

**Gardner-Webb University**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Gardner-Webb program covers history of N.C. Politics and significant Shelby connection**  
Joyce Compton Brown Lecture Series Presents Rob Christensen

BOILING SPRINGS, NC – The Joyce Compton Brown Lecture Series presents its first program for the spring semester at Gardner-Webb University when it welcomes Rob Christensen, a political reporter for the *Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer* and author of “*The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics: The Personalities, Elections, and Events That Shaped Modern North Carolina.*” The lecture series will include discussions from Christensen’s book that focuses on “*The Shelby Dynasty*” as he shares little known facts about N.C. Governor *O. Max Gardner* (Gardner-Webb’s namesake). This event, free and open to the public, takes place on Wednesday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m. in Blanton Auditorium, located in the Hamrick Hall.

Christensen has covered N.C. politics for over 35-years at the *News and Observer*. “Politics in North Carolina was like stepping back in history, and I saw all these little threads and I wanted to put it all together and answer some real questions about several political paradoxes,” said Christensen in a *UNC-TV* interview.

Amazon.com had this to say about Christensen’s book; “How can a state be represented by Jesse Helms and John Edwards at the same time? Journalist Rob Christensen answers that question and navigates a century of political history in North Carolina, covering conservatives, liberals, Democrats and Republicans. It is this climate of competition and challenge, Christensen argues, that enabled North Carolina to rise from poverty in the nineteenth century to become a leader in research, education, and banking in the Twentieth Century.”

When ask in an interview, who Christensen felt was the most fascinating unheralded political figure he encountered or learned about, he said *O. Max Gardner (Governor from 1929-1933)*. “He (Gardner) was a textile plant owner and a lawyer who pretty much invented state government as it exists today. After leaving office, he moved to Washington (D.C.) to become one of the first of the super lobbyists. But for 20-years, he continued to run the state from his suite in the Mayflower Hotel,” said Christensen.

The scholarly lecture series at Gardner-Webb is named after Dr. Joyce Compton Brown, professor emeritus, who retired from the University at the end of the 2004-05 academic year after almost 40 years of service in the department of English. These events are free and open to the public.

For more information contact the Office of University and Media Relations at 704-406-3221.

Located in Boiling Springs, NC, Gardner-Webb University seeks a higher ground in higher education – one that embraces faith and intellectual freedom, balances conviction with compassion, and inspires in students a love of learning and leadership.

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