Charter Lecturers

The Charter Lecture Series was established in 1988 to honor the high ideals expressed in the 1785 charter that created the University of Georgia as the nation’s first state-chartered university.

2015-2016
Sam Nunn and William Perry
Former U.S. senator and former Defense Secretary
"Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe in the Age of Terrorism"

2014-2015
Edward J. Larson
Professor and Pulitzer Prize-winning Historian
“George Washington And America’s Second Revolution”

2013-2014
Charlayne-Hunter Gault
Award-winning journalist and UGA’s first African-American woman graduate (ABJ ’63)
“Reflections on Nelson Mandela”

James R. Clapper
U.S. Director of National Intelligence
“The Importance of Intelligence Integration”

2012-2013
Natasha Trethewey
Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-2014)
Robert W. Woodruff Professor of English and Creative Writing at Emory University
Poetry Reading with Commentary

2011-2012
Lee R. Lynd
Paul and Joan Queneau Distinguished Professor of Engineering, Dartmouth College
“The Sustainable Resource Transition: Systemic Change and Enabling the Improbable”

2009-2010
Paul Begala
Political consultant and commentator
“Show Business for Ugly People: Why Politics Matters”

2008-2009
Robert Hazen
Senior Research Scientist, Carnegie Institution of Washington’s Geophysical Laboratory
“Genesis: The Scientific Quest for Life’s Origin”
2007-2008
Dennis Dimick
Executive Editor, National Geographic magazine
“Changing Climate: Where Energy and Global Warming Meet”

2006-2007
Kenneth Miller
Professor of biology, Brown University
“God, Darwin, and Design: Thoughts about America’s Continuing Problem with Evolution”

2005-2006
Taylor Branch
Pulitzer prize-winning author and Civil Rights historian
“Democracy in Crisis: Martin Luther King and the Future”

2003-2004
Hanna H. Gray
Former President and Harry Pratt Judson Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of History at the University of Chicago
“History: Studying the Unpredictable Past”

Lawrence M. Friedman
Marion Rice Kirkwood Professor of Law, Stanford Law School
“The One-Way Mirror: Law, Privacy, and the Media”

David Sloan Wilson
Professor of Biology and Anthropology, Binghamton University

Richard Powers
Professor of English, University of Illinois
“The Language of Life: A Rough Draft”

2002-2003
Linda Gordon
Florence Kelley Professor of History and Vilas Research Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin; and Professor of History, New York University
“Vigilantism and Childnapping in the Arizona Territory: Race and Family Values”

Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.
Vice Chairman, Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System
“One View from the Federal Reserve”

Edward O. Wilson
University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University
“The Future of Life”
2001-2002
Lynn Margulis
Distinguished Professor in the Department of Geosciences, University of Massachusetts
“The Face of Gaia: Earth's Microcosm”

James M. McPherson
Professor, Department of History, Princeton University
“The Problem of Peace in the Midst of War, 1863-1865”

William Cronon
Professor of History, Geography, and Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison
“Humanist Environmentalism: A Manifesto”

2000-2001
Jared M. Diamond
Professor of Physiology, UCLA School of Medicine
“Why Did Human History Unfold Differently on Different Continents for the last 13,000 Years?”

Howard H. Baker, Jr.
Former U.S. Senator from Tennessee
“What's Happening?”

Mary-Claire King
American Cancer Society Research Professor
Department of Medicine and Genetics, University of Washington
“Genetics and Human Rights”

1999-2000
Freeman Dyson
Eminent Physicist-philosopher and author, Princeton University
“Gravity is Cool, or Why our Universe is Hospitable to Life”

Arthur Levine
President and Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia
“The Remaking of the American University”

Rita Dove
Former Poet Laureate of the United States
Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia
A Poetry Reading by Rita Dove

1998-1999
Alex Kotlowitz
Award-winning writer and speaker
“Writing on the Other America: Is Anybody Listening? Does Anybody Care?”
David Kessler
Dean of the Yale School of Medicine
“The Tobacco Wars”

