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## Television Executive Shares Life Lessons from Historical Figures at Cal Poly on Nov. 20

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Libby Haight O'Connell, senior vice president of corporate outreach and chief historian for A&E Television Networks, will present a lecture titled "Looking Back, Moving Forward," at Cal Poly's Spanos Theater from 11:10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Nov. 20. The event is free and open to the public.

O'Connell's presentation is based on quotes from historical figures and how they can inspire people today. The quotes are diverse in chronology and origin, ranging from Roman author Virgil in the first century B.C., who wrote, "Fortune favors the brave," to the more contemporary Woody Allen who said, "80 percent of life is just showing up."

Her topic stems from a concept that has been percolating in her mind as the basis of an article or a book. "I don't believe that history repeats itself, but I do believe that human nature remains the same," she said. "That's why I think these references from history are so important to people as they're thinking about their futures."

O'Connell was teaching history at Long Island University when she was originally hired by A&E to develop content for a proposed network based on historical content. She wasn't convinced others shared her passion, but she couldn't pass up the challenge of working on a start-up network. Since that time, the History Channel has grown to a fully-programmed network with more than 90 million subscribers.

She now serves as Chief Historian for the History Channel, develops and produces educational and community-based initiatives for AETN including A&E, History, and The Biography Channel, and oversees onsite video production with organizations such as the Smithsonian and the National Park Service.

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