Four emeritus members of the Peabody Awards Board will take part in a special program planned as the centerpiece of the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication’s third annual Fellowship Tribute Evening on Thursday, Nov. 18. The event will be held in the Mahler Auditorium at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education Conference Center and Hotel.

Hosted by Grady Dean E. Culpepper Clark and Grady Board of Trust President Swann Seiler, the evening will feature the induction of the 2010 class of the Grady Fellowship and a salute to the Peabody Awards, founded at Grady and first presented in 1941.

The Grady Fellowship was created in 2008 to recognize individuals whose lives and careers lend measurably to the reputation Grady College enjoys. Nine alumni and friends of the college will be inducted into this year’s class.

Following a dinner program and the induction ceremony, Grady College and Peabody Board alumni Neil Aronstam, Tom Dowden, Betty Hudson and Tom Johnson will participate in a "reunion" discussion, moderated by Peabody director Horace Newcomb. Their reflections and conversations will provide guests with a glimpse into the rich deliberation process involved in selecting Peabody winners.

"Our goal is to select ‘the best of the best’ from 1,000 or more entries each year," explained Newcomb. "Many Grady grads, even those who have risen to prominence and have been honored as Grady Fellows, don't really know how special the Peabody Award is or how our deliberative process is so different from those of other awards programs."

The Peabody Awards will celebrate its 70th anniversary next year. The tribute evening will launch a special outreach effort to help alumni and friends feel close to the Peabodys and to share pride in and respect for the program, its alumni and honorees and its insistence on "excellence on its own terms," noted Parker Middleton, assistant to the dean at Grady.

"There is always considerable passion in discussions of Peabody entries," said Newcomb. "But that passion is matched by the expertise of our Peabody Board members. Our discussions are one of the few sites where strong-minded individuals actually change their minds out of respect for arguments put forward by their colleagues. We wish this same kind of civil discourse were more prominent throughout the media worlds we live among."

The Peabody discussion group is comprised of some media heavyweights, according to Newcomb. Aronstam, now retired, founded Independent Media Services, New York City; Dowden is founder and CEO of Dowden Communications, Cashiers, N.C., Hudson is
executive vice president of communications for The National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.; and Johnson, now retired, is former president of CNN News Group, Atlanta.

Produced as a gift to the college by alumnus Jody Danneman and Atlanta ImageArts, the evening promises historic Peabody video and a hometown close-up view of Grady’s Peabody Awards. “In its gathering of the Fellowship and its timely salute to the Peabodys, the tribute evening promises a great show again this year,” said Clark.

Slated for induction in the Grady Fellows 2010 class are Randall and Carolyn Abney, media entrepreneur and marketing specialist, U.S. and international, Athens; Joe Belew, late president of the Consumer Bankers Association; Phil Gailey, editor, The St. Petersburg Times, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Betty Gage Holland, late philanthropist and benefactor of Grady’s Cox Center and Cox Institute; 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, retired vice president of corporate communications, Atlanta Gas Light, Mount Pleasant, S.C.

The Grady Fellowship Tribute Evening will begin with a 6 p.m. reunion reception, followed by a dinner program, induction ceremony and the Peabody Awards salute.

The public is invited to attend and may purchase tickets by Saturday, Nov. 6, at www.grady.uga.edu or by contacting Karen Andrews at karena@uga.edu