

McGill

Symposium for Journalistic Courage



November 15, 2017



**Grady College of Journalism
and Mass Communication**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The McGill program is funded by the McGill Lecture Endowment

Excerpts from four group discussions:

- The Eyes are Listening: Using Photography as a Messenger of Hope, Empathy and Change
 - Billy Howard
- Reporting in the Era of Leaks and Fake News
 - Beth Reinhard
- Press Freedom Under Attack
 - Peter Sterne
- At the Turbulent Confluence of Race, Politics and Sports: Covering the National Anthem Protests in the NFL
 - Steve Wyche and D. Orlando Ledbetter

Contents

Welcome 3

The Eyes are Listening: Using Photography as a Messenger 4

Reporting in the Era of Leaks and Fake News 7

Press Freedom Under Attack10

At the Turbulent Confluence of Race, Politics, and Sports 13

Participants 16

Contact Us 16

Welcome

On behalf of my colleagues in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, welcome to the McGill Symposium. The McGill symposium, now in its tenth year, is an outgrowth of the McGill lecture.

For nearly 40 years, the McGill lecture has brought significant figures in journalism to the University of Georgia to help us honor Ralph McGill's courage as an editor.

Roundtable discussions in 2006 with industry professionals and faculty led us to develop the McGill symposium as the next step in honoring McGill and exploring journalistic courage. The McGill Symposium brings together students, faculty, and leading journalists to consider what journalistic courage means and how it is exemplified by reporters and editors.



McGill Program Director Diane Murray

Today 12 McGill Fellows – undergraduate and graduate students selected by a faculty committee for their strengths in academic achievement, practical experience and leadership – join five McGill visiting journalists for a six hour discussion.

Topics will include:

- The Eyes are Listening: Using Photography as a Messenger of Hope, Empathy and Change
- Reporting in the Era of Leaks and Fake News
- Press Freedom Under Attack, and
- At the Turbulent Confluence of Race, Politics and Sports: Covering the National Anthem Protests in the NFL

Today will be a success if the journalists, faculty and students engage each other rigorously to try to answer the question “What does courage look like in journalism?”

The Eyes are Listening: Using Photography as a Messenger of Hope, Empathy, and Change

McGill Visiting Journalist:

Billy Howard, *Photojournalist*

Moderator:

Mark Johnson, *Senior Lecturer of Photojournalism at the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication*



Documentary photographer Billy Howard reveals inner lives through his lens. The most important aspect, he says, is letting people tell their own stories.

Take his project Epitaphs for the Living, for instance. His full-length book on the AIDS pandemic captured black-and-white portraits of people living with the disease in a time when no one was talking about it and there was no effective treatment. Each portrait captures a stark, moving moment from each person who dealt with isolation, discrimination and rejection while living with the disease. Underneath the image, each person wrote their own statement. Some are sad, and some are happy, but all give insight into the person.

The project started when Howard took photographs for

Emory University. While shooting for the magazine in 1987, he met Ron, a former hospital administrator who was willing to share his story about living with AIDS. Howard took Ron's photo and gave him an 8x10 print to sign at the bottom. He told Ron to write whatever he felt.

“The nights are the hardest,” Ron wrote. “... I’m afraid I may die all alone. What’s more frightening is that no one will care.”

