

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Presented by the Clifford J. and Virginia F. Durr Lectures and Auburn University at Montgomery



Auburn University at Montgomery
and the Durr Family present the 2007
Clifford J. and Virginia F. Durr Lectures
with speaker Jonathan Steele, Senior Foreign Correspondent, The Guardian, London



Clifford Judkins (1899-1975) and Virginia F. Durr (1903-1999)

Clifford Judkins Durr was born and raised in Montgomery, and Virginia Heard Foster in Birmingham. Clifford attended Montgomery schools and the University of Alabama, and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. Virginia attended Birmingham schools and Wellesley College in Massachusetts.

They moved to Washington, D.C., in 1933 when Clifford was appointed legal counsel to the Reconstruction Finance Corp. and later to the Defense Plant Corp. Their home on Seminary Hill was a center of lively political discussion with distinguished guests.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Clifford to the Federal Communications Commission, where he distinguished himself as a strong advocate of public television and was instrumental in obtaining for Alabama the first public educational channel. Virginia became active in the fight to eradicate the poll tax and was a founding member of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

While at the FCC, Clifford challenged J. Edgar Hoover by protecting the free speech rights of those with alleged communist connections, which included such innocent activities as belonging to wartime committees headed by Supreme Court justices and the vice president. Clifford refused reappointment to the FCC rather than implement a loyalty oath he believed violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court later declared the loyalty oath to be unconstitutional, but Clifford's career as a public servant was over.

The Durr family returned to Montgomery in the midst of the challenges and divisiveness of the civil rights struggle. One night E.D. Nixon called on Clifford and Virginia to come post bail for Virginia's friend, Rosa Parks, who had refused to give up her bus seat. Later, Clifford loaned his legal expertise to a young lawyer, Fred Gray, in bringing lawsuits that successfully challenged discrimination in public accommodations and education. Despite their travails, Clifford and Virginia were devoted to Alabama, and to their family and many friends here.

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THE WAR IN IRAQ

Presented by the Clifford J. and Virginia F. Durr Lectures and Auburn University at Montgomery
“Defeat: Why Bush and Blair Lost their War in Iraq”

7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 25

AGENDA

Welcome	Dr. John G. Veres III
Greetings from Durr Family	Ann Durr Lyon
Introduction of Speaker	Dr. Judd Katz
Lecturer	Jonathan Steele
Questions and Answers	
Closing Remarks	Dr. John G. Veres III

JONATHAN STEELE is Senior Foreign Correspondent and in-house columnist on international affairs for *The Guardian*, London.

He graduated from Cambridge university in the classics in 1963 before spending two years at Yale where he obtained an MA in economics.

While at Yale, he worked as a volunteer on the Mississippi Summer Project in 1964 helping black Americans register to vote. He took part in the march from Selma to Montgomery that was turned back at the Edmund Pettus bridge on March 9, 1965.

He joined *The Guardian* later that year as a reporter. His first foreign assignment was as East European correspondent soon after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He became the paper's Washington D.C. bureau chief in 1975, and covered Jimmy Carter's election and presidency.

As Chief Foreign Correspondent in the 1980s he travelled widely, covering wars in southern Africa and central America. A regular visitor to Afghanistan, he was the only Western newspaper correspondent in Kabul when Soviet forces withdrew. He also covered the Taliban take over in 1996 and their collapse in 2001. He also covered the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983.

As bureau chief in Moscow from 1988 to 1994, he reported on the end of Soviet communism and the dissolution of the USSR. He was the only English-language reporter to reach Mikhail Gorbachev's prison villa during the August 1991 coup where he interviewed the Soviet president, a feat which won him the London Press Club's Scoop of the Year award.

In his present role he regularly travels to the Middle East. He has had eight assignments in Iraq since the U.S. invasion in March 2003, and was there most recently in November 2006.

He has twice won the International Reporter of the Year title in the British Press awards, the UK equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. He has also won the same title in the Amnesty International annual awards.

A frequent broadcaster on the BBC and CNN, Steele is known for his radical insight into foreign affairs. He has written books on issues affecting South Africa, Germany, and the Soviet Union/Russia. His 1983 work, *The Limits of Soviet Power*, challenged the Reagan administration's assumptions that Moscow's global might was on the increase. His most recent book, *Eternal Russia: Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and the Mirage of Democracy* argued that long-standing Russian traditions would undermine Western expectations of a rapid transition to democratic practice after the fall of Communism. He is currently writing a book on Iraq.

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