

Meacham: Jackson's presidency successful, lasting for his eccentricities as character

Natalie Butler
Reporter

If you ask Jon Meacham, previous editor of Newsweek magazine, former President Andrew Jackson would have loved YouTube. In Elon University's 10th annual Baird Pulitzer Prize Lecture, Sept. 27 in McCrary Theatre, Meacham said Jackson sought to rouse Americans politically by creating an engaging, true-to-life character, focusing on those living on the frontier and more disconnected parts of the country.

"(Jackson) understood that in a mass democracy, people needed a president that was a real live character in the drama of their daily lives," Meacham said.

Meacham in 2009 received a Pulitzer Prize for his book "American Lion: Andrew Jackson and the White House." He justified Jackson's notoriously crazy character and support of two of America's "great original sins," slavery and hostility toward Native Americans, as being vital to his roles as a father figure and character of drama to the American people.

"Jackson was a critical figure," Meacham said. "I think he really did invent the modern presidency as we recognize it."

Though he appeared crazy, there was method behind his madness, Meacham said. Jackson worked behind the scenes to find peaceful solutions, deliberating while his tirades allowed for more time.

Meacham said he finds a similar quality in politicians throughout history and present day.

"They are as flawed and occasionally short-sighted as all of us," Meacham said. "They make compromises in the worst sense to get what they get, and yet for five minutes along the way, they manage to transcend those human limitations and do something for the long-term good of the country."

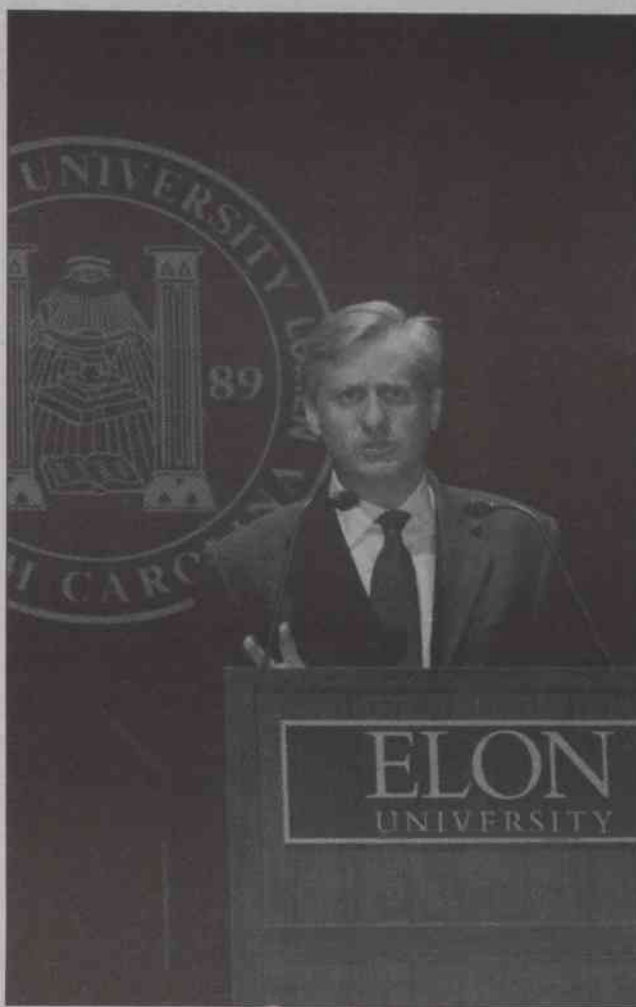
Jackson's presidential successors saw him as inspiring because he was a dynamic figure. Meacham said he believes the best way to judge a president's impact is by looking at the judgments of those who immediately followed him.

Though Jackson fought on the side of slavery and the removal of Native Americans, Meacham said the president's "sinful" values were just a part of his influence in America that reverberates throughout history.

"You learn more from presidents who have great failings and great successes," Meacham said. "History is a complicated tale in which good and bad are all tangled up together."

Meacham said Jackson took on a cantankerous personality during times of conflict. He often intimidated those in opposition to his beliefs, including the state of South Carolina during its attempt to secede from the union.

"This is a man who had killed a man in cold blood while



TRACY RAETZ | Photographer
Jon Meacham, former editor of Newsweek magazine, talks about his new book on Andrew Jackson, called, "American Lion: Andrew Jackson and the White House."

his own boot was filling with blood because the other man had shot him first," Meacham said. "This was not someone you picked a fight with."

He said Jackson's dynamic character, though, was what made him a successful president.

"To make all of that worthwhile, to make it matter to people as more than entertainment, you have to be able to wield executive power and bend legislature to your will," Meacham said.