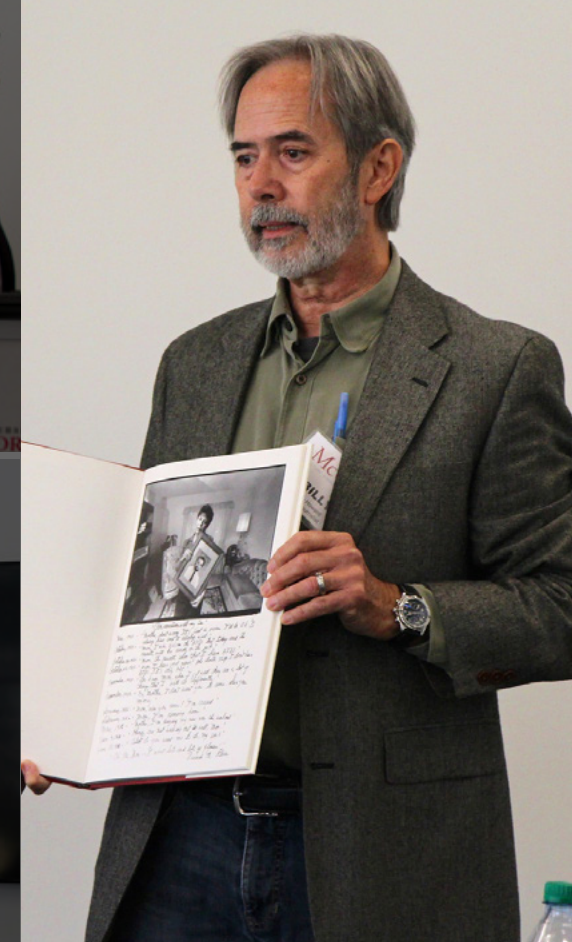
The statement hit Howard like a ton of bricks. The story sounded similar to his friend, a dentist who was diagnosed the year before and left his dental practice in Atlanta to live with his mother in Florida. Howard wrote to his friend but didn’t hear back and learned months later that he died. As a dentist, he thought his patients would be upset and reject him, so he

didn’t communicate with anyone after he left.

“He died alone when he should have died with people around him,” Howard said. “It broke my heart.”

Similarly, Ron left his job as a hospital administrator when he was diagnosed. He thought people would reject him for having the disease and moved without telling people about it. After Howard took his photo, however, Ron began taking Howard to his support group to recruit more subjects. Soon Howard had eight photos and a growing project. When the Atlanta Journal-Constitution published an article about the project and featured Ron’s photo, his former coworkers reached out. They became his support group until he died.

“He did not die alone, which was his fear,” Howard said.





Left: McGill Visiting Journalist Billy Howard; Middle: McGill Fellow Sammy Smith; Right: McGill Fellow Noelle Lashley

"It was the most powerful experience I had with a photograph in my career."

That one connection became the project to Howard and made it worthwhile. It had meaning outside of himself. It was about their stories and their lives. That's when he began reaching out to other support groups and flew to other cities — New York, Dallas, San Francisco, Chicago and more — to tell their stories. He had no funding but found a way to make the project happen.

"I wasn't prepared for the level of openness and lyricism that came back to me," Howard said. "It was profound in many ways."

He began sending the project to publishers and received many rejections. In 1989, however, Southern Methodist University agreed to produce the full

11x14 book, and everyone in the book who was still alive received a copy. By the time the book came out, 18 of the 80 subjects had died.

"It was a meaningful experience for me, and it made a difference in all of their lives," Howard said. "About 20 years after the project, I heard from Doug, who had lived. I thought everyone was gone."

Since then, Howard has been a Rosalynn Carter Fellow in Mental Health Journalism and on the board of directors for Atlanta Celebrates Photography. His work has been exhibited with the Smithsonian and on Frontline and HBO. He's been interviewed on Good Morning America and CBS This Morning, and his images were projected at the opening ceremonies for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games during a tribute to Martin Luther

King, Jr. Now Howard's images sit in the permanent collections at Emory University, the Library of Congress, the High Museum of Art, the Carter Center and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I'm not a traditional journalist... but I like creating powerful images for my clients," he said. "It doesn't always relate to my heart, but I try to get grants where I can tell the stories I want to tell."

Howard continues to work on projects that resonate with him, especially health-related issues. While working with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Eggleston on an assignment, Howard got to know the art therapist and appreciated how kids could reflect on their feelings about illness. He then began taking photographs of children with cancer and paired

the photos with their drawings. Years later, the American Cancer Society asked him to publish a book about the kids and where they were eight years later.

"The beauty of it was that it wasn't time to publish it when I first started it," he said. "That would have been too hard to see 25 kids and not know what happened."

One by one, he found them

me into the lives of people I wouldn't have met."

McGill Fellow Sammy Smith asked Howard how he dealt with emotional projects and what types of support systems that reporters and visual storytellers can use. Howard said his journalism friends often provide support, feedback and a listening ear during his in-depth projects. Most of all, though, his subjects provide



McGill Fellow Maureen Sheeran asks a question.

again and took photographs. He remembers Amanda in particular. At 14, she wore a bandana from hair loss and looked dejected in her bedroom. At 22, however, her hair had regrown and she held two healthy babies.

