

Former National Geographic Editor speaks on campus

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Reporter

"If you are to understand the world and crucial issues, you must understand its geography," Gilbert Grosvenor said to a full audience on Jan. 9 in McCrary Theatre.

Grosvenor, chairman of the National Geographic Society Board of Trustees, addressed faculty and students about the importance of geography.

"Unfortunately for most Americans geography is a subject that has almost vanished from the American classroom during the last half of the 20th century," he said. As a result, one in three Americans cannot follow basic north, south, east and west directions, one in seven adults cannot locate the United States on a map and one in four adults cannot locate the Pacific Ocean on a world map.

Although the National Geographic Society describes geography as "the world and all that's



Annette Randall / Photo Editor
Gilbert Grosvenor, spoke to Elon community as part of the theme of Winter Term.

in it," Grosvenor, the magazine's editor from 1970-1980, presented a five-part definition of geography to the attentive audience, stressing that geography is not just a place and a location.

"Geography is how humans

interact with their environment and how an environment interacts with human beings," Grosvenor said earlier in the day. "It's the interconnection that makes it great."

Grosvenor, who began his career with National Geographic in the 1950s, continued by addressing one local and one global issue he feels is vital to the study of geography. On the global scale, Grosvenor says there is a lot Americans do not know about Islamic countries. Out of the world's 191 countries, 41 are predominately Muslim, and, Islam is the world's fastest growing religion. Grosvenor added that Muslims created the number system used today and founded the first university in Cyro in 972 AD.

"Why do extreme fundamentalist Muslims hate Americans?" Grosvenor asked the audience.

One reason for Muslims' hatred, he said, is the U.S. support of Israel during the Middle East

conflict. A second reason is the U.S. rescue of Kuwait during the Gulf War.

Grosvenor also said he believed Muslim extremists dislike Americans due to their poverty and our wealth as a nation.

Another cause is Hollywood, he said, and film's depiction of sex, violence, firearms and alcohol. "Muslim's view the United States through a lens of Hollywood films."

On the local level, Grosvenor said the United States must take the arrival of Hispanic immigrants more seriously. According to the 2000 Census, the Hispanic population has grown by 58 percent in the U.S. since 1990 and there are more than 35 million Hispanics legally living in the U.S.

"I feel the U.S. is not preparing itself to assimilate the Hispanic influx," Grosvenor said. He added that one in five Hispanics do not speak English at home in America, but the num-

ber is probably closer to one in four due to illegal immigration.

"English language proficiency is crucial," he said.

Thirty one percent of Hispanic boys and 26 percent of Hispanic girls drop out of high school.

"We must provide equal and fair opportunities for the immigrant population."

"Most economists believe, and I agree, that Hispanics fuel the greatest economic growth in U.S. history," Grosvenor said. "The question is—are we creating short term prosperity without dealing with long term obligations?"

Before concluding with a slide show revealing some of the awe-inspiring images associated with National Geographic, Grosvenor said, "If you remember one thing tonight at this address remember only a well educated individual can intelligently address critical issues at whole."

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In addition to the Academic Village, three new residence halls will be opening in Danieley Center this fall at a cost of about \$4.5 million. These halls will include one 80 person building similar to the current Danieley residence halls.

Two single-bedroom apartment buildings, which will house 64 students, are also being constructed. These apartments will include four bedrooms, two baths, a living room and a kitchenette.

In addition to the completion of the residence halls, Elon expects

the Carlton renovation to be complete by the fall of 2002. The 1.5 million renovation, which began on December 17, 2001, will include El Centro de Espanol, the Isabella Cannon Centre for International Studies, a new multimedia foreign language center, classroom and office space.

In addition, the building will be updated with new central heating and cooling, new wiring, ceilings and flooring. The floor plan will also be revised for better access.

Bettina Brown, Assistant Dean of International Programs said that the new location than the Isabella Canon Centre's current location in Alamance 109, will provide more resources and computer access for students. "More resources means more opportunities," she said.

Brown said that the center is overcrowded in its current location. Students must come into her office to research study abroad trips while she is often busy with other tasks such as making phone calls. And the current international

center does not have enough space to house all its members; two workers have separate rooms down the hall from the main office.

El Centro will also be moving from its current location in Moseley to Carlton. Sylvia Munoz, Director of El Centro de Espanol, said that the move would be beneficial for students. "I think that it is going to be easier to work together with the Foreign Language Department and with the Office of International Programs to offer the students more opportunities to improve their language skills," she said.

Munoz also said that the new location will be bigger and allow El Centro to teach more than one class at a time.

The Belk Track, named for philanthropist Irwin Belk, is also projected to be ready for use by fall 2002. The construction for the track will begin this spring and will include eight track lanes, space for field events such as the high jump and javelin and an infield soccer



Annette Randall / Photo Editor

Construction seems to be underway in various areas around campus. Elon reports that much of the construction will be complete in the fall of 2002.

practice field.

In addition to these projects, Elon is expanding Koury Center, making room for added recreation space, a weight room and dance studios. The University is also pre-

paring to complete the building of the new restaurant by the Acorn Cafe and to constructing a larger greenhouse for the biology department.

“ This will be a unique living and learning environment for students to live with other students committed to the some academic pursuits. ”