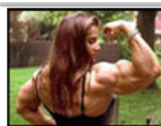




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Newsman Sam Donaldson announces new journalism degree

By Adriana Gómez Licón / El Paso Times
Posted: 11/03/2009 12:00:00 AM MST

EL PASO -- Sam Donaldson, who became a broadcast legend by challenging the powers that be in Washington, returned to UTEP on Monday to tout the school's new multimedia journalism program.

Photo gallery: [Sam Donaldson visits UTEP](#)

"You can't do it the old ways. You can't go and take video and television or print, and then say I'm educated in the business that I'd like to pursue," Donaldson said. "You have to have the whole range."

The 75-year-old newsman, once ABC's White House correspondent, spoke before a crowd of more than 100 people at the University of Texas at El Paso.

He reminisced about the days when editors would shout "stop the presses" and people would depend on TV and radio to learn about national events such as the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963 and the Watergate scandal a decade after that.

Donaldson, who retired in February, covered the Carter, Reagan and Clinton administrations. He also got a feel for the Internet starting in 1999, when he was lucky if dozens would watch a slow-speed streaming newscast. He co-hosted "Politics Live" on ABC's digital and Web channel.

"The way we looked was strange and not very watchable," he said. "Right now is when streaming video is really getting started."

Donaldson graduated from Texas Western College, now

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Retired television newsman Sam Donaldson, right... (Photos by Rudy Gutierrez / El Paso Times)

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UTEP, in 1955, when television news was in its infancy.

"The print guys looked at us as the new video idiots," he said.

Donaldson said the journalists of tomorrow will have to be more agile than ever.

Until this fall, UTEP offered degrees in electronic media, for those interested in TV and radio, and print media, for those looking to work for newspapers and magazines.

But UTEP has merged the two degrees and is launching the new bachelor of arts in multimedia journalism through the Department of Communication. Professors said the university is a pioneer in offering a program of this

kind.

"We have been able to move really quickly in this direction, when a lot of other institutions with traditional media programs, it's been a little harder for them to change," said Zita Arocha, a journalism professor.

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Arocha said she hoped to have a multimedia training academy to teach professors at UTEP how to implement different platforms in journalism. Frank Pérez, chair of the communication department, said they expect to hire one professor who can teach communication theory and journalism.

Some of the classes that the degree plan includes are multimedia storytelling, audio and video news production, ethics, investigative journalism and a news magazine class in which students produce stories for a Web site called Borderzine.com.

Lauren Pace, an English literature major at UTEP, attended the event to see Donaldson. Pace said she is thinking about changing her major to multimedia journalism.

"This is definitely a new way of journalism that can be introduced to us," she said. "It's great to see that there are other aspects of writing and other ways to go about it."

Adriana Gómez Licón may be reached at agomez@elpasotimes.com; 546-6129.

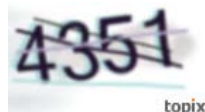
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