

"It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be on the breaking wave of history and to tell people's stories."

ANDERSON COOPER

Finding hope among horror



Don Campbell / HP staff

CNN journalist Anderson Cooper speaks during a meeting of The Economic Club of Southwestern Michigan Sunday at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center in Benton Township. He has covered wars, famine, natural disasters and political conflict here and abroad during his 25-year career.

CNN's Cooper speaks at Econ Club of Southwest Michigan Sunday

By **JOHN MATUSZAK**
HP Staff Writer

BENTON TOWNSHIP — Veteran CNN journalist Anderson Cooper has witnessed genocide in Rwanda, famine in Somalia, the ravages of earthquakes in Haiti and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

While seeing the worst, he has also experienced the best, he told the audience at the Economic Club of Southwest Michigan Sunday at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center.

"You expect to find the horror," said Cooper, who has traveled to 55 countries in his 25-year career. "You also find the humanity" with people willing to risk their own lives to save strangers. "That's the thing that gives me hope."

He commented that "we are at a fragile time in this country."

Amid the political turmoil, he also finds a reason

to be optimistic. He conceded that things "are more challenging than they have been in a long time" but he also sees more people engaged in ongoing events.

"It's an exciting time, no matter what side of the political aisle you are on," Cooper said, addressing the audience in a question and answer format.

Cooper, 50, was born in New York City, the son of heiress and socialite Gloria Vanderbilt and a descendant of Cornelius Vanderbilt. He graduated from Yale University, where he majored in political science, and interned for two summers with the CIA.

He said that the suicide of his older brother spurred him to want to be where people were facing real issues of life and death.

Cooper joined Channel One, which broadcasts to middle and high schools, becoming their chief international correspondent.

covering stories in Vietnam, Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda.

In 1995 he became a correspondent for ABC News, rising to the position of co-anchor for World News Now. He joined CNN in 2001, and in 2003 was given his own show, Anderson Cooper 360. He covered such stories as the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a program that won a Peabody Award. He has been a "60 Minutes" correspondent since 2007.

He has covered crises in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, as well as domestic stories such as the Orlando shootings. He also had dived with great white sharks.

"What, they couldn't get Leslie Stahl to do this?" he joked about his "60 Minutes" colleague.

Last year he moderated the second debate between presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. His books in-

clude "Dispatches from the Edge" and "The Rainbow Comes and Goes," about correspondence between himself and his mother.

He credited Trump for being one of the candidates that made himself accessible to journalists during the campaign. He also cited the difficulty of getting facts out of the White House, which he blamed on the challenge spokespeople are having keeping up with the president's Tweets and other pronouncements, that frequently contradict the official line.

He said that discussion of any impeachment charges from investigations into White House dealings are "premature. We're a long way from anything like that."

Cooper took exception to disparaging remarks Trump has made about journalists.

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