"It was one of the more emotional and rewarding moments of my career," he said. "It has also given me lasting relationships and put

support as well. Since he keeps in touch with them, they become his connections.

"Building these relationships is profound and has changed my life," he said. "As people die, it's extraordinarily difficult, but I'm also meeting new people as the projects go on."

Now Howard is working with his wife Laurie Shock on Blind/Sight, Conversations with the Visually Impaired, at the

Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta. The exhibit features photographs of people with vision loss, a biography of each person, an illustration of what they see, and a description of their vision in print and audio.

"Everyone who is blind has a visual experience, so we recreate the visuals as they describe it," he said. "They, too, are able to share their stories."

For today's journalists and visual storytellers, Howard recommends finding a subject and digging into it deeply. Invest in a topic that means more than a byline. Meet people and encourage them to open up to you. Try to understand "ordinary people" who live "ordinary lives" in a wonderful way.

"Every story you cover will get you closer," he said. "Tell stories in whatever you do with your life and career."

Reporting in the Era of Leaks and Fake News

McGill Visiting Journalist:
Beth Reinhard, *Washington Post*

Moderator:
Janice Hume, *Journalism Department Head of the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication*

Washington Post reporter Beth Reinhard was in Alabama when the news about Roy Moore's sexual abuse allegations broke. She traveled to the state when a fellow Post reporter was working on a related story among an evangelical Christian community with Roy Moore supporters. They spent two weeks chasing leads, often running into dead ends before four women agreed to go on the record.

In an era of leaked stories and fake news, reporting is all about spending time, repeating interviews and finding the consistent links. During the McGill Symposium, Reinhard talked to the McGill Fellows through a live video call as she sat in her car in Alabama, waiting to head to another interview.

"They agreed to go on the record after three weeks. This doesn't happen after the first or second interview," she said.

the strategy."

With an explosive story that involved sexual abuse allegations, Reinhard knew the story had to be watertight and bulletproof against any fact errors. She knew there would be backlash and that the women must feel comfortable and invested in their decisions to tell their stories. After two more weeks in Alabama, Reinhard wrote her story in the Washington D.C. newsroom and passed it to a team of editors and lawyers to inspect the story for holes before publication.

"We really put these sources through a lot, and they came to a decision on their own," she said. "We've been grateful for how strong they've stood when their credibility came under a withering review."

Before publishing the story, Reinhard's team presented an overview of the story to Roy Moore's campaign and asked for a response. In 24 hours, the

campaign leaked the letter of questions to Brietbart News and then responded and denied the allegations. Once the Washington Post put up the story online, the next week was a whirlwind of comments and responses for Reinhard.

"As a result, people called me about things they heard or knew," she said. "Follow-up after your stories can be helpful as a reporting technique."

Reinhard received emails and social media posts from people who thanked her for writing the article and told their own stories of sexual abuse. On the other hand, of course, she received negative responses that attacked her motives and her reporting. On Twitter, a post said she had offered \$1,000 to sources in Alabama to make up the story. In another instance, a fake robot call posing as a Post editor offered \$7,000 to people for information about Roy Moore.



McGill Visiting Journalist Beth Reinhard was on the move, but was able to Skype into the Symposium with the help of Grady's technology experts.

"That's obviously ludicrous, but it spread everywhere on conservative social media," she said. "It has put me on alert to be extremely cautious about reporting and everyone I deal with."

As an investigative report, Reinhard has faced plenty of negative emails and feedback, but she's never been a target of false stories that others believed and spread online.

"I know there are people looking for ways to discredit me, the Washington Post, and the women in our story," she said. "I've never dealt with anything like this."

McGill Fellow Noelle Lashley asked how Reinhard found the women to talk about their personal lives and how she gained their trust. The Washington Post reporting team first heard casual rumors that

Moore had pursued women, and through a long line of leads, one person led to another.

"We knocked on tons of doors and either found out the person didn't live there anymore or didn't have information," Reinhard said. "We went through tanks of gas driving around Alabama."

