perched herself atop my heater and looked around, eyes wide and grinning that familiar grin. When her scanning eyes ran past a small syringe, she picked it up and said, "Ooh, what's this?" with the look in her eyes that said, "I hope this is a story!" The look of breaking a big investigative story had settled on her face. It was the kind of moment when I really hated to disappoint her by telling her it was only teeth-whitening gel. But it was moments like those that conditioned me to never just take things at face value—to a reporter, everything is worth at least one question. Keep asking those questions, Casey. We're all waiting for the answers.

— Ashley Tedesco, opinions editor



Even before I met Casey, she had left a lasting impression on me. Her work for The Observer displayed an endless determination to get to the bottom of a story. Her pieces were so well-written and so detailed that I always found myself drawn in, whether I had interest in the subject matter or not. When I met her during The Observer meetings, I saw that she not only sought to achieve the best in her own stories but the best in everyone else's as well. Her helpful advice, incredible focus, and drive to get to the truth will be missed by all.

— Joe Marvilli, asst. online editor



Casey was one of my favorite students, not only because of her wonderful personality and incredible energy, but also because of her deep passion for journalism and media ethics. These concerns really mattered to her—and she expressed them in her writing for class and in the Observer.

Her internship last spring at amNew York presented a real challenge for her because at last she was working in daily journalism in the media capital of the world, but in a position that was not exactly what she had in mind when she thought of serious reporting. Her beat was the NY bar scene, which interested her editor far more than it did her. Nevertheless, she did her best to try to make her stories lively. Through her typical combination of hard work, diligence, and persistence, she was at last able to convince her editors that she was ready for more. And during her last weeks of the internship, she produced several articles that showed she had all the makings of a serious general assignment reporter—which was one of her chief goals.

Casey achieved so much at Fordham, and yet had so much more left to do. I'm glad we were all able to share her spirit while she was here.

— Professor Brian Rose

My first interaction with Casey was a professional one; I had timidly volunteered to take a stab at writing a news piece and I was terrified to get her edits back. After all, I was brand new to The Observer and she was, well, Casey—powerful, brilliant and definitely on top of her stuff. When I mustered up the courage to look over the reconstructive surgery she had done on my piece, I was surprised at how painless it was. For almost every criticism she made, she ended it with a smiley face or a silly little condolence like, "Don't worry, it doesn't mean you suck or anything." That was Casey. As an editor, she was talented, to-the-point and critical, but she never lost sight of the human being behind the words she was ripping apart. I saw that she always operated like she edited—with that edgy kind of empathy that only she could pull off—and everyone loved her for it. I think that's something that everyone who knew her will always strive to achieve; at least, I know I will.

— Liz Bowen, opinions editor

"Because of Casey, I will..."

What you can do to honor Casey's memory

Casey served as an inspiration to so many of us at Fordham, and to countless others whose lives she touched in a range of ways. The following are thoughts from some of the many who have been inspired by Casey's life:

"It struck me, as I listened to the incredibly full list of her volunteering activities and her amazing accomplishments that she packed more into 21 years of life than most of the people in that room collectively have. Her death is a loss for us all and after hearing in such beautiful detail how she conducted her life one cannot help but try to pass on her loving example."

"While I did not know Casey, after I left the service, I knew I would be changed forever by the example of this incredible young woman who touched the lives of so many... I can and will do better. I will not forget how she lived."

Because of Casey, we will change the way we live our lives. Through preserving Casey's memory, we can continue to be actively inspired by her life, and in turn, act as inspiration to others, as well.

A Web site is being created which will allow us to share how Casey touched our lives and what we will do to make this world a better place because of the example Casey has set. The Web site will be interactive, allowing all to share their acts of kindness, seek assistance to become further involved in volunteer activities and to monitor how these efforts proceed. The Casey Feldman Memorial Foundation will be established to provide support for these positive acts through scholarships, educational programs and grants. Additionally, Casey's family and friends will work with New Jersey officials to promote pedestrian safety through legislative changes.

To receive announcements regarding these activities, please e-mail BecauseOfCasey@CaseyFeldmanNetwork.org to be added to our contact list.

A memorial for Casey Feldman will be held at Fordham College at Lincoln Center on October 8th at 6 p.m. More details will be posted on fordhamobserver.com when they become available.

To see more photos of Casey and to contribute your own memory, visit fordhamobserver.com or caseyfeldman.com.

I remember when Casey came in as a staff writer during her freshman year. It doesn't take long to realize when a writer has it, and it became clear very quickly that Casey had an innate talent that would allow her to tackle stories that would have normally been taken on by senior staff members. She was confident, competent and willing to ask tough questions. I'm pretty sure the news editors at the time thought they had been given a wonderful gift from the gods of journalism—and I can't say they were wrong.

— Adam Kaufman, former managing editor

