

Johnston Lecture brings lauded author Greene to University

Discussing the AIDS epidemic in Africa, Melissa Fay Greene's speech challenged journalists' stories to give faces to issues

By **Moriah Balingit**
Freelance Reporter

Award-winning author and journalist Melissa Fay Greene delivered the annual Johnston Lecture, titled "A Writer Bearing Witness: AIDS Orphans in Africa," to students and community members in the Knight Library Browsing Room Thursday.

The Johnston Lecture is part of the Richard W. Johnston Memorial Project to memorialize the 1936 School of Journalism and Communication graduate and co-founder of Sports Illustrated.

Professor Lauren Kessler, who heads the Literary Nonfiction program at the University, introduced Greene, saying, "She cares, and through prodigious work and artful narrative, we care."

Greene's work has brought her from a mining disaster two-and-a-half miles underground in Springhill, Nova Scotia, Canada, for her book "Last Man Out: The Story of the Springhill Mine Disas-

ter," to an Ethiopian orphanage for a landmark New York Times article about children orphaned by AIDS. Her first book, "Praying for Sheetrock," which documents the triumph of a black community in rural Georgia over racism, was named one of the top 100 works of American journalism in the 20th century by the New York University School of Journalism.

Greene's speech focused around her work in Ethiopia. She began by saying there are 11 million AIDS orphans in Africa and posed the question: "Who's going to sign 11 million permission slips...our readers, the public, don't care about millions. They can't count that high."

Greene spoke about two orphanages in the Ethiopian capital: the Layla House, a house for healthy orphans, and Enat (an Amharic word for mother), an orphanage for HIV-positive children. She also shared a number of anecdotes, collected through interviews with actual orphans. Some moved the audience to laughter on several occasions, including when she perplexed the Ethiopian orphans with whoopee cushions; others brought a solemn silence across the room.

"There is a terrible sameness to the sto-

ries. They all head down the same path: the mother's death, then the father's...alone, bringing out the words of the family's end, a child's eyes fill with tears," she wrote in the New York Times article.

Greene's visit to Ethiopia wasn't strictly business, however. The author was in the process of adopting an Ethiopian orphan, Helen. Helen arrived in the United States in February 2002, and Greene, like any other proud parent, couldn't resist sharing stories about her six-year-old adopted child.

Greene made a parallel between her adoption of Helen and her work as a journalist.

"Adoption says that the face of this one smiling, curly-haired little boy stands for the face of Africa's AIDS orphans...Journalism has to play a similar role," she said. "Narrative nonfiction stories ask the world to remember that these children are not just digits and numbers...but they recall that each sick and famine-stricken parent and each stranded child is a person worthy of our time and respect."

Moriah Balingit is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

Melissa Fay Greene, author of "Last Man Out: The Story of the Springhill Mine Disaster," spoke in the Knight Library Browsing Room Thursday afternoon.

LAWSUIT

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who lived two doors down from her in Cloran Hall of Hamilton Complex, helped care for Dieringer before she went to the hospital.

"She was in a lot of pain," Penney said. "Two of us stayed with her the night before she was taken to the hospital to try and help her feel better."

Penney said that two international

students found Dieringer in the bathroom and called the Department of Public Safety. She was then taken to the hospital.

More than two years after Dieringer's death, Hughes sued PeaceHealth and Eugene Emergency Physicians, P.C. for \$2.5 million in non-economic damages, which includes emotional damage to Hughes and the physical suffering of Dieringer. Hughes also sued for

\$940,000 in economic damages, or the loss of future earnings.

Hughes claimed that both defendants failed to suspect or diagnose acute bacterial infection and thus failed to start Dieringer on broad-spectrum antibiotic therapy in time to stop the infection. Hughes also accused the defendants of an improper diagnosis of mononucleosis or dehydration.

The jury found PeaceHealth 100

percent negligent in "one or more of the ways claimed," but Eugene Emergency Physicians did not share responsibility in the death, according to the jury verdict. Hughes was awarded \$1 million in non-economic damages and \$100,000 in economic damages.

Brian Terrett, director of public affairs for the PeaceHealth Oregon region, said that a post-trial appeal has been submitted to the judge.

Although PeaceHealth lost the lawsuit, Terrett said the situation has helped educate the public.

"We've tried to take advantage of the educational opportunity," he said. "We've discovered that the highest group at risk (for meningococcal) is college freshmen."

Contact the crime/health/safety reporter at lisacatto@dailyemerald.com.

TOTAL STUDENT DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCES FILED WITH THE OFFICE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY January 1- December 31, 2003

Formal	Results
2	One claim of sexual harassment; one claim of disability discrimination. Both claims resolved after investigation.
Informal	Results
3	One claim of disability discrimination; three claims of race/ethnicity discrimination; one claim of conflict of interest violation.*

STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT GRIEVANCES FILED WITH THE OFFICE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY January 1- December 31, 2003

Formal	Results
1	One claim of hostile environment sexual harassment. Claim resolved after investigation.
Informal	Results
0	No informal sexual harassment grievances filed in 2003.

This information is provided by the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity.

* Number of claims does not correspond to totals column because some cases contain multiple claims.