We asked Dr. Jim Walsh to join us here tonight at Mt Aloysius College for at least four reasons.

First, Jim is the perfect segue to last year’s beautifully presented lectures by Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamison, the Director of the Annenberg School of Communications and the founder of FactCheck and FlackCheck.com. Frankly, Sister Helen Marie and I were desperate to find someone who could match Dr. Jamison’s hundreds of appearances on national airwaves and we found him. At last count, Jim was coming up on his thousandth appearance—and I am sure his daughter Corie will love how I am about to describe him—his thousandth appearance as a “talking head.” So he is a good match for Dr. Hall Jamison.

Second, Jim is also a perfect segue from last year’s year-long Mt Aloysius Speaker Series theme on Civil Discourse. Jim is a devoted practitioner of the art of civil discourse and I need offer only one proof of that claim—his supporters on CNN rave about Jim just as often as his supporters over on Fox News—on which polar opposite 24/7 news stations Jim has accumulated the most airtime. And we have their blogs and tweets to prove it. In one of his classroom appearances, we will ask Jim to speak to some of that history—the ironic relationships between his Fox and his CNN followers.

Third, Jim graciously fit his topic neatly into our year-long exploration of the Mercy and Mt Aloysius core value of “Hospitality,” which we have pursued this year with the theme “Finding Home in a Changing World.” We have heard from a self-described Hunger Games/Harry Potter philosopher on “Finding Home in an Often In hospitable World,” from a Catholic Bishop and canon lawyer on “The Theology of Hospitality,” from a Pulitzer Prize winner on “The Hospitality of Writing,” from our faculty on “Hospitality in the Digital Age,” and now from Jim on “My Five Dinners with Ahmadinejad: Hospitality as a Context for Foreign Policy.” Thank you for adapting your first hand, front line experiences in Iran and North Korea to our Speakers Series theme here in the Southern Allegheny Mountains.

Finally, Jim’s special expertise allows us to explore again the idea of Moral Choices about which Sister Helen Marie spoke with fervor. In past years, Mt Aloysius has focused this lecture on
death and dying, on the environment, on sex and sexuality, last year on civil discourse in public life and this year, thanks to Jim’s quite remarkable depth on the topic--on the issue of terrorism. Thank you for that Jim.

Jim’s resume is impressive and a much edited version appears in your program. Yes, he has hundreds of appearances on major news shows in America and 30 foreign countries. Yes, he is a prolific author, with more than 50 articles in journals and major newspapers around the country and the world and a new book due out later this year from Yale University Press. Yes, he won the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship from the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Yes, he is the author of one of the “ten best and original ideas for 2008”, as chosen by the British paper *The Independent*. And yes, Jim was described in this month’s edition of Foreign Policy magazine as “one of the world’s top military thinkers.” I should add that he is perhaps the only one also named a Jennings Randolph Peace Scholar by the US Institute for Peace.

No more words from me in this regard—Jim is very talented, he is thoughtful, and he is highly respected in his field, far beyond his home base in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And I am delighted to welcome my friend Jim Walsh to Mt Aloysius College to deliver the Annual Moral Choices lecture.