THE WAR IN IRAQ

Presented by the Clifford J. and Virginia F. Durr Lectures and Auburn University at Montgomery

Auburn University at Montgomery
and the Durr Family present the 2007
Clifford J. and Virginia F. Durr Lectures
with speaker Jonathan Steele, Senior Foreign Correspondent, The Guardian, London
Clifford Judkins (1899-1975)
and Virginia F. Durr (1903-1999)

Clifford Judkins Durr was born and raised in Montgomery, and Virginia
Heard Foster in Birmingham. Clifford attended Montgomery schools and
the University of Alabama, and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford Univer-

sity. Virginia attended Birmingham school and Wellesley College in
Massachusetts.

They moved to Washington, D.C., in 1933 when Clifford was appointed
legal counsel to the Reconstruction Finance Corp and later to the
Defense Plant Corp. Their home on Seminary Hill was a center of liv-
ly political discussion with distinguished guests.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Clifford to the
Federal Communications Commission, where he distinguished himself as
a strong advocate of public television and was instrumental in obtain-

ing for Alabama the first public educational channel. Virginia became active
in the fight to eradicate the poll tax and was a founding member of the
Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

While at the FCC, Clifford challenged J. Edgar Hoover by protecting the
free speech rights of those with alleged communist connections, which
included such innocent activities as belonging to wartime committees
headed by Supreme Court justices and the vice president.

Clifford refused reappointment to the FCC rather than implement a
loyalty oath he believed violated the First Amendment of the U.S.
Constitution. The Supreme Court later declared the loyalty oath to be
unconstitutional, but Clifford’s career as a public servant was over.

The Durr family returned to Montgomery in the midst of the challenges
and divisiveness of the civil rights struggle. One night E.D. Nixon called
on Clifford and Virginia to come post bail for Virginia’s friend, Rosa Parks,
who had refused to give up her bus seat. Later, Clifford loaned his legal
expertise to a young lawyer: Fred Gray, in bringing lawsuits that success-

fully challenged discrimination in public accommodations and education.

Despite their travails, Clifford and Virginia were devoted to Alabama, and
to their family and many friends here.
THE WAR IN IRAQ

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THE WAR IN IRAQ

Presented by the Clifford and Virginia D. Durr Lectures and Auburn University at Montgomery
“Defeat: Why Bush and Blair Lost their War in Iraq”

7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 25

AGENDA

Welcome                      Dr. John G. Veres III
Greetings from Durr Family   Ann Durr Lyon
Introduction of Speaker       Dr. Joel Koz
Lecturer                      Jonathan Steele
Questions and Answers
Closing Remarks               Dr. John G. Veres III
As bureau chief in Moscow from 1988 to 1994, he reported on the end of Soviet communism and the dissolution of the USSR. He was the only English-language reporter to reach Mikhail Gorbachev’s prison villa during the August 1991 coup where he interviewed the Soviet president, a feat which won him the London Press Club’s Scoop of the Year award.

In his present role he regularly travels to the Middle East. He has had eight assignments in Iraq since the U.S. invasion in March 2003, and was there most recently in November 2006.

He has twice won the International Reporter of the Year title in the British Press awards, the UK equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. He has also won the same title in the Amnesty International annual awards.

A frequent broadcaster on the BBC and CNN, Steele is known for his radical insight into foreign affairs. He has written books on issues affecting South Africa, Germany and the Soviet Union/Russia. His 1983 work, The Limits of Soviet Power, challenged the Reagan administration’s assumptions that Moscow’s global might was on the increase. His most recent books, Eternal Russo-Polish, Gorbachev, and the Mirage of Democracy argued that longstanding Russian traditions would undermine Western expectations of a rapid transition to democratic practice after the fall of Communism. He is currently writing a book on Iraq.
The Lectures Committee wishes to thank the following contributors:
Auburn University at Montgomery is pleased to honor the memory of Clifford and Virginia Durr with the Durr Lecture Series on civil liberties. As the metropolitan campus of a land-grant university, AUM blends the traditional view of the university as a community of scholars with the contemporary view of the university as an integral part of the surrounding community, state and region. AUM's mission is to foster and exemplify excellence in education through instruction, research and service — to provide academic programs that are not only characteristic of the finest traditions of the liberal arts, business, sciences, nursing and education. AUM encourages open and free inquiry and seeks to instill in its students ways of thinking, communicating and learning that will be of enduring value.