Appearing in the Post

Illinois associate professor of journalism Charles “Stretch” Ledford produced a photo series of the university’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic for The Washington Post. One photo featured F&S painter Ricky Pierce (right) as he applied socially-distanced stickers to a classroom floor in Gregory Hall.

F&S helped coordinate access for Ledford to document some of the organization’s COVID-19 response on campus as the university prepared for the return of on-site instruction for the fall semester.

“COVID-19 was the biggest story in the world at that time, and we were all learning to adapt to our new reality. Preparing an institution the size of the U of I for in-person learning was, and continues to be, a task of herculean proportions. But it’s an effort made up of smaller, individual efforts by many, many people. I wanted to cover the macro by photographing the micro.”


“I noticed the stickers Mr. Pierce was working with and realized they would identify the University of Illinois as where this was happening. So this particular image not only shows the work being done, it provides viewers with a sense of place. I shot about 750 photographs in the couple of hours I was with Mr. Pierce and his co-workers… this little moment is a keeper.”

Charles “Stretch” Ledford, University of Illinois associate professor of journalism