



## **Z88: The Soul of Akron**

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The struggle was real as a college student. I had no idea what I wanted to study, was commuting from my parents' house, and felt totally lost going into that new world after high school. High school was easy. I had my friends, sports, activities, and was still technically a kid. Suddenly, I was dealing with student loans, pressure to declare a major, and feeling lonely. Depression settled in. I enrolled in a variety of classes, participated in career testing, and sought career counseling to no avail. By junior year, I settled on a major and decided to push through in order to get that degree that would at least get me in the door somewhere and out of my dependent status. In those

communication classes, I met my friend, David.

David produced the news at the campus radio station and suggested I visit the studio. I had no idea the University had a radio station, but having an all-access press pass sounded super fun! I immediately joined the station, began delivering the news, and finally found my tribe of people.

I loved being at the station. Even in the summer when it was very quiet, I would still go in and record a newscast for the DJ to broadcast. It was one of those days when the manager asked me to go live on-air as “talent” because no one else was around to do it. I refused, thinking I’d lose all credibility. He basically said, “Well, you're the only one here so, you'll go on the air.” This was back in the mid-1990s, and the station was not quite set up as digital. We had just received a computer to “run the board” overnight so there was no longer dead air between the hours of midnight and six a.m. I took a few shifts over the summer, and, by the fall semester, I had the morning drive shift. To this day it was the most fun job I've ever had, even though it was without pay. At the annual banquet, my peers voted me as one of the best on-air personalities. I honestly don't know how I would have completed my degree without my WZIP family. Those friends and that experience helped me out of a very dark time in my life, and I'm so grateful to my friend David for introducing me to Akron's Urban Network!