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Next Edgar Lecture to Focus on State, Federal Politics

Apr-08-2011

There's so much going on politically that David Yepsen wants to keep his options open.

"2011 Political Overview," he said, announcing the title of his April 14 lecture on the campus of Eastern Illinois University. "Gives me room to maneuver between both state and national politics."

Yepsen, who enjoyed a 34-year career with the Des Moines Register, serving as the paper's chief political writer, political editor and political columnist before becoming director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, in 2009, will be the seventh presenter in EIU's Edgar Lecture Series. Admission to his presentation, set to begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 14, in the Tarble Arts Center Atrium, is free and open to the public.

The featured speaker said he looks forward to his time at EIU, as events such as this frequently bring out attendees who "are pretty politically sophisticated themselves.

"I allow for a question-and-answer period," Yepsen said. "Those in themselves can lead to some really good political debates!"

The Edgar Lecture Series, established in 2007 by former Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar and his wife, Brenda, demonstrates a continuing support by the Edgars of their alma mater. The series allows the university to host two speakers a year -- one in the fall and one in the spring. The lectures frequently focus on state government and address current issues and their historical implications.

The Edgars personally launched the series, with the former governor speaking in Fall 2007 and Mrs. Edgar taking her turn behind the lectern in Spring 2008.

Yepsen, a native of Jefferson, Iowa, and a 1972 graduate of the University of Iowa, did graduate work in journalism and mass communication at Iowa State University and, in 1985, earned a master's degree in public administration from Drake University.

In 1989, he was a fellow at the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. In 2008, he was a fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard where he led a study group on the nation's presidential selection processes.

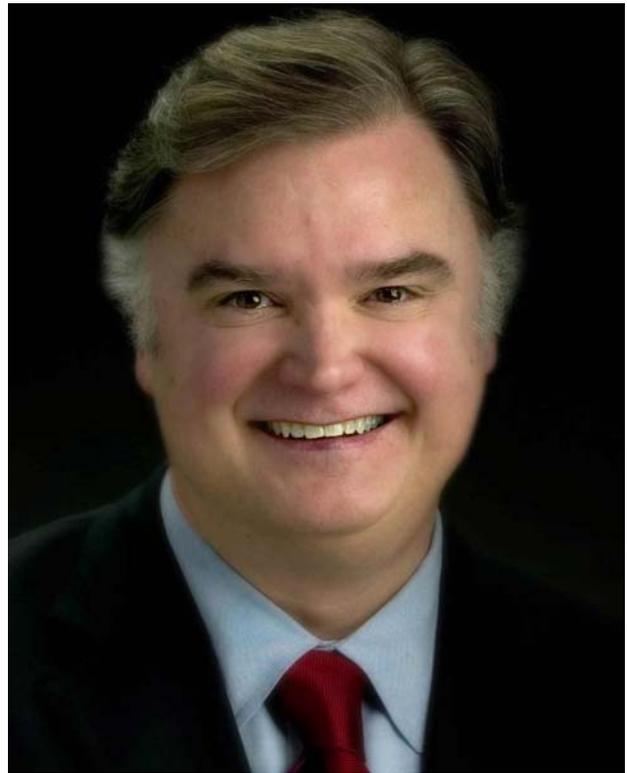
Prior to joining The Register and Tribune in 1974, Yepsen worked for two years as a reporter for the Quad City Times in Davenport, Iowa. During his newspaper career, he covered a variety of beats including police, city hall, courthouse and the Iowa Statehouse. In 1977, he became a statehouse reporter for the Register and chief political reporter in 1983. In 1994, he was named political editor and, in 2000, became the Register's full-time political columnist.

He was a regular panelist on Iowa Public Television's weekly "Iowa Press" news interview program for more than 30 years. Yepsen has also appeared on a variety of national radio and television programs commenting on Iowa politics and the presidential caucus campaigns in the state.

In November 1994, the American Political Hotline named Yepsen one of "America's best political reporters outside the Beltway." In 1997, the Washingtonian Magazine named him one of the "best Washington reporters who doesn't live in Washington" and, in 2000, Brill's Content magazine named him to their list of "all-star" political writers.

In 1999, veteran political reporter Jack Germond wrote Yepsen "is one of the premier political writers in the country." Yepsen served on the national advisory board for the start of "stateline.org," an Internet publication started by the Pew Foundation to improve coverage of state governments.

In his book about his 1988 presidential race, the late Illinois Sen. Paul Simon praised Yepsen's objectivity.



"Every four years the chief political reporter for the Des Moines Register becomes the most important reporter in the nation," he said. "It is a position that could cause vanity and abuse. To his credit, David Yepsen handled this position with sensitivity and balance. And he worked hard."