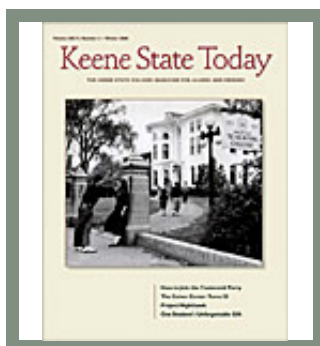




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## Adam Wade's Success Story

*He came to KSC to become a teacher, and left four years later, famous on campus for original songs like "Winnebago," headed for New York City and the world of entertainment.*

by Mike Ward

College is a funny thing. You enter with one goal in mind and can leave four years later completely reoriented. Such was the fate of Adam Wade, class of 1998.

Son of Ed Wade (KSC M.Ed. '69), a lifetime teacher and school administrator, Adam came to KSC to major in education with the goal of being an elementary school teacher. Fast-forward four years and he exited as an aspiring movie maker/ singer/ songwriter/ comedian. What brought about such a change? Adam cites a number of influences – supportive friends, encouraging professors, and exposure to a multitude of stimulating courses and experiences while at KSC.

" My parents encouraged me to work hard and explore many interests. Education always came first. I had a 'Challenge Scholarship' so to keep my GPA above 3.5 I spent a lot of time in the quiet rooms at the library." But he dreamed of goals beyond academics and was entranced by the lure of having a program on WKNH, the College radio station. He joined the



Adam Wade: from the Night Owl Café to NYC.

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station as a DJ in his first semester and learned the ropes under the tutelage of Mitchell Mendys, who now works at Disability Services on campus and still DJs on WKNH. " I was an outright terrible DJ, but everyone at the station was helpful and gave me a sense that I was part of the College community as well as the town. My show got better and better and came into its own – it was my place to be creative." On " The Man They Call Elvis Novelty Show," Adam played songs, interviewed people, and even got Gino Vallante '97 (now the manager of the Night Owl Café) to sing Neil Diamond songs live on the air.

In his sophomore year, Adam teamed up with his roommate Eric Flanders '96. Adam read his poetry and stories aloud, and Eric played guitar in the background in the cozy confines of their Holloway dorm room. " Most songs were about romance – and my lack of it. I started playing the recordings on my show and people liked them. This surprised me. I guess there was a universal quality, a sense that most students were going through the same kind of stuff."

His junior year, Adam bought his own guitar and took lessons from Ted Mann. He started writing songs, playing two or three chords, and performing them live on his radio show, at open mike nights at the Night Owl Café, and at Brewbakers on Main Street. " I'd set up each song with the 'real life' situation and why I was moved to sing this song. Then I'd hammer it out on the guitar as I sang. The open mike shows were always packed, and I was extremely shy, but the crowds were great. It was a cathartic experience for me always, letting out the songs. The radio station started letting me emcee some of their concerts with local bands around Keene and asked me to open and play in between bands.

" By my senior year, I had a loyal group of people would come to see me perform. I remember my last show – May 1998. I opened for a couple of bands in a large basement on Roxbury Street. The place was packed for



my set, and when I was done more than half the crowd emptied. Those people were there just to see me! It was weird because when I had started as the opening act for those shows a year and a half earlier, I performed for maybe 10 people who came early to get a seat to watch the other bands. Everything had come full circle."

During his stay at KSC, Adam was a favorite at the annual Saturday Night Jive talent show, coming in second place in his junior year and winning top billing as a senior. His performance the year he won featured ear-splitting chants of "WADE! WADE! WADE!" as he strolled to the microphone. During his song, he leaped from the stage onto the judges' tables to finish his rendition of "Winnebago." The crowd went wild. "I felt like a rock star," he recalled.

Reflecting on the popularity of his songs, Adam says they were mainly autobiographical and were sometimes "mini-epic" combinations of a number of adventures rolled into one story line. They usually focused on vulnerable topics such as "unattainable girls, being in love, going to parties, dreaming of the future and past." One of his favorite KSC-era songs is "Computer Lab Girl" – "... a song that I wrote about a girl I had the hugest crush on. She worked at the computer lab and was just the coolest girl ever. My other favorite was 'Winnebago' because it was about traveling around, seeing new things, and being free."

Adam now lives in Hoboken, New Jersey, where he is working with the executive producers of ESPN's *Cheap Seats* on a sitcom pilot based on his high school years. He no longer writes and sings his own songs but rather writes short stories that he narrates on stage at local comedy venues. He has worked on the production crews of *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and Comedy Central's *Tough Crowd with Colin Quinn*. He's also done a series of reports for ESPN. This past month he performed at a tenth-anniversary show for The Moth, the renowned storytelling group in Manhattan. "There were about 700 people there. I got to share the stage with the great Garrison Keillor, actor Gabriel Byrne, and author Malcolm Gladwell. I told a



story about coming to NYC from New Hampshire, and it went over really well."

When asked to sum up his proudest accomplishments to date, Adam cited all of these: " Moving to NYC, going after my dreams, struggling, working hard, meeting some great people along the way, staying with it, believing in myself, and not compromising the values that my parents taught me."

**Adam Wade online**

