

The Magazine of the Mizzou Alumni Association

# MIZZOU

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## First-class Publication

**A J-School alumnus pilots the American Airlines in-flight magazine.**

*Story by Marcus Wilkins*

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**A**s the wheels go up and the iPads power down, 3.5 million American Airlines passengers every month grab *American Way* from the seatback. During that technology-free period of ascent, the magazine's readers might be the most captive audience in the media industry.

For editor Adam Pitluk, BJ '99, it's his opportunity to entertain and inform travelers — be it with stories about medical breakthroughs, international business or the best beach cocktails.

“I have been laughed at before for saying this, but I think this is the best job in journalism,” says Pitluk, a Dallas resident who acknowledges in-flight magazines



Adam Pitluk, BJ '99, is the editor of *American Way*, the in-flight magazine of American Airlines. He met his wife, Kimberly Ferrante-Pitluk, BS HES '99, at Mizzou. Photo courtesy of Adam Pitluk.

are sometimes dismissed as fluff. “We are in a unique position because, whether you want to look at a map of O’Hare [International Airport] or if you want to read about Medal of Honor recipients [the current cover story], we’re going to get you.”

Count Montel Williams among the “gotten.” It was an *American Way* story about a battery-powered tongue stimulator used to treat multiple sclerosis that motivated the TV talk show host to seek the prototype’s inventors by contacting

the publication. Now Williams, who has multiple sclerosis, credits the device for enabling him to exercise again. He even pitched the product to the brass at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where the Army now uses it to treat veterans.

“You can’t do that unless you have a fixed audience,” Pitluk adds. “We take this very seriously.”

Pitluk’s playful side occasionally uses space in his Editor’s Note column to recount collegiate escapades, including adventures at Columbia’s Black and Gold Tavern. A former *Missourian* reporter, Pitluk enjoyed

ultimate Frisbee on the Quad, manned the door at Harpo's and went on to earn a master's degree in journalism at Columbia University in New York.

Now, as a married father of two and a part-time instructor at the University of North Texas, he tries to see the global picture from 30,000 feet.

“A lot of our readers are business travelers, and they might be on their way to a board meeting in Omaha, [Neb.],” Pitluk says. “People look to these magazines as an escape.”

And if they don't find the magazine cover intriguing? There's always the safety card or the airsickness bag.

**Topics:** Alumni, Journalism and Communication, Web Exclusives



This year, *American Way* won Best Travel and In-transit Publication honors from the Western Publishing Association. Cover image courtesy of Adam Pitluk.

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