

Alum, Boston Globe Health Reporter to Discuss Career at UNH April 11

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BOSTON GLOBE HEALTH REPORTER CHELSEA CONABOY HAS BEEN NAMED THE 2012 DONALD MURRAY VISITING JOURNALIST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Boston Globe health reporter Chelsea Conaboy has been named the 2012 Donald Murray Visiting Journalist at the University of New Hampshire. She will discuss her career as a health reporter and share her experiences with journalism students during her weeklong visit beginning April 9, 2012.

As part of her week at UNH, Conaboy'04, will present "10 Years in a Newsroom: The Things I've Found Worth Fighting For," Wednesday, April 11, 2012, at 5 p.m. in MUB Theatre I. The event is free and open to the public.

"My talk really is about the things that I hope students will join me in fighting for when they graduate and start their professional careers: mission, story, and optimism. The industry is changing so much, and being a young journalist is hard. It requires some fight. These are the things that motivate me to keep going -- the mission of serving a community of readers, the joy and the importance of storytelling, and my own optimism for where journalism is headed," Conaboy says.

Conaboy writes about Boston's medical industry, state and national health care policy, and advancements in medical research for the White Coat Notes blog on Boston.com and the Boston Globe. Previously a business and health reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer, she started her career at the Concord Monitor.

"Health care, in particular, is a great specialty to pursue right now. The Globe has made a significant commitment to maintaining its health and science department — which is much smaller than it used to be but larger than at many comparable papers — because it recognizes that there's a real hunger for health reporting. It's such an issue of national concern. Within health care there are important business stories and community stories and personal stories. And there's so much conflicting information out there about what we should be doing to protect our own health as individuals. I think readers are looking for help in navigating it all," she says. She graduated in 2004 from UNH with a triple major in Spanish, international affairs, and journalism, and she spent the following summer as a writing and reporting fellow at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla.

"I had three very formative journalism experiences at UNH. One was working at TNH — the camaraderie among the staff and the experience of working with other writers on their stories every week really helped to solidify my interest in journalism. I had a great internship experience at the Lewiston Sun Journal in Maine, where they let me write regularly and I got a sense of just how important a newspaper is to a community," Conaboy says.

"Also, Jane Harrigan's journalism ethics class in the fall semester of 2001 was a really powerful experience. The World Trade Center was attacked at the start of the semester and, for months, we dissected the coverage of that day and the aftermath. That class really helped me to see the bigger picture, the role that journalism plays in society, and pushed me to think about the standards that I wanted to live by as a journalist," she says. Conaboy was recognized by state and regional press associations in eight consecutive years, most recently by the New Jersey Press Association for a story about the mortgage crisis in that state. She received multiple awards for her work on a five-part series about Carolynne St. Pierre, a Concord woman dying of a rare cancer, and her family's struggle to redefine itself after her death.

"It's hard to put into words what this project and what this family has meant to me. Personally, I learned a lot about family and death and resiliency. Professionally, this story really stretched me to develop my skills in reporting and narrative writing. It taught me about how important it is to be human in our work, to pay attention to how we feel

about the people and the stories we write about and to convey that to readers,” Conaboy says.

The Donald Murray Visiting Journalist Program is named in honor of the late Donald Murray, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who started the UNH journalism program in 1963. Terry Williams '80, publisher of The Telegraph of Nashua, led the fundraising drive for the program, with primary support coming from The McLean Contributionship and from UNH journalism alumni. Sponsored by the journalism program, the Donald Murray Visiting Journalist Program brings accomplished alumni journalists to campus each year for week-long residencies during which they conduct classes, work with students and student media, and give a public lecture. Recent visiting alums include Dana Jennings of The New York Times and Steve Damish of The Enterprise in Brockton, Mass.

The program is sponsored by the UNH Journalism Program, the UNH English Department, The Telegraph of Nashua and the McLean Contributionship.

Photo courtesy Yoon S. Byun

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