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Four-time Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist visits WKU

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com 23 hrs ago



Western Kentucky University students got a glimpse into natural disasters, political revolution and the endurance of the human spirit Wednesday as Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Carol Guzy shared images spanning three decades of her storied career.

Guzy is one of four people to win a Pulitzer Prize four times, and the only journalist with that honor, a news release said. But for Guzy, empathy always comes before professional acclaim.

“My greatest riches are the relationships that remain long after the story,” Guzy said, speaking to students in the Jody Richards Hall auditorium.

After graduating with an associate degree in nursing from a community college in Bethlehem, Pa., a change of heart led Guzy to study photography at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

While in school, Guzy interned at the Miami Herald and later secured a staff photographer position there, where she remained for eight years, according to her biography at Pulitzer.org.

In 1986, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography as part of a two-member team covering a mudslide in Columbia. She then moved to Washington where she took a job with The Washington Post.

Guzy’s visit coincided with the opening of a new photo exhibition at WKU. The collection, “Women Photojournalists of Washington, D.C.,” presents 21 of the top-ranked images of 2017 taken by women in the Washington area. The exhibit is open until Nov. 27 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday in the Jody Richards Hall gallery.

In a series of presentations, Guzy showcased her work documenting some of the most notable natural disasters and political conflicts of the last 30 years.

Guzy's images showed protesters toppling the Berlin Wall and the fall of Communism, a child passed through a barbed-wire fence during ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, flag-draped coffins during a memorial following the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and many other tragedies.

Children were at the center of many disasters Guzy documented. Several images show children being pulled from rubble from an earthquake in Haiti or refugees displaced by Islamic State forces in Iraq.

Her work also offered a window into suffering by animals, such as pets left to fend for themselves in the fallout of Hurricane Katrina.

However, through tragedy, Guzy's work also shows the strength of the human spirit. In one presentation, her work followed a paralyzed man's journey to Cuba to propose to the woman of his dreams.





Guzy insists against photojournalists becoming detached and aloof.

“How can you witness some of these things and not feel?” she said.

She hopes that her work will prompt people to take action.

“It frustrates me when people complain about pictures that we run (because) they’re too graphic,” she said. “Perhaps maybe we should use that energy to do something.”

Lily Thompson, a sophomore from Paoli, Ind., said she’d encountered Guzy’s work, but didn’t know the photojournalist. Thompson said Guzy’s work “fuels my passion and intensifies my need to go into this profession.”

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