UGA’s Grady College Tribute Features 2010 Grady Fellowship Inductees, Peabody Awards Salute

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Nine distinguished communicators were inducted into The Grady Fellowship during a tribute ceremony Thursday, Nov. 18, in the Mahler Auditorium at the University of Georgia’s Center for Continuing Education.

The 2010 class of Grady Fellows included Carolyn Abney, marketing specialist, U.S. and international, Athens; Randall Abney, media entrepreneur, Athens; Phil Gailey, former editor, The St. Petersburg Times, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Steve Koonin, president, Turner Entertainment Networks, Atlanta; Edwin Pope, sports journalist, The Miami Herald, Key Biscayne, Fla.; Bo Spalding, founder and principal of Jackson Spalding, Atlanta; and James H. Tate Jr., retired vice president of corporate communications, Atlanta Gas Light, Mount Pleasant, S.C.

Inducted posthumously into the Fellowship were Joe Belew, late president of the Consumer Bankers Association, and Betty Gage Holland, late philanthropist and benefactor of Grady’s Cox Center and Cox Institute. Belew and Holland are inaugural members of the Fellowship’s Sanford Circle created to honor absent friends of the Grady College "...whose achievement and generosity of spirit remain with us," said Grady College Dean E. Culpepper Clark.

The nine were chosen for their influence, achievements and service to the media professions. The Grady Fellowship was created in 2008 to recognize individuals whose lives and careers lend measurably to the reputation the Grady College enjoys.

Dean Clark served as co-host of the event, along with Swann Seiler (ABJ ’78) and Chris Jones (ABJ ’73), the outgoing and incoming chairs of the Grady Board of Trust, the college’s advisory board. More than 150 friends of the college attended the tribute event.

Carolyn Abney found success in a variety of pursuits, including real estate, finance, writing, teaching, arts and photography. She has taught cooking and wine classes in Italy and Georgia, and was the wine writer for The Florentine, Tuscany’s only English-language newspaper. In 1998, she co-founded Athens-based smARTlens Corporation, a company that redefines photography through its innovative products and where she serves as marketing specialist, U.S. and international.

Randall Abney has traveled the U.S. and almost 100 countries in a variety of media-related jobs and entrepreneurial ventures for more than 35 years. He held a number of positions with Atlanta’s Telecorp Systems, Inc. and Syntellect, Inc. In 1998, he co-founded Athens-based smARTlens Corporation where he serves as chairman, CEO and president. One of the company’s products won a 2009 Academy Award for Technical Achievement.

Gailey (ABJ ’66) has had a journalism career spanning more than four decades at The

Koonin is president of Turner Entertainment Networks, Atlanta. He oversees programming, marketing, scheduling, strategy, operations, advertising sales and other core business functions for the cable networks Turner Broadcasting Systems, Turner Network Television, Turner Classic Movies and truTV. He also oversees the Atlanta broadcast station, Peachtree TV.

An Athens native, Pope (ABJ '48) has been a sports columnist at The Miami Herald for more than 45 years and is one of sports journalism's most honored writers. One of only a handful of writers to have covered every Super Bowl, he was honored three times by the National Headliners Club as the nation's best columnist and won the Red Smith Award for excellence in sports journalism. Though "retired," he still writes more than 50 columns a year for the Herald.

Spalding (ABJ '78) is founder and principal of Jackson Spalding, one of the largest independent marketing and communications firms in the Southeast, with offices in Atlanta, Athens and Dallas. He started his career at The Atlanta Journal, covering government and business, before joining Atlanta's Bank South Corporation as senior vice president and director of public affairs and communications. He co-founded Jackson Spalding in 1995.

Tate (ABJ '42) served as a press briefing officer, public information officer and news division chief for the U.S. Army, both on active duty and in the Army Reserve for 39 years. He also worked at Atlanta Gas Light Co. as director of public relations, although his work later encompassed advertising, special projects, and employee, financial and customer information. He retired as vice president of corporate communications in 1986.

The tribute event also included a salute to Grady's Peabody Awards legacy with the unveiling of a Peabody video detailing the history of the award and a close-up view into the deliberation process involved in selecting Peabody winners.

Four Grady College alumni and emeritus members of the Peabody Awards Board participated in a panel discussion on "70 Years of the Peabody Awards: A Grady Legacy." Panelists included Neil Aronstam (ABJ '65), retired founder of Independent Media Services, New York City; Tom Dowden (ABJ '62, MA '64), founder and CEO of Dowden Communications, Cashiers, N.C.; Betty Hudson (ABJ '71), executive vice president of communications for The National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.; and Tom Johnson (ABJ '63), retired former president of CNN News Group, Atlanta. The "reunion" discussion was moderated by Peabody director and Grady professor of telecommunications Horace Newcomb.

View photos from the tribute reception, awards ceremony and Peabody salute at www.flickr.com/photos/ugagrady/sets/.