While talking with women in person, Reinhard faced the tough task of being a dispassionate reporter who sets boundaries with her sources but also being sensitive and sympathetic to their concerns about backlash. She also faced the difficulty of asking tough questions to ensure the sources weren't coming to the interviews with an axe to grind or political vendetta.

"I really interrogated them, frankly, to make sure they were credible," she said. "We explained that we had to put

them through the ringer for their protection and the strength of the story."

Even once Reinhard returned to the newsroom, she made numerous follow-up phone calls to ensure consistency across the sources. During the writing process, she and others made decisions about what to include and what to keep in their notebooks. Most of all, they wanted to report a clear story with facts and not include any fuzzy details simply because they were intriguing.

"It's been ugly for the women named in the story. They've been deluged by the press, as you might imagine," she said. "They've received so many media requests and have had people camped out at their houses."

McGill Fellow Lindsey Conway asked if the Washington Post team planned a social media strategy to field the backlash. For the most part, Reinhard said, the reporters decided not to engage in provocative social media posts. Colleagues and followers did the work for them by praising the story and talking about how well-researched it was. On the corporate side, the newsroom put out statements against the hoaxes that bloomed after the story was published. When other reporters came to her for comment, Reinhard referred to executives above her in the newsroom.

"I try to focus on the reporting and not get into the back and forth," she said. "It's not a good use of time."

McGill Fellow Sammy

Smith asked how reporters can combat the hoaxes that spread after a big news story goes live. Unfortunately, Reinhard responded, it may not be completely possible.

“People will believe what they believe,” she said. “As we’ve seen, a segment of the population — when you present them with data — simply ignores it when it doesn’t jive with their worldview.”

At the same time, for every person who gave a negative comment about the story, many others have been supportive and positive, which makes the reporting worth it, she said. That’s why she prepared the sources by having conversations with family members, boyfriends and friends to enlist support before the story was published.

“I didn’t doubt for an instant that I was doing the right thing, but people do have a lot to risk

when they live in a small town,” she said. “There’s more we think we know that we can’t put in the paper because we haven’t been able to verify it, or people are afraid to go on the record.”

The process isn’t new to Reinhard. She previously covered the 2016 presidential campaign and national politics for the Wall Street Journal and was the lead political correspondent at National Journal magazine. She has long covered local, state and national politics at The Miami Herald and The Home News in Brunswick, New Jersey. When she covered Trump’s presidential campaign, however, it was unlike any campaign she had covered before.

“It was astonishing every single day how many things Trump would say that were easy to refute factually,” she said. “One of the challenges was that he would say many things that were outrageous and suspicious, and we didn’t

know what to write about first.”

As technology and social media continue to speed up news cycles, Reinhard recommended that the McGill Fellows continue to follow the traditional tenets of good journalism. Ask solid questions. Vet the interviews. Look for documents. Get sources on the record. Give opposing sides the opportunity to respond. Make sure your facts are tight and unassailable.

Most of all, point out wrongdoing and hold officials’ feet to the fire.

“Frankly, you’re lucky if a story comes along every once in a while where it’s possible to have a real impact,” she said. “But you can’t let that cloud what you’re doing while you’re reporting. You’re not doing this to provoke a reaction. You’re doing it for the sake of the story.”

Press Freedom Under Attack

McGill Visiting Journalist:
Peter Sterne, *Freedom of the Press Foundation*

Moderator:
Charles Davis, *Dean of the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication*



In a new era of “fake news,” journalists need support systems to protect and defend themselves against adversarial critics. In the past year in particular, the Freedom of the Press Foundation has stepped up to boost public-interest reporting and a focus on exposing mismanagement, corruption and law-breaking in the government. Alongside it, the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker began documenting press freedom incidents in the United States.

“We can’t begin a conversation about journalistic courage without talking about journalists being directly assaulted,” Dean Charles Davis said. “There’s not anything more chilling to democracy or the free press.”

Launched in 2017, the Press Freedom Tracker logged 44 physical attacks on journalists, 34 arrests, 15 equipment

searches or seizures and five border stops of journalists during the year. As managing editor of the tracker and a former media beat reporter for Politico, Peter Sterne has kept a watchful eye on U.S. press threats in the past year.

