Sports journalism legacy to be highlighted at UGA’s Grady College tribute

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The sports journalism legacy of UGA’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication will be in the spotlight on Thursday, Nov. 19, during the Grady Fellows Tribute Evening at the Athens Classic Center.

Two of the five Grady College alumni who will be inducted into the 2009 class of the Grady Fellowship have strong sports ties and are distinguished for their influence, achievements and service to the media professions.

Claude Felton (ABJ ’70, MA ’71) has held positions in the University of Georgia’s Athletic Association since 1979. Gordon Smith (ABJ ’75, JD ’78) is executive director and chief operating officer of the United States Tennis Association.

The evening will include an additional salute to Grady's sports journalism legacy with a panel discussion of "The Status of Sports Journalism in a 24/7 News Cycle." Panelists will include Furman Bisher, recently retired sports columnist for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution; "Mr. College Football" Tony Barnhart (ABJ ’76) from CBS Sports; Mark Schlabach (ABJ ’96), college football and basketball columnist for ESPN.com; and Conrad Fink, Grady professor of journalism and author of Sportswriting: The Lively Game. The discussion will be moderated by Charlie McAlexander, the only play-by-play announcer in Southeastern Conference history to call games for four SEC schools in four different states and to be honored as Sportscaster of the Year at each one by the National Association of Sportscasters and Sportswriters. McAlexander now serves as assistant to the dean for sports journalism at Grady College.

Four UGA alumni and sports legends, all natives of Georgia's Grady County, will be special guests at the tribute. They will include Teresa Edwards, two-time All-American for the Georgia Lady Bulldogs and the only basketball player to represent the U.S. in five Olympic Games; Lewis Gainey, former track and field athlete, head coach and employee of UGA athletics for 34 years; Bill Stanfill, former All-American defensive tackle, Outland Trophy winner and Miami Dolphin; and Bobby "The Big Toe" Walden, former UGA punter who enjoyed a 14-year career in the National Football League and was part of the Pittsburgh Steelers' Super Bowl IX and Super Bowl X winning teams.

Additional Grady College alumni who will be inducted into the Fellowship class that evening include television writer and producer Brenda Hampton, Los Angeles; former newspaper editor Ray Jenkins, Baltimore, Md.; and former advertising executive Ruth Trager, Atlanta.

"The Grady Fellowship was created in 2008 to recognize individuals whose lives and careers lend measurably to the reputation the college enjoys," said Grady College Dean Cully Clark. "Claude, Brenda, Ray, Gordon and Ruth inspire students and alumni. We are
pleased and honored to receive them into this year's class and to welcome all members of the Grady Fellowship home."

The tribute evening will get underway with a 6 p.m. reception, followed by dinner at 7. Fellowship inductions will take place at 7:45 p.m. The sports journalism panel discussion will follow at 8 p.m.

Tickets for the tribute evening are available for $75. Purchase tickets and RSVP by Friday, Nov. 13, at www.grady.uga.edu/tribute.