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### Gardner-Webb Hosts Former 'News and Observer' Political Reporter and Columnist

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**CAMPUS NEWS**

## Gardner-Webb Hosts Former ‘News and Observer’ Political Reporter and Columnist

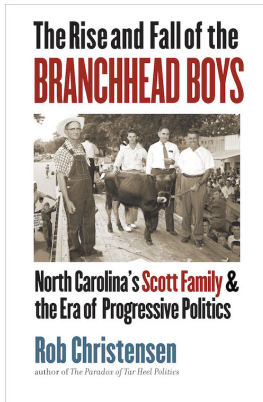
BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON AUGUST 13, 2021



### Rob Christensen Discusses His Book on the State’s Leading Political Family on Sept. 17

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University John R. Dover Library and the Department of Social Sciences will host journalist and author Rob Christensen on Sept. 17 to discuss his book, “The Rise and Fall of the Branchhead Boys.” The program is open to the public and will begin at 7 p.m. in Hamrick Hall Auditorium. Earlier in the day, Christensen will be speaking to political science classes.

“‘The Rise and Fall of the Branchhead Boys’ 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 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

After his presentation, Christensen will take questions from the audience. Copies of his books will also be available.

***Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 48 hours prior to the event. Please call 704-406-2155 or email [disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu) with your request.***

*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.*

## WGWG Interview with Rob Christensen

Rob Christensen shares about his book and latest project in this interview for WGWG: