

# Myers Criticizes National Media at Greenspun Lecture

BY BECKY NORRIS  
STAFF REPORTER

Rapid technological growth has negatively influenced media coverage, said former White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers March 1.

"The news media hasn't gotten more reliable," Myers said.

While regaling her audience at Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall with witty stories from her days in the West Wing of the White House, Myers spoke about the media's secret handbook for success in Washington D.C. She elaborated on four of the secret rules:

- Be first rather than right.
- Never let facts get in the way.
- When in doubt, analyze.
- Create conflict.

Myers illustrated the first rule with the example of the Gennifer Flowers incident. She said there is a food chain of unreliable information that feeds the press.

According to Myers, this story was planted first in a tabloid in England and crossed the ocean to be picked up by American tabloids. U.S. reporters wrote about the tabloids writing about it. Myers said reporters should be more afraid to get information

wrong than being afraid of not being first.

The next rule that Myers pontificated on was to never let facts get in the way. She said, "Just because you saw it on television doesn't mean that it's true." She pointed out Clinton's haircut episode as an example of an over-reported story that was incorrect.

While the *New York Times* did 50 stories on it, six of them with front page coverage, they never printed a retraction once the facts emerged. The truth was that the haircut did not cost \$200 but was closer to \$40, and the LAX runway was only closed for the usual 10 minutes while the Secret Service did routine security checks.

Myers also claims that reporters are increasingly providing stories that involve analysis without labeling them. Further, she said that these stories were not as much politically biased as negative and critical. She said in Carter's first 100 days in office there was no analysis coverage. In contrast, during Clinton's first 100 days 50 percent of the coverage included analysis.

"Good news is no news, so create conflict," Myers said. Making the point hit close to home for

*"Just because you saw it on television doesn't mean that it's true."*

—Dee Dee Myers

the audience, Myers said much more press space is given to the problems surrounding the UNLV basketball program than to the Hotel College, one of the country's best.

Myers said that the Clinton White House has made many strides that remain under or unreported because of this conflict seeking. As press secretary, she tried reporting good news first every morning, but the reporters didn't want to hear it because they were waiting for the nasty stuff.

After good-naturedly haranguing the press, Myers said, "Why would anyone want a job like that dealing with those beasts?" She said that Washington gets the answers it needs from the people, and they should keep sending signals to Washington.

Myers was abruptly escorted off the stage after a heckler questioned her about an inflammatory video about President Clin-

ton. Her only antagonistic comment of the evening was her response to him, just before his microphone was shut off during a question and answer session. Myers said she was sick of the "right-wing-hate-machine media."

When asked the next afternoon if she had any positive comments about the media to add after her speech, Myers said, "I don't think I have an obligation every time I talk about the press to defend the press. I don't see the press defending the White House. I don't see the press defending the Congress. I don't see the press defending any of the institutions that they criticize."

Regarding the media, Myers said, "I have a lot of respect for a

lot of the institutions; I have a lot of respect for a lot of the individuals, but that doesn't mean that there aren't problems."

Myers said that there is a role to be filled by people who can bring perspective to the issue of the press. These people should talk about what is wrong.

One issue that Myers feels strongly about is the nominating process. She said, "We need to encourage people to go into government not to make sure that anybody that's ever done anything interesting in their life is eliminated or prohibited from serving."

Myers was a speaker as part of the Barbara Greenspun Lecture Series.

## Mario Cuomo Featured at Barrick Lecture Series

Former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo will speak on "Perfecting the Union" at 7:30 p.m. on March 27 in Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

The event, sponsored by the Barrick Lecture Series, is free and requires a ticket, which may be picked up at the Performing Arts Center Box office. Student tickets are available now; tickets for the general public will be available beginning Saturday, March 18.

Cuomo served three terms as governor before being defeated in last year's bid for a fourth term. His book, *Diaries of Mario M. Cuomo*, chronicles his 1982 gubernatorial campaign.

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Mario Cuomo

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