



BOOK DELVES INTO UGA CONTROVERSIES

By MIKE MORRIS | The Atlanta Journal-Constitution | Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Sanford Stadium is pictured on the front of Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Rich Whitt's new book, and the title "Behind the Hedges" evokes thoughts of the University of Georgia's football successes.

But don't expect tales of gridiron glory in the book, which was released Tuesday.

The book touches on the power struggle between university President Michael Adams and former athletics director and legendary coach Vince Dooley. But "Hedges" goes far beyond, examining disputes that, according to publisher NewSouth Books, "involved corporate interest, secret deals and scandal ... that stretched from the football fields all the way to the state capitol."

The book's publisher and several former colleagues of Whitt, a former Journal-Constitution reporter, held a press conference Tuesday in Atlanta to tout the book. Whitt died earlier this year, just after finishing "Hedges."

UGA spokesman Tom Jackson said the book is old news that rehashes long-resolved issues.

"We don't see any value in that," he said.

Former UGA veterinary professor Renee Kaswan, who was at the Margaret Mitchell House press conference, is the focus of one of the chapters of "Hedges."

While teaching at UGA, Kaswan invented Restasis, a drug to treat dry eye. She said the university stood to make \$300 million in patent revenues from the drug, but against her wishes, Adams and the University of Georgia Research Foundation sold those rights for a much smaller lump sum, perhaps costing the school more than \$200 million.

In the book, Whitt says Kaswan "is convinced Adams orchestrated the deal to make himself look good without regard for the long-term damage to the university."

That's one of numerous controversies outlined in the 287 pages of Whitt's book.

Wrote Whitt: "One thing that soon became clear in the research for the book was that the general public never understood the power struggle that had gone on in Athens and Atlanta."