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Media executive outlines future of journalism in the digital age as annual Fries Lecturer

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

Advances in technology are changing how news is being gathered, transforming the traditional reporter into a 'MoJo,' or mobile journalist.

According to Charles H. Morris, delivering Georgia Southern University's sixth annual Norman Fries Distinguished Lecture, the advent of laptops, cell phones and digital cameras and recorders will require reporters to multitask and their office will be 'wherever they are.'

To illustrate the concept, Michelle Boen, a member of the Statesboro Herald staff, took the stage wearing a special backpack to demonstrate how easy it was to capture video and sound on the go. The pack also held a laptop, cell phone and personal digital assistant.

Technological changes are requiring media outlets to meet the demands of how customers get their news, said Morris, president and chief executive officer of Morris Multimedia. He added that the Internet is giving newspapers the opportunity to compete with radio and television in real time by allowing stories to be filed from a laptop and uploaded immediately onto a Web site in real time.

Despite the rise of the Internet, which Morris said was still in a 'growth mode,' he told the large crowd of students and community members, that there was still a market for the traditional newspaper.

'It's still the most trusted source of information for the community,' Morris said.

During his talk, presented Wednesday, Sept. 27, in the University's Performing Arts Center, Morris recounted growing up in the 'family business.' His father owned the Augusta Chronicle, for which Morris worked as a paperboy. He said his experiences as a youth influenced his success – particularly learning about customer service. He also encouraged the mostly student audience to 'never underestimate the importance of mentors.'

In addition, he stressed students should be prepared to adapt to the future. He said employers today 'focus on people who are willing to learn new skills.'

Dr. Jim Bradford, dean of the College of Information Technology, which hosted this year's Fries Distinguished Lecture, echoed those sentiments.

'Lifelong learning is the catch-all phrase,' said Bradford. 'It means being prepared to learn from the day you graduate until the day you retire.'

Morris, a graduate of the University of Georgia, worked for newspapers in Oklahoma City and St. Petersburg, Fla., after completing his degree. He later joined the Savannah Morning News as a reporter and was named its publisher in 1966. Four years later, he founded his own company, which has grown to become Morris Multimedia Inc., the parent company of Morris Newspaper Corporation and Morris Television Network One of the largest privately held companies in the United States, Morris Multimedia owns and operates 90 publications, including The Statesboro Herald and four other daily newspapers, as well as five network-affiliate television stations and other media-related ventures in nine states and the Caribbean.

The Fries Distinguished Lectureship Series is sponsored through an endowment honoring the late Norman Fries, founder of Claxton Poultry. Fries, who died in December 2001, was one of the state's leading business leaders, serving as a past president and director of the Georgia Poultry Federation.

Regassa completes residency program for teachers of microbiology

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

Georgia Southern University faculty member Laura Regassa was among 16 scientists from around the country to complete a yearlong residency program that is designed to improve student learning in the microbiological sciences.

An assistant professor in the Department of Biology, Regassa completed the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Scholars-in-Residence Program.

The program brings together outstanding faculty who are committed to investigating and documenting significant issues and challenges in the teaching of microbiology.

Regassa's research interests include bacteriology and molecular biology. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin.

The Scholars-in-Residence Program began in July 2005 with a four-day institute on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the ASM headquarters in Washington, D.C. It culminated in May 2006 with the ASM Conference for Undergraduate Educators in Orlando, Fla.

The program seeks to develop a cadre of leading teacher-scholars, enhance the professional development of microbiology faculty, and support a community of scholarly work.

Throughout the program, the participants developed their understanding of teaching and learning science in college classrooms. They assessed the effectiveness of various approaches, including writing to learn, service learning, highlighting relevancy through case studies, and inquiry based laboratories.

Bulloch County helps Georgia Southern meet another record-setting goal

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

The 2006 edition of 'A Day for Southern' continued the growing tradition of Georgia Southern University.

Bulloch County's business and professional community contributed a record-setting \$1,271,823 to the University during the 33rd annual one-day fund drive on Tuesday, Sept. 12.

It marked the ninth year in a row that 'A Day for Southern' surpassed the \$1 million mark. This year's total saw a \$50,000 increase, shattering the old record of \$1,220,334, which was established in 2005.

Proceeds from 'A Day for Southern' go to the Georgia Southern University Foundation and Southern Boosters, two not-for-profit organizations that build the University's 'margin of excellence' in academics and athletics.

'Together We're Better' was the theme for the 2006 campaign, which was chaired by Dr. H. William Perry, who served as pastor of First Baptist Church until his retirement in 2004. Some 200 volunteers solicited donations from approximately 1,100 members of the Bulloch County business and professional community during this year's event.

The Georgia Southern Foundation uses a significant portion of the proceeds to help pay for the scholarships that are necessary to attract academically gifted students to campus.

In addition, 'A Day for Southern' proceeds are used to support cultural and educational attractions like the Botanical Garden, the Georgia Southern Museum, the Performing Arts Center, and the Center for Wildlife Education and the Lamar Q Ball Jr. Raptor Center.

'A Day for Southern' benefits Southern Boosters, too. The organization manages money for student-athlete scholarships and supports the athletic department, which fields teams that compete in 15 varsity sports at the NCAA Division I level.

For more information on 'A Day For Southern,' call (912) 681-5680.