



▲ Professor Keith Karnok performs a magic show. He said he has been interested in magic since he was a child and plans to pursue it as a full-time career after he truly retires from the University.

Professor doubles as magician

By MICHAEL PROCHASKA
THE RED & BLACK

When Turf Grass Management Professor Keith Karnok visits magic shops, he buys surprises to hand out smiles. Karnok considers himself to be in a transition phase between finishing his career as a University professor and taking his hobby as a magician and ventriloquist to a whole new level.

Karnok, who is officially retired, was asked by the University to teach part-time this year due to budget cuts, but that doesn't stop him from traveling the state to perform magic tricks for children.

"There's more similarities between the college classrooms and elementary schools and probably even preschool than I'd like to admit," Karnok said. "But only in that people like to be entertained, and if you're entertaining them, they're more open to learn."

Children and adults are more receptive to new ideas if you find an interesting way to engage them, Karnok said. The use of humor makes Karnok's shows the most effective, as every show will end with a couple of one liners and jokes from a wooden puppet.

"What I've also found with the puppets, I could tell the kids something and the teachers could tell the kids something important and they may or may not [comprehend], but when a puppet tells them the same thing, they will remember that and repeat it," he said.

Karnok's interest in magic began when he was only 12 and a neighbor boy puzzled him with a trick. Since then, he has raised four children and three grandchildren — an experience that has inspired his pursuit for magic. His wife, Melinda, serves as his steadiest assistant.

Before performances he will often ask, "Does this have any meaning? Whatever I'm doing, would it affect my grandchildren and my children when they were young?"

Karnok learned ventriloquism fewer than seven years ago out of a concern for animal cruelty in magic shows.

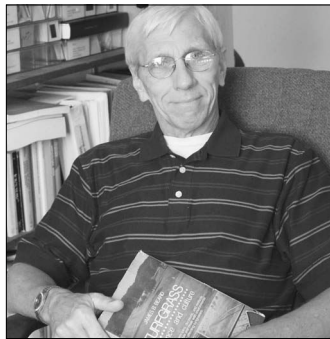
"You have a rabbit stuck in a box somewhere and you make him disappear or a dove — a lot of times doves are stuck in a coat or sleeves or behind your back and they can be there for quite awhile," he said. "There are some concerns about animal treatment, and I agree with that."

Though Karnok wouldn't reveal any secrets, he explained a method to the madness of children's magic.

"When you go into the elementary schools, you have to have a theme," he said. "For all my shows, you don't go in and just do fun magic things — you have to have a purpose, a theme or a message that you're delivering."

Topics can vary from the importance of reading to the dangers of driving campaigns, Karnok said. And in many shows, Karnok finds a way to incorporate his experience with the University's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

"I have done some elementary schools where I have talked about the importance of agriculture," he said. "I can bring in food production — different crops and peanuts and how important peanuts are to our state economy."



DINA ZOLAN | THE RED & BLACK

▲ Karnok, who teaches turf grass management at the University, said he tries to incorporate agriculture education into his magic shows.

Occasionally, Karnok will even discuss turf grass with a room full of captivated children.

"It surprises a lot of times how sharp some of these kids [are] and how worldly they are," he said. Karnok has no illusions of becoming an illusionist. Instead, he enjoys little things — the giggles and sparkling eyes of children from the simplest of tricks.

"I can go on to tricks that actually cost hundreds of dollars, and the children will continue to yell for Wally Wand," he said.

Wally Wand, a plastic baton that jumps and wiggles around, is one of his least expensive tricks. It only cost \$5, but more often than not his audience will avidly chant, "Bring out Wally! Bring out Wally!"

However, the tricks are not just for kids. Karnok will often perform for the elderly at nursing homes and assisted living spaces. Still, some of his favorite places to visit are hospitals.

On Oct. 11, Karnok went to a children's hospital in Atlanta.

"That always brings things into perspective," he said. "Any time you feel bad about whatever is going on in your life, go to the Atlanta children's hospital."

Karnok plans to become a full-time magician once he retires from the University. He will continue educating, just in a different fashion.

Teaching is what he does, he said.

DEAN: Students more excited about other candidates

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campus interview in the second round, Bennett said he did choose McDonald and he did want him to come to campus.

