

# Weaving a tapestry of travel, leaving a legacy



## Heart of the 'Hood

By Felicia Dechter

When Streeterville resident Gemma Allen lost the husband she adored to a heart attack last December, she discovered that one way to begin the healing process when you lose someone you love is to focus on what they loved.

Since then, Allen has spent many months working on ways to honor the memory of her late husband, Albert Nader. Throughout the years, Albert's company, Questar Entertainment, had accumulated a vast collection of more than 5,000 professionally-produced travel videos. One of Albert's dreams was to have all the beautiful, timeless videos posted on a website as streaming video and available at a very reasonable price to both travelers and "armchair travelers."

Allen worked with the Questar team to create GoTraveler.com, which launched in October. Initially, the site features nearly 700 titles of travel videos from diverse destinations such as America's national parks and the capital cities of Europe to exotic locales in Asia and Africa. Subscribers can select videos based on both geographic region and type of travel (adventure travel, cruises, historic sites, etc.). All visitors to the site can access free travel articles and tips.

The site has brought Allen a sense of peace, and she hopes it will bring the many travelers out there enjoyment. She and Albert traveled the world to many far-away lands, and through her website, you can too.

"We want everything to be up to Albert's famously high standards of quality and accessibility as we move forward," said Allen, a founder and Principal Partner in the Chicago family law firm of Ladden & Allen, Chartered, 150 N. Michigan Ave.

"I used to tease him about being part Good Shepherd and part German Shepherd in his drive for all of us to be and to do our best and in that spirit, we are continuing to strive for perfection."

Allen chatted with us a bit about the website, and Albert. We wish her the best of luck in her endeavor!

*Q. Tell me about your life with Albert?*

A. My life was a love story. His favorite line about us was that we were "attached at the soul," which coincidentally was the name of a short film in which one of his/our beloved grandchildren starred. That does not mean that we never disagreed and we did because we were both two strong personalities. He was older, creative in his work, conservative in his politics and his deeply felt religion, and also in some of his expectations about women. I was younger, a lawyer, liberal in my politics, a Roman Catholic, and a feminist. Nevertheless, the love and connection between us overcame the differences and the differences came to enrich and expand us both. We

met through his daughter who gave my phone number to her widowed father 22 years ago and the rest was history.

*Q. What can you tell me about Questar Entertainment?*

A. Questar is a production and distribution company of mainly non-theatrical product ranging from travel to inspirational to special interest, nature, wildlife, and history. Albert's career had begun in marketing with Rand McNally which fed his passion for history and education. He then founded and for years owned a successful boutique advertising firm with clients like the RTA, Mama Celeste, real estate development firms, and the like. From the work I have seen from those earlier years, he was always passionate and wonderfully creative.

He told me that in the 1980s he began to see two patterns emerging that informed his entrepreneurial choices; a noticeable pull away from Chicago agencies for some of the major advertising clients and a push among consumers toward video content and at home entertainment. He decided to focus on producing and marketing a video entertainment product himself and his first love was travel. From the very beginning he loved to work with film makers on the National Parks and on compelling sights throughout the world. His original vision was a travel channel and he began producing and acquiring product with that in mind, but then realized he could instead use his marketing skills to sell a variety of video products to distributors and catalogues as well as to consumers. His product base continued to expand and the methods of delivery evolved from VHS to cassettes to BluRay to streaming, but his insistence on quality was constant and legendary. His tagline was, "Everything in the world worth watching," and he never ran out of ideas.

*Q. What made you decide to honor Albert's dream and what can people find on the site?*



Gemma Allen and her husband, the late Albert Nader.

A. In the last couple of years he realized that he had produced or acquired a breathtaking collection of over 5,000 travel video products often filmed and/or narrated by the best known experts, which were uniquely focused on history and culture and thus were truly timeless. Simultaneously, the idea of/need for an online travel magazine website featuring professionally-produced travel programs organized by both geographic regions and travel preferences began to again capture his imagination. He had outlined a business plan the year before he died, began identifying a strategic marketing partner with whom Questar is now working, and was interviewing travel bloggers and writers for the website and newsletter, which writing would keep the site interactive and fresh. Over the last holiday before he died, we were reflecting on the fact that he was weaving together his entire career history, including the early Rand McNally educational/historical focus, his marketing and writing skills honed in his advertising days, and his film making and production experience at Questar, all to create this wonderful travel tapestry of GoTraveler.com.

The idea was a dream I shared daily with Albert and working on it with his President and Board and staff has been my privilege and part of my magical thinking that in some sense he is still here. I have to remind myself that I will not see him coming around a corner when I am at the Questar offices

and that he is not physically in the room when we screen the travel product and work on the design of the website.

*Q. How does it feel to memorialize your husband in a way that it sounds like he would have loved?*

Albert was an entrepreneur who was highly ethical and loved God and his faith dearly and was endlessly interested in miracles and in eternal life. In my occasional lighter moments, I picture him now rounding up a film crew and some star narrators as only Albert could do, and producing a series on "Touring Heaven" and finding a way to deliver it to the GoTraveler.com website. He is with us in this legacy and we are with him. Carrying out and completing a project he so loved felt like an inevitable and meaningful continuation of his story and ours.

**Giving it all away...** is playwright/producer Amy Crider, whose play, "Leda," runs through Saturday at the Conservatory, 4210 N. Lincoln Ave. Crider is generously donating all ticket

sales money to Mercy Corps' Disaster Relief.

Crider is a graduate of the Second City writing program, and has been a semifinalist for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference and the Princess Grace Award. Her plays have been performed in New York and around the Midwest. She describes "Leda," as a comedy set in ancient Greece during the war between Athens and Sparta. Blending mythology and politics for humor and wisdom, it delivers a strong message about resisting one's Fate -- whether it's dictated by an Oracle or powerful men.

So far, "Leda," has raised more than \$700 for Mercy Corps.

"I decided on Mercy Corps be-



A scene from "Leda," whose ticket sales are being donated to Mercy Corps.

cause they help people where the need is direst," said Crider. "I was searching a few months ago when Syria was in the news more, and they're in Syria and other places

**LEGACY** see p. 15

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Thursday, November 30, 2017  
DePaul Student Center  
Room 120  
2250 N. Sheffield Ave.

**6:30 p.m. Reception**

**7:00 p.m. Program**

Admission is free

**RSVP** to Fran Casey

DePaul University

Community & Government Relations

Phone: (312) 362-8100

E-mail: cgr@depaul.edu

Online Registration:

<http://bit.ly/FallLPCRI>

## AMERICA'S GANGSTER

Presented by John Russick  
Vice President for Interpretation and Education  
Chicago History Museum

Chicago's legendary association with organized crime is mostly due to the meteoric rise, violent reign, and humiliating fall of Al Capone, America's most famous gangster.

John Russick will contextualize the Prohibition Era in Chicago and Lincoln Park and explain Capone's impact on the city's identity. Russick will use—and share with the audience—a new virtual reality app that explores the city's and Lincoln Park's most notorious unsolved crime.

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