

Legendary journalist criticizes media's assault

■ Daniel Schorr, of National Public Radio, decries television for "making an assault on reality"

By Emily Gust
Oregon Daily Emerald

At the 1939 World's Fair, Daniel Schorr tried out RCA's newest technology: The television. After seeing himself on screen, he remembers walking away somewhat skeptical of the device's potential.

"It's a nice stunt," Schorr said. "But it won't go very far."

Now the senior news analyst for National Public Radio, Schorr realizes his judgment was a bit off. But that doesn't stop him from wishing he had been right.

In a keynote address to a crowd of around 450 students, faculty and community members Tuesday, Schorr talked about the increasing fuzziness between reality and non-reality invading today's news media, especially television.

Schorr's speech highlighted the University's Convocation, which took place in the EMU Ballroom. The centuries-old tradition of Convocation is the ceremonial beginning of the academic year, while also giving the University a chance to recognize faculty members for their accomplishments.

Schorr's "work and life are the epitomes" of the learning pursuits engaged by all those in the University community, University Presi-

dent Dave Frohnmayer said in his opening remarks before Schorr's speech.

In a career spanning more than a half century, Schorr covered many of the biggest events in the past 50 years and worked for a variety of media organizations, including CBS, and helped set up the Cable News Network.

He is also a journalist who has consistently worked to preserve honesty and integrity in reporting, to the point of being threatened with jail time for refusing to reveal the name of a source.

And so it bothers Schorr when he sees television news reporting increasingly based on twisting what is real and presenting "virtual reality" instead.

Take the fact that during Dan Rather's report from Times Square last New Year's Eve, a billboard in the background was replaced with a CBS logo, when in reality the sign advertised Budweiser and NBC.

This was just some of many examples given by Schorr of how "television is making an assault on reality." His speech — entitled "Forgive Us Our Press Passes" and delivered without the use of notes — focused on this assault.

His critique also included the Internet, which blurs the lines even more. Schorr said with this technology, someone can be a writer, editor and publisher all in one.

"You can also have your own ethical standards," Schorr said.

Schorr, for his own part, has spent his career telling people what they don't know, and trying to distinguish reality from virtual reality, he said.

Some audience members seemed to appreciate his efforts. Near the crowd of people approaching Schorr for autographs after the speech, Elizabeth Steffensen, a Eugene resident and one of the coordinators for the Million Mom March, said she and her six children have spent a lot of time listening to the NPR analyst. She said if everyone listened to Schorr, some of the world's problems could be lessened.

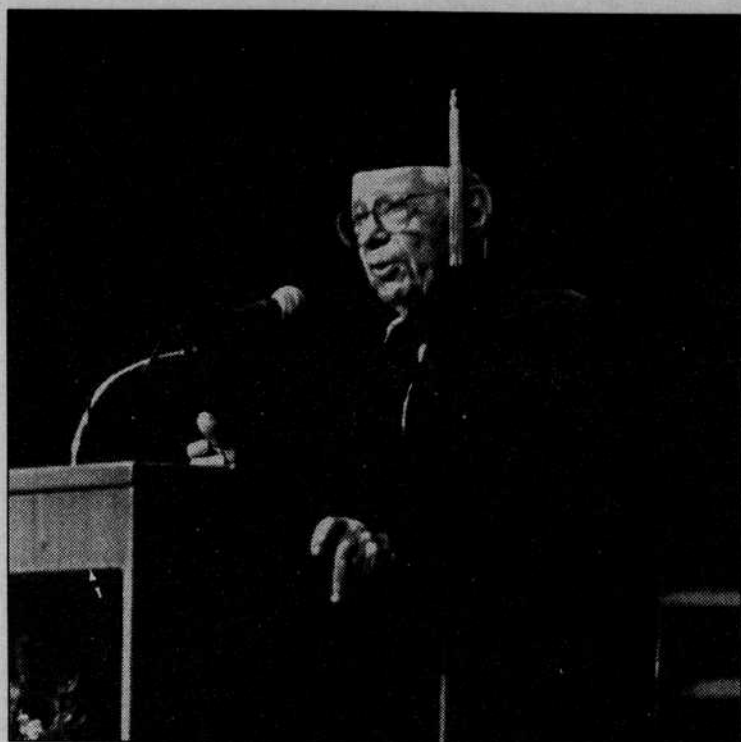
"He's worth listening to for any problem [people] might have," Steffensen said.