“We count chilling statements made by officials and politicians ... and document cases when the government tries to prosecute sources,” he said. “These have a chilling effect on reporters.”

The tracker began with 2017 data to document cases as they are happening in the present. Sterne worried that if the group tried to track cases from previous years, the documentation would occur out of context and not capture the full story. In the future, the tracker will have more data to understand how press freedoms have changed.

“Anecdotally, you could

say the rhetoric and chilling statements have gotten worse,” he said. “The president now attacks reporters by name, which we haven’t seen since Nixon. Even then, it was behind closed doors and not on Twitter for everyone to see.”

Overall, Sterne and Davis remarked on broader movements that have attracted press attention — and militarization of the police — in the past decade, such as Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter protests. Large gatherings and growing activism have coincided with angry rhetoric online, increasingly viral video content and situations that sometimes leave journalists vulnerable in the middle.

As both sides of a heated situation become volatile, McGill Fellow Maureen Sheeran asked what journalists can do to earn back trust from readers and



Left: McGill Fellows Sammy Smith, Emily Giambalvo, and Kristin Bradshaw listen along with Moderator Janice Hume; Right: McGill Fellow Mollie Simon asks a question into the microphone.

garner greater respect among opposing groups.

“The best way to maintain that trust is to continue to report accurately,” Sterne said. “It’s cliché, but if you report what happens, even if they don’t like you or respect you, they’ll still read what you produce if they want to know what’s going on in the world.”

That’s particularly important as pervasive technology continues to change how — and how many — people are able to record text, photos and videos at these large events. Everyone may livestream videos from their phones of a protest, but journalists are there to provide the context that viewers need to understand what’s occurring and what may happen next.

“Journalists learn how to cover protests as a beat and get to know people,” Sterne said. “You interview them before and after and go to places where others may not go.”

When it comes to press freedom, he warned, independent or freelance reporters may have a tougher time than those with a traditional institution backing them. Police and protestors tend to have more familiarity with how to handle journalists with official press passes, TV trucks and video equipment with media insignia on the side. Those from less familiar publications with only a phone camera or notebook in hand should take precautions and be aware.



The McGill Fellows look towards McGill visiting Journalist Peter Sterne and Moderator Charles Davis

“One journalist I knew, who was attacked at a Berkeley protest, said he was an independent freelancer for an outlet but wouldn’t say which one,” Sterne said. “He was beaten badly.”

Independent reporters have a few resources in these situations. They can contact the National Lawyers Guild, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, Southern Poverty Law Center, the Society for Professional Journalists Legal Defense Fund and the National Press Photographers Association. Some organizations focus more on overseas attacks, but many of them communicate with each other and with the Freedom of the Press Foundation to assist journalists who need help.

“The U.S. is seen as a beacon of press freedom, and the First Amendment is one of the

strongest in accepting a critical and independent press,” Sterne said.

McGill Fellow Lindsey Conway asked for tips to keep journalists safe during protests and tense reporting assignments. Sterne suggested being wary of people dressed in all black who try to cover their faces, especially if they seem to be hiding or trying to commit an illegal act. In two cases in 2017, journalists were attacked when they filmed anti-fascist protestors spray painting signs.

“Try not to get into a confrontation with people who seem violent,” he added. “Many times, these people have reasonable fears of being photographed or videoed at a protest.”

This is also when it helps to know your sources and do pre-reporting, he said. If police and protestors on both sides



McGill Fellow SK Bowen listens intently.

know a reporter before the event occurs, there’s a much smaller chance that a conflict or attack will occur. During protests in Ferguson and St. Louis, for example, reporters documented the scene long enough to get to know people and become familiar with the scene. Those who reported at local newspapers or TV stations for years often shot the best footage or found the best stories because they knew where to go or who to interview.

“Don’t worry about being seen as an ally but about actually being an ally,” Sterne said. “It’s not bad if a source thinks that by talking to you, they will get a message out. You want people to trust you.”

On a national and international level, McGill Fellow Mollie Simon asked how the rhetoric about press freedom in the U.S. affects press freedom in other countries. Sterne agreed that

as our own president spreads “fake news” ideology, then it’s picked up by other countries. At the same time, Sterne doesn’t see the current press freedom slant as a long-term irreversible trend. Instead, he’s interested in watching the mid-term elections and any press freedom legislation that may come before Congress.