NEWS BRIEFS

Entrepreneurship students network in Raleigh

Students from business professor Gary Palin's Entrepreneurship Skills course attended an event in Raleigh geared at networking for entrepreneurs in North Carolina.

The event, held at Brier Creek Country Club, allowed students to network with 80 high growth and technology entrepreneurs and held a panel. The event was put on by The Indus Entrepreneurs of Carolina.

Professor elected as program chair for APSA section

Laura Roselle, professor of political science, was elected to serve as the program chair for the American Political Science Association's Information Technology and Policy section.

The APSA is an organization focused on the development of political science as a discipline, working to improve research and communication, expand teaching and learning and diversify the field, among other objectives. Roselle will serve as program chair from 2012 to 2013.

Communications advisory board members talk on panel

The School of Communication's advisory board visited Elon University's campus Sept. 24 to Sept. 26, and two of the members participated in a panel discussion about journalism.

The talk was called "The News We Watch: Is It Getting More Opinionated and, If So, Is That a Bad Thing?" Panelists included senior producer of "60 Minutes," Michael Radutzky, and Nina Easton, the Washington, D.C. editor of Fortune Magazine and a Fox News contributor.

Professors develop undergraduate research on health sciences

Paul Miller, a professor of exercise sport science, and Eric Hall, an associate professor of exercise sport science, worked to develop a nationally-recognized division of undergraduate research devoted to health sciences.

Miller will serve as the first division chair for the newly approved Health Sciences Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research. The division will focus on nutrition, exercise science, nursing, pre-medicine and occupational health and safety.

Library celebrates banned book week

Belk Library is currently displaying books banned around the country to celebrate Banned Book Week, Sept. 27 - Oct. 1.

Banned Book Week is an event that celebrates the significance for the First Amendment by highlighting the freedom to read books that have been banned across the United States.

Hillel donates food to North Carolina food bank

Hillel, Elon University's Jewish organization, sponsored a food drive on campus during the 10-day period between the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Students, faculty and staff donated 137 pounds of food, which was then donated to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

Jersey of Hudgins to be retired at family weekend game

The No. 19 jersey of Elon University football player Terrell Hudgins will be retired prior to the Oct. 2 game against the Samford University Bulldogs.

The ceremony will take place on the field before the scheduled game at 1:30 p.m.

Calendar: Sept. 29 to Oct. 5

Sept. 29

- * Catholic Mass on Wednesday nights 7:30 p.m., Holt Chapel
- * Meet Elon Graduate Admissions at the University of Virginia Graduate Fair
- * D.C. Chapter Welcome to the City
- * Michael Steele, 'The 2010 Elections - A Republican Party Perspective,' 7:30 p.m. Whitley Auditorium
- * Support South Africa service-learning projects with Phoenix Cash, Moseley, all day
- * EVI tutoring interest meeting, 7 to 8 p.m. Harden Dining Hall

Sept. 30

- * Philadelphia Chapter Welcome to the City
- * Chicago IGNITE Nite at Redmond's
- * Midnight Meals with Twisted Measure, 11 p.m.
- * EVI tutoring interest meeting, 7 to 8 p.m. Harden Dining Hall
- * Interest meeting for advertising club 7 p.m., McEwen 210
- * Support South Africa Service-Learning Projects with Phoenix Cash swipes in Moseley
- * Careers in Business Law panel
- * Mosques, Muslims and the Media: A forum on Park 51, the 'Ground Zero Mosque'

Oct. 1

- * Family Weekend 2010 events, Oct. 1-3
- * Collage - 7 and 8:15 p.m. Yeager Recital Hall
- * Department of Music Faculty Gala
- * Support South Africa Service-Learning Projects with Phoenix Cash swipes in Moseley

Oct. 2

- * Chicago Chapter AIDS Run/Walk at Grant Park
- * Family and Friends Day at Elon Law
- * DC Chapter Apple/Pumpkin Picking Family Day at Cox Farm
- * Collage - 6 and 7:15 p.m. Yeager Recital Hall
- * 5th Annual MBA Tailgate Party

Oct. 3

- * LEAF Weekly Worship and Fellowship - Sunday evenings

Oct. 4

- * Christian Karkow, opening reception 12:15 p.m. Arts West Gallery
- * Bike and hike trip interest meetings, 6 p.m. Koury Commons
- * Methodist Fellowship Meeting, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. McCoy Commons

Oct. 5

- * Van training dates - contact Michael Williams or Drama Holder for more information
- * Bike and hike trip interest meetings, Koury Commons, 6 p.m.
- * Fairytales and Prostitutes: 20 Years after "Pretty Woman" 6:30 p.m. Yeager Recital Hall
- * Student Global AIDS Campaign interest meeting, Moseley 216, 8 to 9 p.m.

For more dates and information about campus events, visit the calendar on the Elon website.