

# Yellow light for lecture series

A longtime campus lecture series that has been responsible for bringing such luminaries as William Styron, Eudora Welty, Richard Leakey and Joyce Carol Oates to Auburn University for speaking engagements is in danger of extinction due to loss of funding.

The Littleton-Franklin Lecture Series in Science and Humanities was established in 1968 to bring some of the world's leading thinkers in the arts and sciences to Auburn for speeches and small-group interaction with students. About five years ago, a key benefactor, Atlanta-based The Franklin Foundation, began reducing its support of the lecture series in an effort to emphasize its funding for educational

programs within the state of Georgia, says series founder Taylor Littleton, retired Auburn dean of undergraduate studies and vice president for academic affairs.

Since then, the Littleton-Franklin lecture series has relied on funding from individual donors and various deans' budgets. The only permanent funding that remains for the lectures is about \$3,500 annually from the estate of the late W. Kelly Mosley '24, an Auburn alumnus and former chair of the Franklin Foundation, Littleton says.

More than 150 leaders in the arts and sciences have served as Franklin lecturers at Auburn, including poet and novelist

Robert Penn Warren, documentarian Ken Burns, physicist John Archibald Wheeler, conservative political columnist James J. Kilpatrick and feminist theorist Carol Gilligan.

Littleton hopes to raise awareness among potential donors of the need for funding to sustain the series, which he says has enriched Auburn's intellectual life for 43 years.

"We can document, of course, who came and went as Franklin lecturers, when those visits took place, the classes and discussions which were held," he wrote of the lecture series more than 20 years ago. "But what we cannot document are the silent transformations which occurred."

The series is offered in concert with Auburn's Human Odyssey Project, which consists of a pair of courses exploring the intersection of philosophy, science, humanities and the social sciences. Students learn how human societies have developed and discuss topics such as ethics in medical research, sustainability and even quantum physics.