

Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern University honors Coach Erk Russell

SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

Georgia Southern University unveiled the addition of Coach Erk Russell's name and championship years to the two retired jerseys at Paulson Stadium at halftime of Saturday's game vs. West Georgia. Russell guided the Eagles to three championships, including back-to-back titles in 1985 and 1986, the first in I-AA. Georgia Southern completed the 1989 championship season undefeated and untied, earning recognition as the first 15-0 college team of the 20th century. Russell passed away one year ago today.

'The addition of Coach Russell's name to our retired jerseys pays tribute to his contributions to Georgia Southern,'" said President Bruce Grube. 'His passion for coaching football and for the game itself, his energy and charisma, created an atmosphere of excitement on campus and in the community. Coach Russell and his Eagle teams made us proud to be associated with Georgia Southern, and made our football program the most respected in the nation.'

More than 45 feet in width, the white lettering reads 'Coach Erk Russell' with three footballs detailed with the years of his championship seasons. The nameplate is centered between the retired jerseys of former Eagles Tracy Ham (8) and Adrian Peterson (3) on the southern facade of Paulson Stadium.

Russell coached in Paulson Stadium for six of his eight seasons, ending his coaching career after defeating Stephen F. Austin before a stadium-record crowd of 25,725 in the 1989 NCAA championship game. Russell and his Eagle teams posted a 41-1 record at Paulson Stadium from 1984-1989, including an 11-0 mark in playoff games, and a string of 37 consecutive home victories.

Faculty Recital Series continues with Elvis Costello's The Juliet Letters

SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

Statesboro audiences have a rare treat in store on Friday, Sept. 21, when pianist David Murray and his wife, soprano Michelle Murray, perform the southeastern premiere of Elvis Costello's song cycle, The Juliet Letters. Their presentation, which is free and open to the public, takes place at 7:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 1215 Fair Road in Statesboro.

In 2004, Murray, who recently joined the music faculty at Georgia Southern University, arranged the entire song cycle for voice and piano. He and his wife recorded and released an album of The Juliet Letters in 2006. Their performance on Sept. 21 continues the Faculty Recital Series presented by the Department of Music at Georgia Southern University

'This 17-song work was originally inspired by Italian folklore about Juliet," Murray explained. 'In Verona, there is a tomb that is traditionally believed to be Juliet's burial place. During the last century people from around the world began writing letters to Juliet and sending them to this tomb. These letters asked for advice, discussed problems or issues with life, or offered prayers to the dead girl.

'At some point members of the Veronese tourism board began writing back as Juliet. Elvis Costello and the Brodsky Quartet were inspired by the idea of these letters and jointly composed 17 songs for voice and string quartet that explore what kinds of letters might have been left at Juliet's tomb.

David Murray has been described as 'the perfect collaborator" by the *New York Concert Review*, and his work as a solo artist has included a highly praised performance of George Gershwin's *Concerto* in F and the premiere of Richard Wall's *Four Short Studies for Piano*. He is frequently seen in concert with his wife, and the two made their New York debut at Carnegie Hall in 2005.

To learn more about the Department of Music at Georgia Southern University, go to <http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/music/>.