Bruce Tuchman, ’89: That’s Entertainment

By Lori Atherton

As a child growing up in New Jersey, Bruce Tuchman, ’89, had “two abiding interests” for when he entered into adulthood: He longed to travel the world, and he dreamed of working in entertainment. It’s no surprise, then, that as the president of AMC/Sundance Channel Global Networks, Tuchman found a way to turn his passions into a career.

“I loved history and stories about other places in the world,” Tuchman recalls, “and I was fascinated by television and movies. At that time, broadcast media was very closely confined to national boundaries, but now you can go to so many places and watch TV channels, programming, and brands from all over the world.”

The concept of all of those networks showing their programming fascinated Tuchman. “I was eager to experience the incredible diversity of culture and life across the world,” he says, “so when I got to college I applied myself in international relations and put a lot of work into perfecting my Spanish-language abilities and going abroad.”

Tuchman studied at Boston University and, after earning his international relations degree, put his Spanish to use in the historic Mediterranean port of Alicante, Spain, where he began working for a group of Spanish toy companies. His goal was to further his international studies, however, so he applied to law school, taking the LSAT in a tiny elementary school on an American military base in Madrid. He was accepted to Michigan Law, which made an immediate impression on him when he came to visit.

After law school, Tuchman began working as a mergers and acquisitions attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in New York, then relocated to the firm’s London office. While there, he earned a master’s degree in international relations from the London School of Economics.

Tuchman had been working at Skadden for five years when he, after returning to New York, decided in a now-or-never move to pursue his dream of working in the entertainment field. “I thought that if I didn’t make a real, concerted move to break into entertainment, I may never get there or be as fulfilled occupationally as I could be,” he says. He sent resumes to numerous entertainment companies, asking if there were any legal jobs available. He received a call from MTV Networks, which was getting ready to accelerate its launch of TV channels internationally and needed a lawyer to oversee the legal side of their expansion.

“I was thrilled,” says Tuchman, who served as vice president of business affairs and senior counsel of international development. “I was a young guy who loved music, and I was involved in the launch of MTV Asia, which got me started in the television business.”

From there, Tuchman moved to the business side of the company, and became general manager of Nickelodeon Global Network Ventures and then senior vice president of Nickelodeon New Media Ventures. He developed and oversaw Nickelodeon channels and new media projects in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and Africa.

In 2001, he joined Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and became president of MGM Worldwide Networks, a division of MGM, where he developed and managed the company’s interests in cable, satellite, and other television networks globally. He was appointed to his current role with AMC Networks in 2011.

“When I look at the launch of cable and satellite TV systems across so many countries, it really started around the time I got into this business,” Tuchman says. “I went to India after law school in ’89, and there was no cable TV. Now, there are more satellite and subscription homes in India than there are in the United States, and this all happened in 10 to 15 years.”

Tuchman often speaks about his experiences with students in Michigan Law’s International Transactions Clinic (ITC), a clinic he would have taken had it been offered when he was in law school. “I think back to when I was a student, having accepted a job with Skadden following my 2L summer there, my desire to do international transactions, and appreciating how truly enriching it would have been to take a clinic like this. That’s why I wanted to get involved: to speak to the students about the real-world challenges I’ve faced, as well as some real-world things that have happened beyond the transaction and how to deal with them.”

The ITC has proven to be a great opportunity for Tuchman to encourage students to follow their passions—just as he did when he took a leap of faith and sent his resume to entertainment companies all those years ago—and to share his love for Michigan Law.

“Never give up, and never sell yourself short,” he advises students. “I was just a kid who dreamed of going abroad and getting into entertainment, but I didn’t have any way of getting there. What made all the difference is Michigan. It has opened up so many doors for me and still does to this day, and I’m eternally grateful for that.”