

Emerging Media Studies Comes to COM

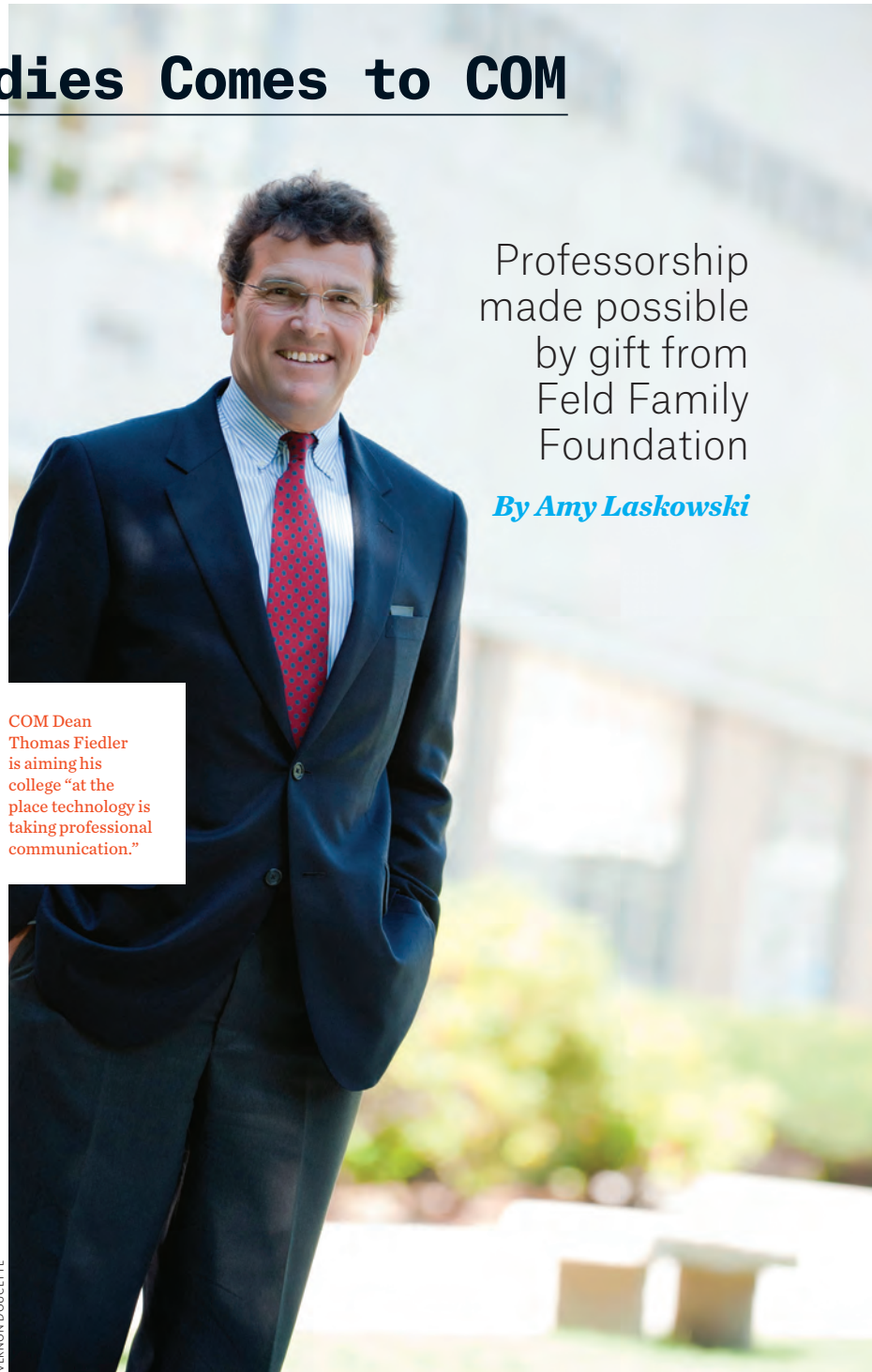
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IS NOT DONE CHANGING everything. Journalists, who once produced words that appeared only in newspapers, now produce audio and video bits that accompany their words online. Copywriters still create ads that appear in magazines, but now they consider how those ads will work in a viral campaign on Facebook and Twitter. The former stand-alone worlds of film, television, print journalism, advertising, and public relations are fast becoming one big blended digital family. To prepare the next generation of media professionals for life in that family, the College of Communication will launch a division of emerging media studies in January, funded in part by a \$10 million gift from the Feld Family Foundation.

“As a college, we must orient ourselves, our curriculum, and our direction towards the place where we believe that technology is going to be taking professional communication,” says Thomas Fiedler (COM’71), dean of COM. “The importance that we’re placing on the new division of emerging media studies comes directly from the hope that it will be a perpetual motion machine, constantly pulling the college forward and bringing ideas back to the professions that we serve.”

He says the division will initially include only students in a newly formed PhD program, and will welcome other graduate and undergraduate students within two years.

The Feld Family Foundation is a private philanthropic organization administered by the Feld family: Kenneth Feld (SMG’70) and Bonnie Feld (CAS’73), and their daughters, Alana Feld Hackel (COM’02), Nicole Feld, and Juliette Feld. The gift to BU, made in August 2009, will endow three professorships, one in each of the schools attended by a member of the family: at COM, the Feld Family Professorship in Emerging Media, at the School of Management, the Feld Family Professorship of Marketing, and at the College of Arts & Sciences, the Feld Family Professorship of Teaching Excellence. Each of the professorships is funded with \$2.5 million, and the remaining \$2.5 million will be allocated by mutual agreement between the Felds and the University.

“My parents went to BU, I went to BU, and I met my husband at BU, so the University holds a very special place in my family,” says Hackel, executive vice president of Feld Entertainment, the parent company of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, Feld Motor Sports, Disney on Ice, and Disney Live! “The way we communicate today is so different from just a few years ago and is constantly changing, so we felt that there was a need for a new media pro-



COM Dean Thomas Fiedler is aiming his college “at the place technology is taking professional communication.”

VERNON DOUCETTE

Professorship made possible by gift from Feld Family Foundation

By Amy Laskowski

gram at COM. This program will set COM apart by giving students the resources to be ahead of the curve in modern communication.”

Eventually, says Fiedler, all of the college’s courses related to new media will be integrated into the division, so that, for example, the advertising department’s search engine optimization class would be available to students from journalism, film and television, and mass communication. The program will also develop new classes, and the Feld Professor will oversee the development of that curriculum.