Everyone involved in the interview and selection process for the new Dean of Students was asked to submit anonymous feedback after each candidate's forum on campus. Bennett said those documents are not an accurate reflection of the feedback he received about McDonald.

"There was widespread support for Dr. McDonald," Bennett said. "There were students who talked to me personally who did not fill out forms at the forum, so I think to say that my personal impression of Bill was that he had a grounded history in Georgia, and that he was very excited about the position, but the student feedback was heavily in favor of other candidates," Barlow said. "I don't understand why student input was ignored the first time. And it might've not been ignored, but that's what it feels like. Our feedback was very strong in one direction, and it does not feel like that was considered."

Barlow said McDonald's resume is impressive, and he has years of experience, but student support should also be part of the equation.

"I think you've got to have both experience and student support," she said. "I think you've got to have 100 percent of both, and frankly, I don't think

it should be a question on either one of them. The candidate for the Dean of Students should have all bases covered, and I think that's what the problem is."

The dean will supervise the department of campus life, which includes Intercultural Affairs, Judicial Programs, Greek Life and the Center for Student Organizations.

University President Michael Adams said he was not involved in the selection of the Dean of Students process except when Bennett asked him to hold 30-minute interviews with three of the candidates in the first round. McDonald was one of the candidates.

"I don't know the details on this one," Adams told appropriately. "I have a list of people that I've been forthright about that I would put forward in the hiring of, but this one was not on the list."

Adams said he agrees students should have a say about who the Dean of Students is, but they are not the ones with the final say.

Both Shay Davis Little of the University and Mary Beth Mercatoris of the University of Texas at Austin participated in student forums this fall.

McDonald was one of five candidates to have a student forum last spring. "My personal impression of Bill was that he had a grounded history in Georgia, and that he was very excited about the position, but the student feedback was heavily in favor of other candidates," Barlow said. "I don't understand why student input was ignored the first time. And it might've not been ignored, but that's what it feels like. Our feedback was very strong in one direction, and it does not feel like that was considered."

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were't listened to both in the first and even included very much or listened to in the second round. The whole point of the Dean of Students selection is to find somebody who resonates with the students as well as the administration. Josh [Delaney] and I both feel half of that was left out."

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Local politics may be foreign topic for students

By MARIANA HEREDIA
THE RED & BLACK

No vote, no voice. During this year's midterm elections, students eligible to vote will be able to decide who will become governor, mayor and member of the general assembly among other positions. Nevertheless, for many eligible students, the chance to register to vote is gone.

Charles Bullock, a political science professor at the University, named this as one of the main reasons why students do not vote at all.

"Young adults have the poorest turnout rate records of any age group," he said.

He said since students may not register, they are unable to vote by the time elections come around.

"It is too late to do that for this fall's elections. You want to maintain your registration if you want to vote."

This year the deadline to register is Oct. 15. He also said many students do not vote here in

Athens because they are not as aware of the local issues.

"Students might be more involved at home, especially a freshman who hasn't been here. He might know the issues back home and know candidates there," he said. "By the time you are a senior you might be more of an Athenian than when you first got here."

Austin Smith, a freshman at the University, is one of these students who is more involved in his hometown than in Athens.

"I am registered in my hometown. I think it is a civil duty to [vote] in the place you know the issues," he said. "I don't know the issues here as I do in my hometown. If I don't know what I am talking about, I don't need to vote."

Bullock said in order to have their voices heard, students must vote.

"Public officials are not interested in your concerns if you are not a participant," he said.

He made the comparison between the elderly and younger generations.

"Young people do not get the same attention. But the elderly are among the most politically mobilized, and state legislators are aware of that," he said.

Bullock also said participation in the midterm elections is much lower than that of the presidential elections.

"Participation drops off substantially. That's true everywhere," he said.

Smith noticed the same trend.

"People worry too much about the presidential election, which, truthfully, it doesn't affect you as much as local elections," he said.

Nevertheless, Bullock said there were several ways for students to get more involved in the elections. Visiting candidates' websites, watching televised debates, going to political club meetings and reading newspapers are all actions that can help a stu-

dent become more politically aware.

And Smith said being politically aware is essential during elections.

"If you feel you don't know who to vote for, then don't do it at all. It's like trying to vote on a book based on the cover," he said. "If we vote like this, we can't hold them [politicians] accountable for doing what we want them to do."



BULLOCK

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