“What Trump is doing is demonizing journalists who report on him, but I don’t think Trump really cares when classified information is reported,” he said. “It’s more about White House intrigue, but what we need to protect the press on is what harms national security, which is a tougher sell to Congress.”

McGill Fellow Noelle Lashley asked about threats at the state and local levels as well. When it comes to protests and local incidents, Sterne said, it’s good for police officers to be trained on First Amendment freedoms and

for protestors to be educated on the ways journalists are helpful in spreading the news.

“In that sense, I see a lot of opportunity for change,” he said. “On our end, the best way to persuade people is to do good journalism and show them something they don’t know.”

For instance, in Boston, law enforcement officials and residents initially didn’t want to talk to journalists shedding light on abuse happening inside churches. However, once they learned how widespread the issue was, they were more grateful for the investigation and more likely to trust their local reporters. Since the stories have reached national prominence through movies such as *Spotlight*, everyday consumers have become more interested in stories that journalists report.

At the same time, as press freedom incidents occur, Sterne and others will continue to document the attacks and chilling statements that hinder reporters daily. As they collect more data, we’ll learn more about the changes in press freedoms and journalistic courage in the U.S.

“This issue didn’t start with Trump, but we started covering it with Trump because we woke up to it in 2017,” Sterne said. “We’ve only realized how bad it is now.”

At the Turbulent Confluence of Race, Politics and Sports: Covering the National Anthem Protests in the NFL

McGill Visiting Journalists:

D. Orlando Ledbetter, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
Steve Wyche, *NFL.com*

Moderator:

Vicki Michaelis, *Journalism Professor at the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication*



When NFL.com reporter Steve Wyche broke the story about then-49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick not standing for the National Anthem, he knew where to look on the field from a simple tip from a source. He heard from a colleague that Kaepernick sat for two preseason games, but he was in his sweats, so nobody had noticed. While in the press box that night, Wyche paid attention and saw it happen again. Given Kaepernick's recent interest in the Black Lives Matter movement and other social justice issues, Wyche had a feeling it may be more than getting his gameface ready.

"I went to the 49ers staff and they trust me and I trust them," Wyche said. "Relationship-building is key, and that's why they let me speak to him off to the side."

out of the press conference auditorium following the game, Wyche spoke with Kaepernick about what could happen and the context of other players doing this previously. Since they had built a rapport talking over the years while Wyche worked at the NFL Network, Kaepernick felt comfortable about opening up. In the middle of the conversation, Wyche knew this was a big story that would continue for some time. In the midst of the presidential campaign, this collision of race, sports, politics, youth and business would become the story to cover.

"He didn't run from it, and days later, it continued to build," Wyche said. "From my vantage point, my journalistic experience gave me the ability to contextualize everything going on around it."

Since the story broke, Wyche has been one of the lead voices in the aftermath. Reporters, sports commentators and fans have fallen on both sides of the discussion. Should players stand? How does this divide or unite Americans and one their favorite pastimes?

"It's amazing how many fellow journalists have taken sides, and for some of them, that's their job," he said. "I just report it, and if people are upset, that's their issue."

During their careers, Wyche and AJC reporter Orlando Ledbetter have dealt with fans, commentators and business people telling them to "stick to sports" when it comes to reporting the games. Once sources come forward to address social issues, however, that's not possible.

"Once you have the issue and

know the history, you do your job to cover both sides of the story," Ledbetter said. "The 'stick to sports' idea has the same roots as 'Shut up, boy, and go play.' That's what registers with me when I hear that."

Now everyone is watching. Reporters are engaged from begin to end of the game. Previously, fans and journalists alike weren't alert during the National Anthem. Fans trailed in from their tailgates, and reporters milled around the press box before settling into their seats for the game to start. Now they're looking closely at who is standing, kneeling, locking arms in solidarity or standing by themselves. Team owners are issuing statements in the middle of games, and newsrooms are creating committees to discuss sports and social issues.

"We're spending the beginning of the game with binoculars," Ledbetter said. "Now we're trying to contextualize all of this."

