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## Alumni Profile

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*Linfield College*

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# Balancing an artistic and analytic life

If you watched TV in the 90s, odds are Cindy (Macho) Johnson '81 was in your living room.

You may have seen her surfing an ironing board in a York Peppermint Patty commercial. Or fencing in a Nike spot. Or in one of a hundred other TV commercials. But these days, Johnson's role with the entertainment industry is from her Los Angeles law firm.

The former actress turned (entertainment) attorney and publisher has blended her artistic and analytic passions into a thriving career over the past three decades. Her diverse mindset started at Linfield, where Johnson was encouraged to explore multiple interests.

"The great thing about Linfield and the liberal arts education is that you get a taste of everything," said Johnson, who majored in communication, but also studied French, philosophy, religion and theatre, and played softball. "In my case, Linfield produced a graduate who fully embraced the Renaissance perspective. It was okay to pursue what I was passionate about."

After graduation, Johnson found the "perfect storm of right brain activity" working at a talent agency in Portland. The experience connected her with opportunities in TV, radio, photography and dance – including as the on-air fashion expert and personality for Portland's AM Northwest and as a professional dancer for the Portland Trailblazers NBA team.

Eventually, she followed creative pursuits to Los Angeles, where she studied for two years with renowned acting coach Sanford Meisner, teacher for the likes of Gregory Peck and Grace Kelly. She starred in hundreds of national radio and television commercials and worked behind the camera as a producer for a live talk show, "The Carol Lawrence Show," where part of her responsibility included working with lawyers.

"I could do that," she remembers thinking of a law career. She took classes at night and continued acting during the day to offset the expense of law school, and the royalties from the York Peppermint Patty commercial paid for two years' tuition. She earned a juris doctor degree from Southwestern University School of Law and a master's in entertainment law from the Don Biederman Entertainment & Media Law Institute.

"I have a passion for protecting people," said Johnson, who specializes in entertainment and music contract negotiations, as well as estate planning and probate. "What's made me a good actress and lawyer has been the ability to learn a lot about people. That comes directly from my Linfield education."



*Cindy (Macho) Johnson '81 has pursued both her artistic and analytic passions in the entertainment industry. A former actress, she is now an attorney specializing in entertainment and music contract negotiations.*

In addition to her law career, Johnson, along with husband Neville, own and run Cool Titles, a publishing house. They publish two to three books per year, many of which are award-winning titles including *Life Outside The Oval Office* by Olympic athlete Nick Symmonds, *Gender Results* by Justice Eileen C. Moore and *The John Wooden Pyramid of Success* by Neville L. Johnson, to name a few. Johnson handles all business affairs, submissions, acquisitions and vendor relations, and has become involved in producing book trailer videos.

Volunteer work is equally important to Johnson. She's involved with the Los Angeles Bar Association Armed Forces Committee where she recently coordinated a military ball to raise funds for veterans and subsequently produced a video. An upcoming project may involve her hosting a TV show on a legal network.

"I'm amazed at how life can come full circle," she said. "This merges two of my passions – love of the law and performing. The liberal arts degree all starts to make sense later in life."

With so many meaningful projects, no day is typical for Johnson, which is just the way she likes it. Whether she is writing contracts or speaking at an event, doing a final book edit or storyboarding a video, her secret to a balanced life is straightforward.

"I have a great staff and I know when to say no," she said. "My husband and family are first and all the rest of it falls into place."

– Laura Davis