XX/XX/19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNI announces pre-speaker and #PanthersRead initiative leading up to lecture with former First Lady Laura Bush

UNI NEWS SERVICES – Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States (2001-09), will speak at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9, in the Great Hall of the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center (GBPAC) as part of the Joy Cole Corning Distinguished Leadership Lecture Series.

Doors to the Great Hall will open at 6:15 p.m. and close at 6:45 p.m. Each person entering will be required to pass through a security checkpoint. Early arrival to the GBPAC is highly recommended.

For those hoping to avoid long security lines, a pre-speaker event from 5 to 5:45 p.m. will feature "First Ladies in the Modern Era," by Jill Abraham Hummer, associate professor of political science at Wilson College and author of "First Ladies and American Women: In Politics and at Home." A ticket to Mrs. Bush’s lecture is required for the pre-speaker event. Attendees are encouraged to stay in the GBPAC between lectures to avoid additional security screening. Refreshments will be available in the lobby at a small cost.

During Mrs. Bush’s lecture, the former First Lady will discuss her advocacy for literacy, education and women's rights. As First Lady, she advanced literacy education to support America's young people. Today, as the chair of the Woman's Initiative at the George W. Bush Institute, she continues her work on global health care innovations, empowering women in emerging democracies, education reform and supporting the men and women who have served in America's military.

“The University of Northern Iowa holds a strong shared advocacy with Mrs. Bush,” said president Mark Nook. “With over 450 teachers graduating from UNI each year, we are proud to offer the largest teacher education program in the state of Iowa. We are delighted to offer this opportunity for community to the former First Lady speak.”

In recognition of Mrs. Bush’s focus on literacy, UNI is encouraging the community to share their passion for the value of reading through a #PanthersRead initiative. UNI’s College of Education kicked off the social media campaign on international literacy day, Sept. 8, and invite Panther family and friends to contribute to the conversation through Oct. 9. UNI’s Rod Library will also house a special collection focused on education and literacy, available September through October

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The Joy Cole Corning Distinguished Leadership Lecture Series was established in 2001 by UNI alumna and former Iowa Lt. Gov. Joy Cole Corning. The series' purpose is to bring to campus nationally and internationally renowned leaders in such areas as the arts, business, education, government and the judiciary. It provides students with an understanding of what constitutes leadership across disciplines and helps them discover how people become leaders in their fields.