History Professor Provides New View of Nixon

Earlier that week, the 30th anniversary of the Watergate break-in was making headlines across the country. But when Dr. Dean Kotlowski of the History Department spoke on June 21 at the Richard M. Nixon Library & Birthplace, giving a talk broadcast on C-Span, Kotlowski cast light on a less publicized, but for some, even more significant facet of America’s most enigmatic president: Nixon’s signing of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1970.

Reexamining a Legacy

It is ironic that Kotlowski, who calls himself “a young old-time liberal,” has been instrumental in the reexamination of Nixon’s domestic legacy. Kotlowski’s book, Nixon’s Civil Rights: Politics, Principle and Policy, published by Harvard University Press, has been receiving national and international attention since its release.

Earning Attention

In March, Kotlowski’s book was highlighted in U.S. News & World Report’s Washington Whispers column. In the June 9 Perspective section of the Sunday [Baltimore] Sun, Kotlowski’s essay, “Was Richard M. Nixon a Closet Liberal?,” was the lead article. In April, he was featured at the British Association for American Studies at the University of Oxford, where he was lead speaker on “Pardoning Nixon Again?”

Favorable Reviews

In May, his book received a lengthy review in Atlantic Monthly. Neo-conservative reviewer Tamar Jacoby wrote: “Few Americans know it, but in fact Richard Nixon, even more than John Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson, shaped the civil-rights landscape we inhabit today. Nixon broke the will of the South, making school desegregation, long on the books but largely unimplemented, a reality for millions of children black and white. He presided over the nationalization of the Voting Rights Act, extending it beyond the South to cover all Americans— including Latinos. He oversaw the birth of bilingual education and averted the death of historically black colleges.”

Kotlowski’s book has also received favorable reviews by Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, Choice and Presidential Studies Quarterly. He has appeared on NPR affiliate.
C-Span broadcasted Dr. Dean Kotlowski’s discussion of his recently-published book on Nixon and civil rights.

Scholar and Teacher

Kotlowski is as good in the classroom as he is in the research library or speaker’s circuit. Although he has been at SU only two years, this spring students voted him their Teacher of the Year.

SU Students Awarded First FEMA Training Grants

This spring students majoring in environmental health sciences were the first undergraduates in the country to be awarded special training grants by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to Dr. Vaughn Wagner, a bioterrorism expert and consultant who teaches at SU. The students spent a week studying hazardous materials and bioterrorism at FEMA facilities. Wagner, who trained security personnel for this year’s Super Bowl in New Orleans, sees the new undergraduate coursework he is creating in bioterrorism and emergency management response cutting across all disciplines in a new way. “This (fighting terrorism) is something that’s here to stay. Everyone has a stake in it. We’re training our students for the long-term possibilities.”

Student Entrepreneurship Celebrated

Adam Peno, a senior marketing major, won the $5,000 first prize in the Richard A. Bernstein Achievement Award for Excellence for his business plan, “The Hitch Man Inc.,” an expansion on an existing trailer sales, truck accessory and towing operation. The competition is made possible by a generous endowment by Richard Bernstein (Class of ’76), founder of K&L Microwave, Inc. and current CEO of BAI Aerosystems in Easton, MD. Bernstein established the award to encourage future entrepreneurs to thoroughly research, prepare and defend a business plan.