

Kelsey Woods

October 18, 2025

klw0101@auburn.edu

Phone: (312) 723-3607

JOAN HARRELL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST CATHERINE COLEMAN FLOWERS COLLABORATE WITH AUBURN JOURNALISM STUDENTS TO HIGHLIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN LEE AND MACON COUNTIES

AUBURN, AL. (October 7, 2025) – Catherine Coleman Flowers joined the Auburn journalism faculty this fall as a collaborating teacher for JRNL 4230: Advanced Reporting with Professor Joan Harrell. The class focuses on environmental and sustainability journalism. The project highlights environmental and public health issues in Macon County, Georgia, and Lee County, Alabama.

This eco-journalism initiative centers on neighborhoods with environmental issues including flooding, sanitation infrastructure, and poverty. These environmental concerns negatively impact infant, children and adult lives. Additionally, the lack of access to healthcare raises public health distress.

“Seeing the students’ eyes light up, they are so excited to have the opportunity to investigate issues that are impacting the environmental health of communities. This project is an in-depth investigation that sheds light on systemic public health challenges is a lifetime experience for the students. This is evidence that we need journalists,” said Dr. Harrell.

Auburn journalism students participating in this immersive project investigate the present issues under the collaborative efforts of Dr. Harrell and Dr. Flowers. As one of six national leaders to receive the 2025 TIME Magazine Earth Awards, international environmental advocate and author Dr. Flowers brings innovative learning experiences for the involved students.

“I genuinely believe these students will be the leaders and activists who take our work further than we ever imagined. Empowering them, hearing their voices, and watching them step into their power – that’s the most meaningful part of this partnership for me,” said Dr. Flowers.

The unheard stories written by the Auburn journalism students will be published in the Spring of 2026.

“We are in sync ensuring the students are thoroughly investigating these critical environmental issues and there is no misinformation” said Harrell, regarding her collaborative efforts alongside Catherine Coleman Flowers.

To read more about Catherine Coleman Flowers’ activist efforts, visit this [link](#).

###