

# Today's heroes at mercy of media

By JAMES MILLER  
Of the Emerald

The heroes that society desperately needs are becoming a vanishing species, Ray Browne, popular culture department chairer at Bowling Green University, said Wednesday.

Browne, speaking on "Icons and Heroes in American Popular Culture," told a University audience that the blame for this must ultimately lie in the mass media.

"No heroes can be created today without the media's help," he said. "The media has the power to create and destroy our heroes." He cited the Farrah phenomenon as an example.

"Farrah Fawcett-Majors is doomed to oblivion because of her decision to leave Charlie's Angels," he said.

Fawcett-Majors' current popularity, however, lies not in her face or figure but in her hair, according to Browne.

"Farrah's strength is in her hairdo," he said. "That is what has made her so special. Her hairdo represents today's youthful rebellion. The media has picked up on this."

Browne said heroes were needed to offset the average person's relatively dull existence.

Browne used two recent deaths, those of Bing Crosby and Elvis Presley, to help define heroes as applied in our society.

"While both men were extremely famous, only Elvis was a true hero," he said. Elvis had charisma, meaning sex appeal, while Crosby was more like the guy next door. A true hero needs to take himself seriously. Bing never took him-



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

Popular culture professor Ray Browne told a University audience Wednesday that heroes were made and destroyed by the media. Browne, of Bowling Green University, spoke about vanishing heroes and societal needs in the lecture.

self seriously — Elvis did."

Browne, who lectures on popular culture at Bowling Green University, was asked who the most popular hero of 20th century America was.

"Probably John Kennedy," he answered. "But if you look in today's newspapers, even he isn't sacred anymore. We don't tend to keep our heroes around for long."

Browne also discussed icons, which were defined by him as "things that tend to be revered without our thinking about it." The golden arches of McDonald's were given as a prime example of an

icon.

"Those arches are much more than a big M," he said. "They are also double rainbows, symbolizing gold and wealth."

Browne said it was important for society to concentrate on the present in the field of literature.

"We need to do less thinking about past masterpieces. It is just as important to study Harold Robbins as it is William Shakespeare," he said.

"If we have not gone beyond quoting Aristotle, then we as a society have really been crippled."

## Professors to examine age issues

At what age does a professor bow down and pass the lectern on to "younger blood?"

In what one regular attendant described as "the world's shortest meeting," the University Senate voted unanimously in favor of establishing a committee to investigate the issue of faculty retirement Wednesday.

If approved by the University Assembly, the committee will explore the impact of such policies as mandatory age requirements and early retirement. It would report its recommendations to the Senate in April, 1978.

"Clearly, we know little about the University retirement programs and their implications for the future," Richard Littman, a senator and Advisory Council secretary told the Senate.

He added that the "sudden state of activity on the national level" in the area of retirement regulations and changing of the mandatory retirement age was an important consideration in the establishment of the committee.

If a bill presently before Congress passes, which allows for the exclusion of University faculty from age requirements, Littman suggested there could be a legal challenge that the exemption is discriminatory, according to senate member Barry Siegal.

But University Provost Paul Olum said "in reality, the committee's report will not have any effect on legislation now before the joint House and Senate committee."

The Senate recommendation to form the committee now moves to the University Assembly for final approval at its meeting next Wednesday in Room 150 Geology.

## Museums work out solution

By RICH SEVEN  
Of the Emerald

Thanks to a cooperative agreement, two local museums will once again be able to offer their services to the students and other citizens of the area next week.

The University Museum of Natural History and the Willamette Science and Technology Center (WSTC) have worked out a solution to provide the WSTC with a temporary home and will enable the University Museum to resume its regular daily hours for public display of its art gallery.

Under the agreement, the center will move into two office spaces in the University Museum.

It will receive the space free of rental charge. In return, WSTC staff will perform services for the museum for no fee.

The public portion of the museum has been closed since last spring and the center fired 12 employees temporarily suspending operation the week the museum closed.

The center is expected to inhabit the museum until the new museum is built in Alton Baker Park late in 1978.

"At the museum, we'll continue to operate our science supply store, we'll maintain an office and a record keeping facility and we'll be able to maintain our community contacts," says WSTC Director Tom Wildish.

The center's staff will also resume other museum activities. They will place exhibits in unfurnished areas, handle the sale of museum publications and provide a telephone answering service.

The University museum will be able to operate its public display area once again.

"The museum will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.," says John Baldwin, dean of the College of Arts and Science. "And as soon as we have a schedule worked out, we will be sending a letter to local school systems to notify them of the new hours."

The WSTC staff is currently moving some of their material — such as an enormous polar bear — over to the museum.

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