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Karen Armstrong kicks off Bryan Series Ex-nun discusses her journey of faith

Laura Milot/Laura Blythe-Goodman
Staff Writers

On Sept. 27, the Bryan Series introduced the first of three speakers, Karen Armstrong, an award-winning novelist. Armstrong shared both her personal faith journey and her expertise on the major world religions.

Jackie Amis, junior, enjoyed both the content and the delivery of Armstrong's talk. "She had a very British sense of humor," said Amis. "It was interesting the way she put things together. She said things you might know already, but she said them in an interesting way."

At age 17, Armstrong entered a convent "hoping to leave the mess of my adolescent confusion far behind." She talked about her struggles in the convent and about her decision to leave the convent. "I knew I had to leave because I wasn't going to be a good nun, and if you're not going to be a good nun, there's no point in being one at all," Armstrong said.

After leaving the convent, Armstrong struggled to adjust to life and continue her education. "The hardest thing was trying to live in a world

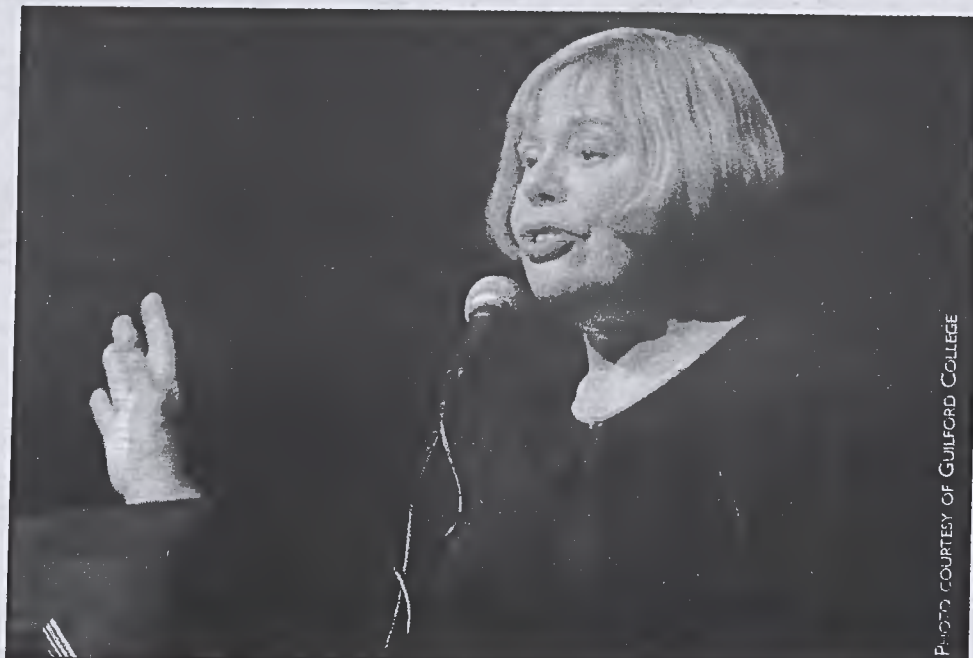


PHOTO COURTESY OF GUILFORD COLLEGE

Ex-nun Karen Armstrong spoke on Sept. 27 as part of this year's Bryan Series as a secular when inside I was still a nun," she said. "I was convinced I would end my days in a locked ward. I became suicidal and anorexic, not because I wanted to die, but because I didn't know how to live."

In addition to the harsh conversion to life as an ex-nun, another cause of

Armstrong's anxiety was her undiagnosed epilepsy. The diagnosis of her epilepsy alleviated some of her worry about her sanity, but she continued to feel lost.

"Once I thought I could trust my own mind, I knew I had a future," Armstrong said. "It was a bit of a bum-

mer that I was going mad, but besides that I realized there was something I could do in the world."

After graduating and working for television, Armstrong took the opportunity to work in Jerusalem. While there, she experienced the similarities of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. She developed what she calls "triple vision," which is looking at events from the perspective of all three religions.

Continuing her studies of these and the other world religions, she discovered the common thread of all religions is the importance of compassion. "What holds us back from the Holy is selfishness; if we get beyond that then we discover a new dimension of humanity," said Armstrong.

Armstrong discovered that the most important thing about religion is not a person's specific beliefs, which makes conflicts over these beliefs seem unimportant. Instead, Armstrong found that religion is compassion in motion. "Theology is a process, it makes no sense unless you put it into action; you can only understand it if you put it into

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Tulane students come to Guilford

Pascale Vallee
Staff Writer

After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, tens of colleges were flooded, and some destroyed.

Two students, Paul Jordan and Jordon Lenter, relocated to Greensboro to attend Guilford as transfer students from Tulane University.

Paul Jordan, sophomore, came to Guilford because his

mother was familiar with the college. "She knew it was a good school," said Jordan. He is a double major in History and Asian Studies.

Originally from Manhattan, Jordan's family moved to Chapel Hill, N.C., when he was a young child. Jordan initially wanted to attend UNC Chapel Hill to be closer to home after the Katrina disaster. "They basically told me to go take a hike," said Jordan.

Jordan applied to UNC Chapel Hill as a transfer student two days after their deadline. Jordan was rejected due to this technicality, despite his extenuating circumstances. His mother then got in touch with the administration at Guilford, and Jordan was registered at the college two days

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NC resident and sophomore Paul Jordan

Master planning continues

labari Sellars
Staff Writer

At night, the sound of hammers pounding can be heard from English hall. Students can't go one day without seeing construction equipment on campus. The music of machines is the first sign of drastic change at Guilford.

On Sept. 28, after an open forum and presentation, Guilford proceeded with the second phase of its long-range campus renovation known as "The Master Plan." The plan is being used to decide how the campus will be renovated and improved for future students, alumni, professors and members of the community.

"The Master Plan is about utilizing the physical space

on campus," said Aaron Fetrow, Dean for Campus Life. "All of this coincides with the fact that we are a



PHOTO BY KATE TALBOT

Chabotar spoke on Sept. 28 growing institution."

In the second phase, leaders of the Master Plan held a presentation for the next

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