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SCHOOL OF PUBLIC & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS • THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



THE GROWING WMD THREAT

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AFTER GRADUATING FROM UGA WITH A DOUBLE MAJOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND AMERICAN HISTORY, RON SHELPH WENT ON TO EARN A MASTER'S DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES. AT AGE 24, HE WAS APPOINTED THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN INSURERS OPERATING ABROAD. A FEW YEARS LATER AIG CHIEF HANK GREENBERG RECRUITED HIM.

Ron SHELPH



By Kathleen Head

Although his remarkable career has led Ron Shelph (AB '64) all over the world, the former AIG executive credits the University of Georgia as part of his strong foundation.

A native of Cartersville, Georgia, Shelph did not attend school in Cartersville because his father's job in the Army frequently moved his family. However, Shelph was introduced to the principal of Cartersville High School, Edmund Martin, while working after graduation. From this meeting, his life took a turn. Martin insisted that Shelph go to college and personally drove him to Athens to enroll at UGA before even applying for admission to the school.

The initial push that Shelph received from Martin in combination with determination and academic talent served him quite well throughout his time at UGA. He paid for college through scholarships and work—many times putting in a 40-hour week, such as managing the local Putt-Putt Miniature Golf Course during his freshman year. As a senior and co-captain of the UGA debate team, Shelph received a fellowship to coach the freshman debate team. That year, he was also named one of two UGA finalists for the Rhodes Scholarship.

Shelph fondly remembers the influence that George Parthemos, a professor of political science, had on the students in his classes and across the UGA campus. "Dr. Parthemos inspired students to learn beyond the classroom. His great affection for students was certainly returned."

After graduating from UGA with a double major in political science and American history, Shelph went on to earn a Master's degree in international relations at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. At age 24, he was appointed the executive director of the Association of American Insurers Operating Abroad. A few years later Hank Greenberg, CEO, recruited him to AIG.

Initially, Shelph's job at AIG was in public affairs for the company's Washington, D.C. operations. Within a short period of time, he became worldwide head of government relations. Eventually his primary responsibilities evolved into a troubleshooting role.

"When Nixon opened China for trading, Greenberg wanted to be the first American business and the first insurer to go back. He told me to make this happen and I did," Shelph recounts.

Years later, he was appointed to head AIG's corporate communications and advertising and was on several corporate boards.

Shelp left AIG in 1985 and although he no longer has any official affiliation, his relationship with AIG continues. In 2005, CEO Hank Greenberg was forced to resign due to an accounting scandal and an investigation by New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. At that point, Shelp took the opportunity to pen the book that he had been planning for years.

"I wanted to write a novel because I didn't think anyone would believe the real thing... that place was wild," explains Shelp. Within a few weeks of Greenberg stepping down, Shelp had an agent and a contract to complete the book in a short seven months.

Published in October of 2006, *Fallen Giant: The Amazing Story of Hank Greenberg and the History of AIG* was received with great reviews and much praise for the author. With AIG's credit crisis and federal bailout occurring in September 2008, original copies of the book flew off shelves. Shelp wrote an additional chapter and new cover art was created in order to put out a new copy that reflected the events of fall 2008.

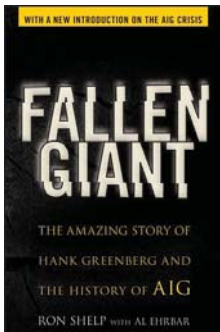
With Chinese versions of the book already published and a Korean version in development, along with a paperback edition, the success of Shelp's book continues. There has also been talk of a movie deal.

Asked about the controversial AIG bailout, Shelp says, "The government is certainly doing the right thing. We've got serious problems."

He also goes on to say that he believes there is no correlation between Hank Greenberg's administration and scandal four years ago and AIG's current financial situation.

Though his career has in large part remained in private business, except for a seven-year term as President and CEO of the New York City Partnership, David Rockefeller's group of 200 CEOs dedicated to improving New York, Shelp maintains that his background in political science and international affairs laid the groundwork for his success in both. "The study of political science sparked my interest in current affairs, which drove my entire career," says Shelp. "My work has basically been a specialized study in public affairs."

Kathleen Head graduated from Furman University in 2005 and is currently working on a Master's degree in public administration at UGA's School of Public and International Affairs.



Giving Back

Ron Shelp has pledged a significant gift to UGA's School of Public and International Affairs to fund a policy forum. He was first inspired to fund such a program after reading about 'The Carter Presidency: Lessons for the 21st Century'—a forum the School co-sponsored in 2007 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of President Carter's inauguration.

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