The final story he shared Tuesday shows exactly how much he has invested in telling the truth.

After CBS refused to air a Mike Wallace interview with a cigarette company "whistle blower," it was later revealed that the company's president actually owned a cigarette company.

It was only after this conflict of interest had gone public that CBS decided to air the interview. By then, however, Schorr saw the real moment of action — the moment when Wallace could have made a stand for his journalistic integrity — had been missed.

In the film "The Insider," which dramatized the incident, the character playing Wallace was asked



Dan Brunell Emerald
National Public Radio's Daniel Schorr speaks at the University's Convocation on Tuesday. Schorr reflected on his storied career and discussed the future of the media.

why he didn't threaten to resign if the segment was not aired. Schorr said the character answered: "And wander for the rest of my life in the wilderness of NPR?"

Schorr's response to that comment at the end of the speech painted the difference between the two

men, consequently drawing a line between Wallace's field — television — and Schorr's, which is now radio.

"You've got it wrong, Mike. You're wandering in a very affluent wilderness," he said. "I have found the promised land."

Blood drive draws needed supply

■ The Lane Memorial Blood Bank will be in the EMU's Fir Room from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

By Bennett Lacy
for the Emerald

Let's face it, we can't live without blood.

That's why the Lane Memorial Blood Bank is back on campus this week with its third-annual University Blood Drive. Tuesday was the first of a two-day effort to increase Lane County's blood supply. Today, you can go to the Fir Room in the Erb Memorial Union from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to help save lives and for your efforts, receive free snacks.

Zoe Jones, a senior double-majoring in art history and romance languages, is the Blood Drive Chair for the Student Alumni Association and has been working hard to make the drive a success.

"The SAA brings the blood drive to campus to give students a chance to give blood who usually wouldn't," Jones said. "I am planning on giving blood today and I hope that more students do the same."

The blood bank is encouraging as many students as possible to help out. Donors should be in good health, at least 17 years old, weigh more than 110 pounds and have had no body piercings or tattoos within the past year.

Chris Stockdale, donor recruiter for the Lane County Memorial Blood Bank, is anticipating a large turnout for the drive.

"We hope to get at least 200 donors over the two-day draw," Stockdale said. "We have a bigger draw at the University because we are here for a longer period of time throughout the day. Plus it's more convenient if the opportunity is on campus for the students."

Although the blood bank routinely goes to other businesses and hospitals to raise blood, the reason for the greater success at the University is because they bring all of the equipment from the blood bank



Dan Brunell Emerald
Registered nurse Liz Snake prepares to draw blood from Nathan Pietsch in the Fir Room on Tuesday. The Red Cross reports that the country's blood supply is at an all-time low.

to the University so that it can serve more people.

Another reason for the blood drive is to prepare for the upcoming holiday season. The increase in car accidents attributed to big holidays increases the demand for blood.

"Summer holidays also see a demand in blood transfusions," Stockdale said. "Big three-day weekend holidays such as the Fourth of July bring an increase in the demand for blood."

Jessica Humphreys, a junior sociology major, came on Tuesday to show her support.

"I give blood because it's an easy way to help people," Humphreys said. "I have given in the past."

For those donors who are unsure about the safety of giving blood, Stockdale assures everyone that donating blood has never been safer.

"Every needle we use is new, sterile and disposed of after usage," Stockdale said.

The Lane County Blood Bank will be back winter and spring terms with two-day drives similar to this week's. The drives are

scheduled for February 6 and 7 along with May 1 and 2.

"SAA has put on the drive for as long as I can remember," Jones said. Jones said that the actual experience of donating blood might be something that causes students to turn away.

"I think it's hard for students to donate because it takes a lot of energy out of a person," Jones said. "I hope more people will take the time out to realize how much it truly is needed."

Located at 2211 Willamette St., the blood bank is always in need of donors and volunteers to help run drives such as the University Blood Drive.

"This is the largest off-property drive we put on," Stockdale said. "When we go to businesses or churches with our bloodmobiles and limited supplies, we usually only get approximately 20 people over a three hour stay."

If you or anyone you know is interested in donating blood, you can contact the Lane Memorial Blood Bank at 484-9111.

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