Laughter and shouts of recognition filled The Classic Center in Athens on Thursday, Nov. 20, as more than 400 friends reunited to celebrate the Grady College's history and look toward its next 100 years at the Centennial Campaign Gala.

Grady College graduates, media professionals and families attended the event that honored the inaugural class of The Grady Fellowship and served as the official kickoff of the college's *Centennial Campaign for Grady: 1915-2015, Democracy's Next Generation*.

Sixty-three individuals whose lives and careers have contributed immeasurably to the national reputation Grady College enjoys were inducted into the charter class of the Grady Fellowship. Each fellow received a special medallion and certificate to commemorate the occasion.

Many of those who were honored have covered history, helped write history or made history themselves. Among the history makers inducted into the Fellowship were Charlayne Hunter-Gault, award-winning journalist and the first African-American woman admitted to the University of Georgia; Maxine Clark, founder and CEO of Build-A-Bear, Inc.; Lessie Smithgall, a driving force behind establishment of the Peabody Awards at Grady and UGA; Gene Patterson, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist; and Bill Anderson, singer, songwriter and country music legend.

A complete listing of the Grady Fellows is available at [http://grady100.uga.edu/](http://grady100.uga.edu/).
Grady Fellow Bruce Finland (ABJ ’74), on right, with wife Glen and Dean Cully Clark.

Photo by Sue Smith

Grady College alumnae Deborah Norville (ABJ ’79), host of CBS’ Inside Edition, and Deborah Roberts (ABJ ’82), ABC News correspondent, co-hosted the evening and presented the Fellows. Norville also filmed Inside Edition on the University of Georgia’s North Campus Thursday afternoon.

"A reporter from the Athens Banner-Herald asked me why I was being so nice to Grady College," Norville said. "How could I not be when it has put me where I am today?"

Both broadcast journalists also received surprise inductions into the elite Fellowship.

"The charter class of the Fellowship are a core of individuals who proudly proclaim the University of Georgia and Grady College as alma mater and a few who, although not UGA graduates, have become synonymous with the college’s success through longstanding service to its mission," said Grady College Dean E. Culpepper Clark.

A special exception was made to the Fellow criteria when it was announced that UGA’s newest bulldog mascot, Uga VII, was granted induction into the 2008 charter class during his first year of service to the university. Uga’s human "sister" and Grady alumna Swann Seiler (ABJ ’78) was in attendance to accept Fellowship materials for her baby "brother." Seiler, of Savannah, was inducted as well.
Grady Fellows Neely Young, editor and publisher of *Georgia Trend* magazine, and Millard Grimes (ABJ '51), president and CEO of Grimes Publications. Photo by Sue Smith.

The gala featured a reception in the Classic Center’s theatre lobby, music by top Athens’ jazz band, Squat, and a gallery of Grady College images by photographer and alumnus Wingate Downs (ABJ '79) and Athens artist Jamie Calkin. Two videos were produced for the occasion by alumnus Jody Danneman (ABJ '88), founder and president of Atlanta Image Arts. A "Yearbook Tribute" video featured past and present images of the Fellows, while a second video served to unveil *The Centennial Campaign for Grady*, the College’s capital campaign.

The *Centennial Campaign* goal of $100 million will fund additional faculty, support student needs, improve facilities and provide experience through the newly acquired WNEG television station.

Tom Johnson (ABJ '63), former chairman of CNN News Group and former publisher and CEO of the *Los Angeles Times*, inducted Norville and Roberts into the Grady Fellowship and encouraged a call to action in the upcoming campaign.

"A collective resolve should enable the college to reach new heights in the years ahead," Johnson said. "Teach a class, establish a scholarship, become a mentor, fund a chair, create a grant, allow an intern to work for you."

The evening’s program concluded with UGA music student Ben Dawkins singing the UGA alma mater. Most attendees congregated after the gala to congratulate Fellows and visit with old friends.
"This has been about people," Clark said of the evening. "As disruptive as the world has been, with changing experiences, we still find the truth. Democracy's next generation is what it's all about."

Click [here](#), for more information about the Centennial Campaign.

Click [here](#), to view photographs from the event.

Established in 1915, the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication offers seven undergraduate majors including advertising, broadcast news, magazines, newspapers, public relations, publication management and telecommunication arts. The college offers two graduate degrees, and is home to the Knight Chair in Health and Medical Journalism and the Peabody Awards, internationally recognized as one of the most prestigious prizes for excellence in electronic media. For more information, visit [www.grady.uga.edu](http://www.grady.uga.edu).