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Gardner-Webb Will Reschedule Former 'News and Observer' Political Reporter and Columnist

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Office of University
Communications

March 12, 2020

Program with Rob Christensen Will be held in the Fall

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University John R. Dover Library and the Department of Social Sciences have postponed the program with journalist and author Rob Christensen to fall 2020. Christensen will be discussing his most recent book, “The Rise and Fall of the Branchhead Boys.”



“The book tells the story of North Carolina’s leading political family—the Scotts, who influenced a whole generation of Tar Heel political leaders including Terry Sanford, Jim Hunt and Jesse Helms,” Christensen shared.

“Three generations of Scotts—W. Kerr Scott, Robert Scott, and Meg Scott Phipps—held statewide office. The book is also the story of the struggle of rural North Carolina to get the amenities that city folks had including electricity, telephones and paved roads.”

Christensen retired from “The News and Observer” in Raleigh, N.C., after writing about North Carolina politics as a reporter and a columnist for 45 years. He has appeared on more than 600 television or radio programs as a political analyst including the CBS Evening News, CNN’s Inside Politics, MSNBC’s Hardball with Chris Matthews, ABC’s Nightline, Fox News, various PBS programs, and D.G. Martin’s Bookwatch on UNC-TV.

He has contributed chapters to five books on North Carolina and the South. His first solo book, “The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics,” (UNC Press) received the prestigious Ragan Old North State Award in 2008 from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association. The association was established in 1900 and presents this honor annually to the best work of non-fiction written in the state.

In 2019, Christensen received the award again for his book on the Branchhead Boys, which weaves together interviews from dozens of political luminaries and archival research. The book is an engaging and definitive historical account of the Scott family's legacy and explores how race and populism informed North Carolina politics during the 20th Century.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.