Events are more than events when it comes to news reporting, Michaelis emphasized. Instead of checking Facebook and watching replay monitors, sports reporters are looking for stories while in the press box.

"It's changed the world for us," Wyche said. "It's a different place that we're living in covering sports now."

Throughout the process, Wyche and Ledbetter have remained vigilant about the



Moderator Vicki Michaelis and McGill Visiting Journalists D. Orlando Ledbetter and Steve Wyche.

ways race and politics play into stories. When the two worked at the AJC together in 2007, they broke the story about former Falcons quarterback Michael Vick being involved with a dog fighting ring. They were the only black voices in editorial meetings at the AJC at the time and were the only ones to touch the story for three weeks, even among reporters in Virginia where the story broke, Wyche said. With a background in law, Ledbetter combed Secretary of State documents while Wyche waited in parking lots of black churches in Surry County, Virginia.

"We had impeccable sources

and were crushing everybody on the story," Wyche said. "I had a race element in every story I wrote for three weeks, and we saw Atlanta as a city split."

McGill Fellow Sammy Smith asked how Wyche and Ledbetter deal with being among the minority in their newsrooms and how sports journalists can accommodate more voices.

"If you watch ESPN, how many black non-former football players do you see? Think about that," Wyche said. "Does that tell you we don't have enough qualified black journalists? No, it shows you how few opportunities that people of color get."

Wyche ticked off the number

of faces he hasn't seen on TV — black women, Latinos, East Indians, Native Americans and others.

"This is an uphill battle," Wyche added. "The main thing we can do is keep talking about it."

Wyche has these conversations at the NFL Network and in the various locker rooms he visits. He talks to players about their backgrounds and experiences to understand how they grew up, what they thought about the election and where they stand on social issues.

"Do the best you can to relate and understand," said

Ledbetter, who has worked in both print and broadcast media. As the former Pro Football Writers of America president — and the first African American president of the group — he got to know players, coaches and sports reporters across various sports. He has also spoken on ESPN, MSNBC and the NFL Network and learned various perspectives.

"It's not bad to feel uncomfortable, if you go sit down and talk," Wyche said. "I'll go sit down with the biggest redneck football player, and once we have a conversation, we understand each other."

The same applies for female

reporters who may face difficult situations in male locker rooms, Ledbetter said. Race and gender relations have come a long way since the 1980s, he said, but there is still more work to do. Today's generation of reporters will be the ones who push the conversation even further.

"Most people are more comfortable now on both sides," Ledbetter said. "It's better now from the old days, and more people will jump in and help you."



Left: McGill Fellow Nicolle Sartain; Right: McGill Fellow Saleen Martin
Middle: The McGill Fellows weren't the only students to attend the Symposium. Many Grady students stopped in to listen to the visiting journalists throughout the day.

Participants and Contact



2017 McGill Fellows

Sara Katherine Bowen, Senior, Journalism and Finance

Kristin Bradshaw, Senior, Journalism and International Affairs

Mary Carol Butterfield, Senior, Journalism and Political Science

Lindsey Conway, Senior, Journalism

Emily Giambalvo, Senior, Grady Sports Media Certificate

Zach Hansen, Senior, Journalism

Noelle Lashley, Senior, Journalism

Saleen Martin, Graduate Student, Health and Medical Journalism

Nicolle Sartain, Senior, Journalism

Maureen Sheeran, Senior, Journalism

Mollie Simon, Senior, Journalism

Sammy Smith, Senior, Journalism

Moderators

Mark Johnson, Senior Lecturer, University of Georgia

Charles Davis, Grady College Dean, University of Georgia

Vicki Michaelis, Professor, University of Georgia

Janice Hume, Department Head, University of Georgia

McGill Visiting Journalists

Billy Howard, Photojournalist

Beth Reinhard, Reporter, The Washington Post

Peter Sterne, Senior Reporter, Freedom of the Press Foundation

D. Orlando Ledbetter, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Steve Wyche, Reporter, NFL.com

McGill Guest Lecturer

Souad Mekhennet, Author, "I Was Told to Come Alone"

Contact Us

For more information about the McGill Lecture and Symposium:

Diane Murray: 706.542.5038, murrayd@uga.edu

The McGill program is on the web at www.grady.uga.edu/mcgill



Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA