Joe Plumeri to address graduates

Joseph J. Plumeri, chairman and chief executive officer of one of the world’s largest and most successful insurance brokers, will deliver the 2011 commencement remarks.

Plumeri, who has led Willis Group Holdings for the past decade, will receive an honorary doctorate degree during the ceremony. In addition, Brian Lamb, president and founder of C-SPAN, and Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children’s Defense Fund, will receive honorary degrees.

"Joe Plumeri has moved mountains in the world of international business," said President Taylor Reveley, "and he has been a great force for good in the not-for-profit world as well. By any measure, Joe is among William & Mary’s most faithful and generous alumni, and he is always a riveting speaker. We’re delighted whenever we can welcome Mr. Plumeri back to campus."

"William & Mary is also delighted to be able to honor at commencement Marian Wright Edelman, a marvelous advocate for the country’s disadvantaged children and their families, and Brian Lamb, whose C-SPAN network has pioneered public affairs television over the past three decades."

From his humble beginnings in Trenton, N.J. to today’s success as a top business executive, Plumeri has combined hard work, integrity and generosity to build an extraordinary record as both a visionary leader and a philanthropist.

Plumeri’s leadership at Willis has solidified the company’s position as one of the world’s leading insurance brokers. Its offices include landmark structures such as The Willis Building in London and one of the nation’s most well-known buildings, Chicago’s Willis Tower. Formerly known as the Sears Tower, Willis Tower is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere. Prior to joining Willis, Plumeri enjoyed a successful 32-year career at Citigroup and its predecessor companies.

Plumeri is a generous supporter of the College. In 2008, he established the Plumeri Awards for Faculty Excellence. The awards, which include a $10,000 prize for each recipient, are given annually to 20 members of the W&M faculty. In addition, Plumeri annually supports the Tribe baseball team and in 1996 he provided funds to build the College’s baseball stadium — Plumeri Park. He has also endowed scholarships for student-athletes, provided support to Gateway William & Mary and contributed to the Mason School of Business. In addition, he funded the renovation of a local residence for W&M visitors, which is now the Plumeri House, and established the Plumeri William & Mary Pro-Am, a golf tournament that raised well over two million dollars in financial support for the College’s Olympics sports programs.

From 2000 to 2008, he served two terms on the W&M Board of Visitors. Plumeri is also a past member of the Alumni Association’s Board of Directors. In 2006, Plumeri was tapped to serve as Grand Marshal of the College’s Homecoming Parade.

Carrie Cooper named dean of libraries

Carrie Cooper has been named the next dean of university libraries. Cooper — who has served the past 13 years in library leadership at Eastern Kentucky University including the past five years as dean of the university’s libraries — will begin her new position Aug. 1, 2011.

Cooper will succeed Connie McCarthy, who retired last summer following 13 years at the helm of Earl Gregg Swem Library. Bea Hardy, the Marian and Alan McLeod Director of the Special Collections Research Center, served as interim dean while the search was underway.

Carrie Cooper has been at Eastern Kentucky since 1998 when she was appointed the team leader of the Learning Resources Center at Crabbe Library. In 2002, she was named the library’s coordinator of research and instruction. In 2005, she was named interim dean of libraries and dean in 2006.

"Carrie is considered a rising star among university librarians and was very well received by members of the College community during the search process," said Provost Michael R. Halleran. "We’re thrilled she will be our next dean. I am confident she is the right person to lead our libraries to the next level."

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W&M launches “Dress the Griffin” app

William & Mary has a mascot in need of a stylist—and you can help.

The new “Dress the Griffin” mobile application, developed by the Office of Creative Services, allows users to dress an image of William & Mary’s mascot in a variety of outfits, from a football uniform to a top hat and tails.

The app features a large image of the Griffin, which users can dress with 100 individual items or 15 themed ensembles, which include unique pieces of clothing, backgrounds and sound effects. Once users are happy with the ensemble they’ve created, they can save the images and then share them via outlets such as Facebook or Twitter.

The free app is available for iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, or Android devices. It may be downloaded from the Android Market and the App Store. For people who do not own a smartphone, the Griffin’s outfits may be viewed on Flickr. Find out more at http://www.wm.edu/dressthegriffin.

W&M partnering with Indian universities

In fall 2010, Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs Kate Slevin led a delegation that explored educational partnerships between the United States and India with representatives from the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Education, the Indian Ministry of Education, and the Fulbright Commission.

Slevin’s delegation from the College also met with the National Law School of India at India University, St. Xavier’s College in Mumbai, and St. Stephen’s College in New Delhi, India’s oldest college.

A result of that trip was the establishment of a pair of two-week, begin as soon as January 2012. counterparts from Indian colleges and universities that could of exchange programs between students and faculty and their National Law School. This was the first step in the development of one-credit courses at the College in March, taught by professors Karen Gabriel of St. Stephen’s College and S. Japhet of the National Law School.

A result of that trip was the establishment of a pair of two-week,开始于2012年1月。印度合作伙伴可以参加学生和教师的交流计划及与印度国家法律学院的多种形式课程,从3月开始,由Karen Gabriel教授(St. Stephen's College)和S. Japhet(国家法律学院)教授。

Susan V. Webster: a month to remember

April was quite a celebratory month for Susan Verdi Webster, the Jane Williams Mahoney Professor of Art History and American Studies at the College of William & Mary.

Hard on the heels of a Guggenheim Fellowship, Webster has been chosen for a second fellowship— from the National Humanities Center (NHC).

Webster’s accolade from the NHC is one of two awards given this year in the area of art history research. Her Guggenheim is one of just two awards given this year for fine arts research. Webster’s father also was a Guggenheim Fellow.

“Professor Susan Webster is a very distinguished scholar and highly valued faculty member at William & Mary,” said Provost Michael R. Halleran. “Receiving two such prestigious fellowships is truly an honor and I am delighted at these recognitions of her achievements and ongoing scholarship.”

Webster is a leading scholar in the art and architecture of colonial Latin America.

Death of bin Laden

When President Barack Obama announced to the world that Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had been killed by U.S. forces, major news outlets called on William & Mary’s Harriman Professor of Government Lawrence Wilkerson to explain the political, military and national security impact of the event.

Wilkerson appeared live on MSNBC’s “Ed Show” and NPR’s “On Point with Tom Ashbrook.” Statements from the MSNBC interview fed to more than 100 NBC affiliates nationwide.

Soaring Gas Prices

Clinical Associate Professor of Economics and Finance Deborah Hewitt talked with the Chicago Tribune about rising gas prices and whether the escalation in prices seen across the country in late April would be enough to send consumers looking for alternative fuels.

For Hewitt the jury is still out. “The key point is whether they will stay high long enough to have a significant impact,” she told the Tribune. Hewitt specializes in international trade and finance.

Odd Couples

Can dogs and cats really be friends? Animal behaviorist Barbara J. King talked about the unlikely and sometimes seemingly improbable relationships that can develop between animals with "CBS Sunday Morning." "Things like, play and grooming—if it goes on over time and the two animals are repeatedly choosing to come back together to do that, then I would think that that’s a friendship," she said. King is the Chancellor Professor in the Department of Anthropology.