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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2007). *Newsroom*. 236.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/236>

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Georgia Southern University biology professor named Fulbright Scholar

OCTOBER 2, 2007

Georgia Southern University Department of Biology associate professor Michelle Zjhra has been named a Fulbright Scholar by the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Winners of the award are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. Through the grant, Zjhra will lead workshops on curriculum and faculty development, emphasizing plant sustainability issues at the Vietnam National University in Saigon during the 2007-2008 academic year.

In addition, she will build scientific collaborations with Vietnamese faculty and students, train and mentor new botanical experts, and provide technical expertise in herbarium curation and restoration of historical collections.

Zjhra is one of approximately 800 faculty and professionals from the U.S. who will travel abroad through the Fulbright Scholar Program during the current academic year. Established in 1946 under legislation introduced by the late senator J. William Fulbright from Arkansas, the program seeks to build mutual understanding between the people of America and the rest of the world.

‘Investing in education is a win-win situation,’ Zjhra said. ‘My Vietnamese colleagues will gain additional tools to train others and have a greater capacity to describe, document, investigate and determine how to coexist with their incredible natural resources.

‘At the same time, I will gain experience and new insights through my interactions with faculty, students, park personnel and others. I hope to sustain these relationships through the development of collaborative research.’

A member of Georgia Southern University’s faculty since 2003, Dr. Zjhra teaches courses on general biology, plant diversity and flora of Georgia, and she serves as director of the University herbarium. Her research interests include the ecological, evolutionary and developmental aspects of plant diversity.

Zjhra will leave for Vietnam in January and return to Statesboro in June.

In addition to her duties at Georgia Southern, Zjhra has served as a research associate for the Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation at the Antioch New England Institute in New Hampshire since 2001. Prior to joining Georgia Southern University, she taught at Keene State College, conducted research at the University of Arizona, and worked at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Zjhra earned B.A. in biology from Reed College and a Ph.D. in botany from the University of Wisconsin.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers more than 120 degree programs serving nearly 17,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia's largest, is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education.

Averitt Lecture Series opens Oct. 16

OCTOBER 2, 2007

This year's Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecture Series will begin Tuesday, Oct. 16, at 7 p.m. with 'Ghosts and Demons: Sources of Terror in American Literature and Culture.' The lecture will take place in the Assembly Hall of the Nessmith-Lane Building at Georgia Southern University. The series continues with two more presentations on Oct. 17, and all three lectures are free and open to the public. The first talk will be preceded by a reception at 6 p.m.

This year's guest lecturer is Alfred Bendixen, founder and executive director of the American Literature Association and professor of English at Texas A&M University. Much of his scholarship focuses on the recovery of unjustly neglected literary texts, especially by women writers, and the exploration of neglected genres, including the ghost story, detective fiction, science fiction, and travel writing. Bendixen's books include *Haunted Women* (1985), an edition of the composite novel, "The Whole Family" (1986), "The Amber Gods" and other stories by Harriet Prescott Spofford (1989), and "Edith Wharton: New Critical Essays" (1992).

The second lecture in the series is Wednesday, Oct. 17, at 10 a.m. when Bendixen will present 'Washington Irving's Tales of the Supernatural and the Invention of American Culture.' In his lecture, he will discuss the way in which Irving's tales shaped the development of American Gothic. Guests may come for coffee at 9:30 a.m.

In the final lecture of the Averitt Series, Bendixen will review 'Sources of Terror in Henry James' "The Turn of the Screw" at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 17. All three lectures will take place in the Assembly Hall of the Nessmith-Lane Building.

In addition to being the associate editor of the *Continuum Encyclopedia of American Literature* (1999), Bendixen has many writing projects underway. He is one of the five contributing editors to the forthcoming "Wadsworth Anthology of American Literature," which will appear this fall. He is also the co-editor of the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to American Travel Writing* (scheduled for publication in March 2008). He is currently completing the editing of the "Blackwell Companion to the American Novel," co-editing the "Blackwell Companion to the American Short Story" (with Professor James Nagel) and writing the volume on American literary realism for the new "Blackwell Literary History of the United States."

This is the 17th year of the Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecture Series, which was established in 1990 as a gift to the Department of History, the Department of Literature and Philosophy and the

Department of Writing and Linguistics at Georgia Southern University. The lectures are made possible through the vision and generosity of Jack Averitt, former dean of the Georgia Southern University's College of Graduate Studies, and his late wife, Addie. The purpose of the lectureship is to enhance on-campus academic and cultural life for students, faculty, and the community. Published versions of the lectures are available from the University of Georgia Press.

For more information about this year's Averitt Lecture Series, contact the Department of Literature and Philosophy at 912-681-5471.