Barbara Fields
Historian, Columbia University
“Race, Racism, and Identity”

1997-1998
Mary L. Good
Former undersecretary for technology for the technology administration in the U. S. Department of Commerce is managing member of Venture Capital Investors, Little Rock, Arkansas.
“Higher Education as Part of the Global Enterprise”

Roald Hoffman
Nobel Prize winner, chemist, and poet, professor of chemistry at Cornell University Ithaca, NY
“Chemistry’s Essential Tension: The Same and Not the Same”

Martin Marty
Pre-eminent Scholar on American Religion, and Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor of History of Christianity at the University of Chicago
“The Dangers of Religion in America – The Dangers on NonReligion in America”

1996-1997
Tony Kushner
Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-Winning Playwright
“Arts in the Current Political Climate”

Ellis Cose
Author on Race Relations in America and contributing editor for Newsweek
“America’s Quest to Move Beyond Race”

Deborah Leigh Blum
Author and science writer at The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee; Pulitzer Prize winner for beat reporting in 1992 for a series on primate research, titled “The Monkey Wars”
“Sex on the Brain”

1995-1996
Jill Ker Conway
Visiting Scholar, Program in Science, Technology and Society, Massachusetts Institute of Tech.
“Myths, Memoirs and the Modern Consciousness”

Paul Berg
Department of Biochemistry, Stanford School of Medicine
“Understanding our Genes: Opportunities and Concerns”
Martin E. P. Seligman
Kogod Professor and Director of Clinical Training in Psychology, University of Pennsylvania
“Learned Optimism: Preventing Depression, Boosting Achievement, Improving Health”

1994-1995
N. Scott Momaday
Regents Professor of the Humanities, University of Arizona
“The Mystery of Language: Native American Oral Tradition”

Daniel Schorr
Veteran reporter and commentator
Last of Edward R. Murrow's legendary CBS team still fully active in journalism
“Forgive Us Our Press Passes: Why all the Media Bashing”

Larry L. Smarr
Director, National Center for Supercomputing Applications
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“The Creation of Cyberspace: How the Internet will Change your Life”

Czeslaw Milosz and Wole Soyinka
Nobel Laureates of Literature
A reading from their works

1993-1994
Robert Schrieffer
University Professor of Physics, Florida State University
“Superconductivity for Poets: From Quantum Physics to Tomorrow's Technology”

Walter E. Massey
Provost and Senior Vice President– Academic Affairs, The University of California
“Research Universities in the Post-Cold War Era: How much change is necessary? Possible?”

Matt Williams
Playwright, Film and Television Writer, Director, and Producer
“The Responsibility of the Storyteller”

1992-1993
Arthur L. Schawlow
J.G. Jackson and C.J. Wood Professor of Physics at Stanford University
“What Lasers Can Do”

Gary L. Francione
Professor of Law at Rutgers Law School-Newark
“Animals, Property, and the Law”
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Humanities
Professor of English, and Director of Afro-American Studies Harvard
“The End of Civilization as We Know It”

1991-1992
Drucilla L. Cornell
Professor of Law, Benjamin N. Cardoza School of Law
“Sex, Gender, and Equivalent Rights”

Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich
Award-Winning writers
“Beyond Cliché, Beyond Politics: Multiculturalism and the Fact of America”

1990-1991
Toni Morrison
Robert F. Goheen Professor of Humanities, Princeton University
“Studies in American Africanism: Gertrude Stein and the Difference She Makes”

Árpád Göncz
President of the Republic of Hungary
“Politics and Literature: Politics in Literature”

Paul R. Ehrlich
Bing Professor of Population Studies, Stanford University
“Human Population Growth and the Deterioration of the Environment”

1989-1990
Peter H. Raven
Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden Home Secretary National Academy of Sciences
“Poverty, Politics, & Extinction in the Tropics--And Their Impact on Us”

Robert Coles
Professor of Psychiatry and Medical Humanities, Harvard University
“The Moral Life of the Young”

Wendy Wasserstein
Pulitzer Prize-Winning playwright
“A Life in the Theatre”