

WHAT'S A F F F ENING!

By Matthew Caruso

"KEAN ENABLED ME TO MEET PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, AND THAT EXPERIENCE PREPARED ME TO WORK WITH MANY CULTURES - WHICH IS THE WAY OF THE BUSINESS WORLD TODAY."

KEREL COOPER '98

If you happen to be friends with Kerel Cooper '98, chances are that you know precisely what he is doing at this very moment. A regular user of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and FourSquare, Cooper maintains a constant online presence, allowing the outside world to take a glimpse into his daily life. Whereas most of us utilize social media to stay in touch with family or friends, Cooper recognizes the importance of these technologies as critical to his career - he is constantly experimenting with them to better serve his clientele.

As director of advertising operations for Advance Internet, Cooper is deeply involved in a multitude of projects, new product launches and advertising campaign management. His work extends to popular websites like www.nj.com. With new technologies emerging all the time that represent the future of advertising, Cooper works diligently to ensure that he can help others take advantage of every opportunity available.

"Social media is the best way to keep your ear to the street and know what people are talking about," said Cooper. "It is critical to be on the cutting edge, especially as companies try to figure out the best use of their advertising budgets and resources."

Cooper always sought to take advantage of every opportunity, a trait that served him well as a college student. While at Kean, he was involved in all aspects of university life as a student leader. He served as the assistant treasurer of the Student Organization and as a resident assistant with the Office of Residence Life. He credits his *alma mater* with preparing him to excel in today's diverse economy. "Kean enabled me to meet people from all walks of life, and that experience prepared me to work with many cultures - which is the way of the business world today."

Cooper's face lights up when he talks about Kean memories. "I met my future wife (Marisa Goolsarran '97) and best friends at Kean University. Many of my in-laws are Kean graduates. Everywhere I turn, I am reminded of Kean University, and every reminder is a positive one."

A few years ago, Cooper fused two passions - social media and baseball - and created www.ontheblack.com, a video blog that covers his beloved New York Mets. After the team suffered two heartbreaking collapses in 2007 and 2008, Cooper realized he "had a lot to say and needed a vehicle in which to express it." Recognizing that there weren't any Mets video bloggers, he suddenly realized his niche.

Through persistence and dedication, www.ontheblack.com has become a popular destination for thousands of Mets fans nationwide. It has even caught the eye of the New York Mets organization, who invited Cooper to attend games, interview players and participate in press events.

Cooper explained the appeal of working on his blog: "Everyone needs a way to unwind after work. It just so happens that I like talking about the Mets. Marisa has a culinary degree and loves to cook and I talk about baseball." Cooper reflects on that for a moment, lets out a big smile and admitted, "I guess that's a win-win situation for me, isn't it?"

WE LOVE YA KID CARTER

When former Met and Hall of Famer Gary Carter recently announced that he was diagnosed with brain cancer, the news hit close to home for Kerel Cooper. Just a few years ago, Cooper's sister in law, Ramona Goolsarran ('93, '99) lost her own battle with glioblastoma, the same cancer that afflicts Carter.

Cooper wanted to do something and contacted fellow Mets blogger Darren Meenan, who runs www.the7line.com. Meenan designs and sells Mets paraphernalia on the site, and Cooper thought the two should create a shirt to support Carter.

The shirt they created plays off of Gary Carter's nickname "The Kid" and has been warmly received by fans of the Mets and Carter. To date they have raised several thousand dollars, with all of the proceeds going to the Gary Carter Foundation, an organization that supports charitable causes that focus on the well-being of children.

For more information or to purchase a shirt, please visit www.the7line.com.