

Lecturer decries nation's lack of sex education

Gilbert Herdt addressed the Bush administration's attacks on gay marriage Thursday in the EMU

By Jeremy Berrington
Freelance Reporter

Cultural anthropologist Gilbert Herdt focused on the role of local communities and their impacts on the lives of America's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth in a lecture in the EMU Fir Room on Thursday afternoon.

Herdt, a professor of human sexuality studies and anthropology at San Francisco State University, has been conducting research on sexuality for

30 years. He is the director of the National Sexuality Resource Center, and his research has taken him around the world.

While Herdt acknowledged an overall increase in sexual tolerance in contemporary society, he critiqued America's shortcomings in sexual literacy. Many of these attacks were directed at the Bush administration.

"The government of the United States is not contributing to sexual literacy at all," Herdt said. "Quite the contrary — they are making politically motivated attacks against sexual education from all issues ranging from abortion to the dissemination of safe sex information."

According to Herdt, the Bush

administration has continued its conservative attack on the LGBTQ population with a plan to impose a constitutional amendment outlawing gay marriage, Herdt said these actions help to create social oppression and inequality.

"How can homosexuals express themselves in a sex-negative, chauvinistic environment?" Herdt asked. "They can't. There is no development. Only unexpressed desire, silence, shame, torment and a legacy of social oppression."

Herdt said America leads the industrialized world in some undesirable categories.

"We are number one in unwanted abortions, unintended pregnancies, HIV rates and sexual violence," he

said. "This is due primarily to the lack of sexual education and dialogue in American culture."

Theater arts major Wayne Bund agreed with Herdt's assertions.

"As a homosexual in contemporary society, I have found my experience to be very in line with much of what Dr. Herdt was describing," he said. "There is a tremendous amount of pressure not to speak up about differences of sexuality."

Herdt's main suggestion for the improvement of sexual literacy in the United States was to move the introduction of sexual education to first-grade classrooms.

"This has been done in the Netherlands, it has been done in France and it has produced very favorable

results," he said.

Event organizer Lynn Stephan said programs such as this are an integral part of sexual understanding.

"The University has attempted to sponsor these events annually in order to help raise more awareness about the state of sexuality in our society," Stephan said.

Stephan said the lecture's scheduling had nothing to do timing-wise with the national election.

"We did not ask Dr. Herdt to come here to raise any political sentiments or create controversy," Stephan said. "This is merely to educate and inform people."

Jeremy Berrington is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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Carroll cited a study released last year that showed Americans had three main misconceptions about Iraq: That weapons of mass destruction had been found, a connection between al-Qaeda and Iraq had been demonstrated and that the world approved of U.S. intervention in Iraq. He said 80 percent of people who primarily got their news from Fox believed at least one of the misconceptions. He said the figure was more than 57 percentage points higher than people who get their news from public news broadcasting.

"How in the world could Fox have left its listeners so deeply in the dark?" Carroll asked.

He added that a difference exists between journalism and propaganda.

As he addressed some of the hard hits journalism has taken in the field of ethics, Carroll noted that anyone could be a journalist because, unlike other fields, journalism had no qualification tests, boards to censure misconduct or a universally accepted set of standards.

However, Carroll said a great depth of feeling remains on the importance of ethics that is centered around newspapers' sense of responsibilities to their readers.

"I've learned that these ethics are deeply believed in even though in some places they are not even written down," he said. When ethical guidelines are ignored, their proponents respond with 'tribal ferocity,' he added.

"If you stray badly from these rules, you will pay dearly," he said.

He said while much media has ended up "in the gutter," the L.A. Times has a different philosophy and was dedicated to taking the "high road."

"I do think that a lot of newspaper people have made a lot of strategic mistakes," he said. "They cut back space on things people really need to know."

Carroll, whose career as a journalist spans 40 years, joined the L.A. Times in 2000, according to the paper's Web site. Under his leadership, the paper earned five Pulitzer Prizes this year.

Tim Gleason, dean of the SOJC, said Carroll is a "journalist's journalist."

"As an editor he cares deeply about

the integrity of the profession and he believes that news, real news is the heart and soul of the business of journalism," Gleason said as he introduced Carroll.

University graduate student Mose Mosely had similar sentiments. He said he admired Carroll not only for his vast experience around the country, but also for his consistent commitment to his ideals.

"The depth of his integrity is very impressive," Mosely said.

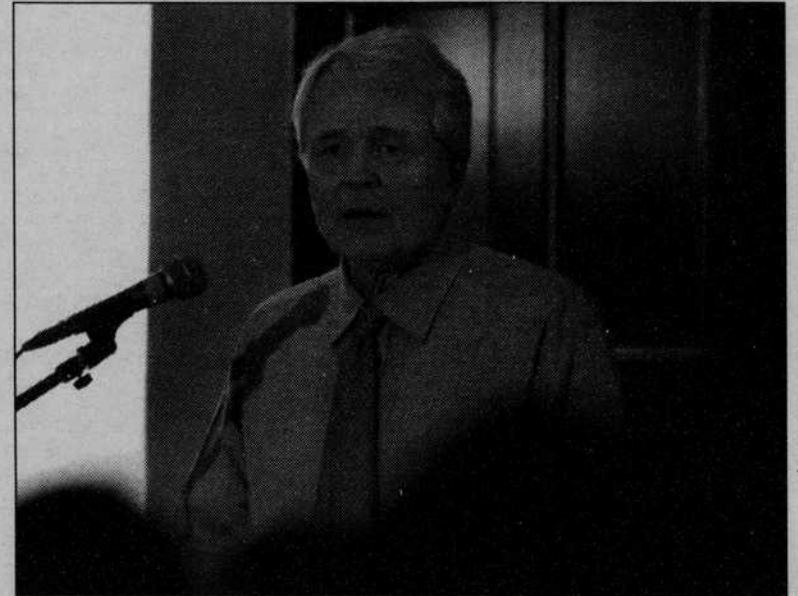
Bobbie Willis, a staff writer for the Eugene Weekly, said she felt Carroll brought up some relevant issues in today's media environment.

"It really made me take a look at my career as a journalist," she said.

Willis said she understood Carroll's concerns about the state of journalism nationally, but added that many of the journalists she has encountered were very committed to accurate and ethical reporting.

Carroll had a few words of advice for student journalists; he told them to pick their boss carefully.

"Don't be lured by the money or the big name of the employer," he said,



Tim Kupsick Photographer

L.A. Times Editor John Carroll spoke about journalism ethics and pseudo-journalism at the Gerlinger Lounge on Thursday.

adding that journalists should not allow their integrity to be compromised by unscrupulous employers.

"Don't be a piano player in a

whorehouse," he said.

Contact the news editor at ayishayahya@dailyemerald.com.



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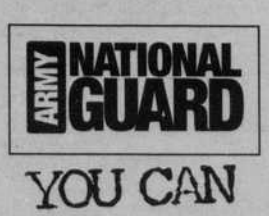
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