

Friday, August 15, 2008

Bill Connellan delivers last lecture

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, *OU Web Writer*

Bill Connellan, associate professor of journalism, delivered his last lecture on Thursday, Aug. 14. Once the finals are scored and the grades turned in, Connellan will begin a new chapter of his life.

"I don't know what the next chapter is, but I will learn a lot from the experience," said Connellan, during his last lecture. Connellan plans to do some consulting and continue his work in the community.

Learning is something that Connellan loves to do every day — a passion that started when he was an Oakland University student.

"I remember little of the specifics of the general education courses, but I remember my eagerness to learn," Connellan said.

Connellan came to Oakland University in 1963 to study political science and history. He later covered the higher education beat for The Detroit News. Connellan returned to OU in 1970. He taught part-time and served in a number of administrative roles in the Office of the President and the provost's office before switching to a full-time faculty position in 2000. From 2001-04, Connellan took a leave of absence from OU to serve as a senior vice president of the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"I thought I would be at OU a couple of years. Here it is 38 years later and several careers later and I am at the same location," Connellan said.

Connellan hadn't planned to make much of his last lecture, which he geared toward the students of his Journalism 200 course. However, after others, including interim director of the program Garry Gilbert, learned of his impending departure, they invited the campus community to hear Connellan's final thoughts.

In past years, Connellan's final lecture focused on life after Journalism 200, and this year the message remained the same, but he also talked about the changes that have occurred around him in the past 50 years.

"I'm proud of you," Connellan told his class, which had no journalism majors in the mix. "You worked hard. You approached the class as if you were going into journalism."

Connellan said his goal was to make the class better readers of the media, challenge them, provoke serious thinking and give them a general education.

"In the end, my feelings on issues are just that—my feelings," Connellan said, encouraging the students to read and develop their own thoughts and stances on issues.

Connellan took an interactive approach when teaching. For example, he wouldn't speak the first day of class until students started asking questions. He had OUPD Lt. Mel Gilroy "arrest" students during class and answer questions to give students practice in dealing with police. Connellan's connections in the community have allowed him to bring people like Ed McNamara, Colleen Engler, George Jackson, Maria Elena Rodriguez, Bryan Barnett and Frank Fountain to his classroom for interviews with the students.

Connellan encourages all of his students to stay in touch and let him know where they go in their careers. He's always interested in what path his former students take.

As for what is next, Connellan also plans to continue his work on **writing OU's history**, a project he started to celebrate OU's 50th anniversary. Connellan said OU will always be a part of his future since it was such a big part of his past.



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SUMMARY

Bill Connellan, associate professor of journalism, delivered his last lecture on Thursday, Aug. 14. Once the finals are scored and the grades turned in, Connellan will begin a new chapter of his life. Learning is something that Connellan loves to do every day — a passion that started when he was an Oakland University student. Connellan came to Oakland University in 1963 to study political science and history. He later covered the higher education beat for The Detroit News. Connellan returned to OU in 1970. He taught part-time and served in a number of administrative roles in the Office of the President and the provost's office before switching to a full-time faculty position in 2000. From 2001-04, Connellan took a leave of absence from OU to serve as a senior vice president of the Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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