

RECENT BELMONT GRAD WRITES BEST-SELLER

By **LAURA FAGAN**, senior public relations major

As the jeans get skinnier and the skirts get shorter, many young women are left wondering whether modesty and class are things of the past.

Jordan Christy says otherwise.

Christy, a recent Belmont graduate, has taken a stand in her book, “How to be a Hepburn in a Hilton World.”

Lighthearted and peppered with pop-culture references, the book teaches young women how to be stylish yet modest, respect themselves, and maintain a strong work ethic.

“Even in middle school, I was always baffled by the fact that the girls that had the shortest skirts and were letting everything hang out were the popular ones,” said Christy in an interview. “It just seemed to me, even at that age, something was wrong with that.”

More than a decade later, a suggestion from her husband led her to pursue the idea of writing a book. What began as a fun side project has become a published best seller.

“I literally thought my family will buy four copies, and that’ll be it. So I’m very shocked,” said Christy.

From the publisher’s initial interest to the release of the finished product, nothing was ordinary.

“That instant success is extremely unusual,” said Dr. Sandra Hutchins, Christy’s English professor. “She just touched something that they were ready to do. Everything just happened very serendipitously.”

Contrary to the typical publishing process, revisions were not made until the final product was turned in to the editor, and even then, they were minimal.

“They literally said, go write the book. We’ll see you in six months,” said Christy. “By the end, I had the book I’d wanted to write.”

And it’s a book readers want to read. Rated four out of five stars, Christy’s book has many positive reviews on Amazon.com.

“Young women are struggling with mixed messages and signals from the media and society,” one reader wrote. “This book is timely and oh, so needed right now.”

The book debuted on Aug. 13, 2009, and the following day, Christy made an appearance on “The Today Show” with hosts Kathy Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb as part of her book tour in New York.

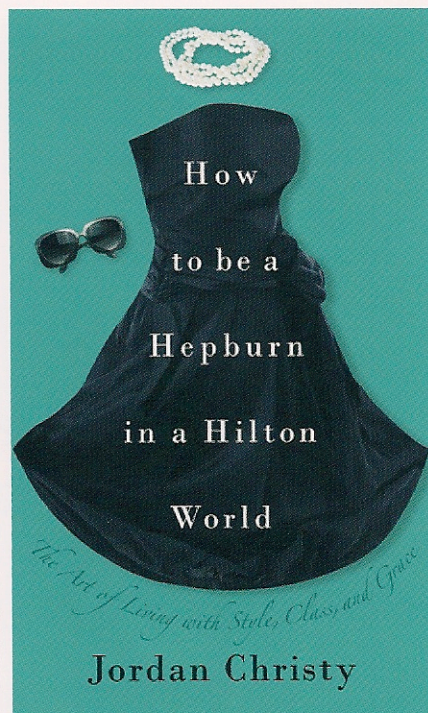
Her appearance demonstrated just how Christy embodies her message and presents it to her audience.

“She’s so personable, so vibrant—she’s not just some woman my age preaching,” said Hutchins. “She’s a very attractive young woman herself, and she’s saying things that I think an audience would respond to.”

Having graduated in August 2009, Christy’s connection to Belmont is still strong. A convocation held in honor of the book the following September drew a crowd; the title alone caught students’ attention.

“There’s something about ‘Hilton World’ in itself, I think, that promises it’s going to be kind of interesting,” said Hutchins.

Belmont professors like Hutchins have played a significant role in Christy’s



success, from leading her to her first job to encouraging her throughout the process of writing the book.

“I’m so, so thankful for my Belmont experience,” said Christy. “The English department in particular was so great at getting you prepared and giving you really worthwhile, helpful assignments.”

The English department fostered free expression by encouraging students to support one another.

“If you give students enough freedom and choice, just enough to jump off of, they’ll chose something they really connect with and write well,” said Hutchins.

The combination of Christy’s personality, the book’s title, and its countercultural message has put Christy on the fast track to a career as an author, including touring the country on promotional tours and a second book in the works.

Despite the new, hectic lifestyle, Christy stays well grounded, refusing to look at reviews and focusing more on her audience.

“It’s so gratifying to see your message connecting with somebody,” said Christy. “And to realize that there are so many other girls out there that feel the same way and are happy someone’s finally writing about it.” **CAS**