



The University of Georgia  
College of Public Health

*Institute of Gerontology*

Cordially invites you to a preview screening of

**“A Conversation with Dr. Mary Starke Harper:  
A Legacy of Service”**

**On Wednesday, November 1, 2006 at 7:00 PM**

The Institute of Gerontology, 255 East Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA

*RSVP to the Institute of Gerontology, (706) 425-3222 by Monday, October 30. Parking is available in the lots behind the Institute. Refreshments will be served.*

This film, and others in this new series, is the result of a joint effort by noted photojournalist and editor, Alan Stecker, MFA, Senior Director of ASV Communications, and Leonard W. Poon, Ph.D., Director of the Institute of Gerontology. Additional films in this series will be screened during the Spring Semester (dates to be announced).

The screening will be followed by an interactive discussion session with Mr. Stecker and Dr. Poon that will offer the audience the opportunity to discuss the themes, issues, and the life journey portrayed in the film. Viewers can also offer critical feedback to the producers about how better to present this documentary for educational purposes.

This film is the second in a series of documentary films examining the human experience of aging through the eyes and voices of elder individuals who have lived full and interesting lives. “A Conversation with Dr. Mary Starke Harper: A Legacy of Service” is Mary Harper’s story, told in her own words and in the words of the people who were closest to her. It is an intimate study of a life lived in high purpose and deep commitment. Mary’s story is about profession, love, and family.

Mary Harper describes herself as someone who began life as a little black girl, growing up in the backwoods of rural Alabama amidst segregation and tough times. Throughout her life, Dr. Harper was challenged with overcoming obstacles, but she was willing to sacrifice and to make a good fight in order to achieve her mission. Her mission was to serve the underserved and to create a pathway for minorities to enter the health professions. Mary Harper served four presidents in her staff position at the National Institute of Mental Health. Under President Clinton, she was charged with the task of heading the mental health initiative to reform the national mental health system- in a profession of all men.

In July of this year, Dr. Harper lost her battle with cancer. At 87, she chose not to continue her regimen of chemotherapy, because the side effects were much too debilitating. Instead she chose to live out her life with a clear mind, working as usual, traveling, writing chapters in books, and advising others.

Everyone whose life she touched will remember Dr. Mary Harper as a role model, a mentor, a fierce advocate, and an activist. She leaves behind a legacy of men and women of color, too numerous to count, who have entered the health professions and who are now carrying on her work and making a difference. At the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, there is a geriatric and psychiatric hospital, which bears her name. Mary Harper's story is an inspiring account of how passion and vision can contribute to creating change in the basic fabric of our society.

**Please join us!**