

# The Bennett Banner

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BENNETT COLLEGE, GREENSBORO, N. C.

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## South Africa trip enlightens Miller

by Laura Nelson

"When I saw real need and hunger black people have for education, I needed to come back and tell our young people how lucky they are and get into those classrooms and take advantage of education." These words expressed President Isaac H. Miller, Jr.'s main concern after his trip to South Africa.

In March, Miller, along with 11 other presidents from black institutions, traveled to South Africa to visit the educational system of the country and to propose some ideas for making the system better. The trip was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.

Miller said the blacks of South Africa do not have adequate access to educational opportunities, thus being handicapped in gaining high responsibility jobs and high pay. He spoke of the high rate of illiteracy, poor nutrition and poor health conditions. He named these as the main problems of the blacks along with their inadequacies in the fields of math, science and engineering.

Miller's desire to help victims of apartheid is intense. He enjoyed his trip, "but the beauty of the country contrasts so greatly with the ugly features of apartheid."

He felt a very strong sense of racial kinship with the people and their problems because they are so similar to the ones blacks here have experienced. "We have a role to help them have a place under the sun," he said.

Miller and the other presidents visited Capetown, Pretoria, Johannesburg and one township, Crossroads. President Miller spoke of the poverty in Crossroads as nothing like he has ever seen in the U.S.: "crowds of people with nothing to do all day except just stand around." He described shantytowns as "just something propped up where they call home—just living."

Asked how he felt about the South African government's refusal to allow outside sources to report on the unrest in the country, Miller said the government was ex-

periencing pressure from the outside world towards its immorality, and along with the pressure from the inside, the government will open up.

There is a similarity between the educational situation in South Africa and that of the era of segregation here, according to Miller. He urges that teachers from South Africa come here to study our school systems and receive help in curriculum development. He suggested that some instructors go to South Africa to train teachers. He also mentioned the possibility of Bennett scholarships for some South African women. One problem for blacks of South Africa is that they are not prepared for technology.

Miller said one thing that needs to be acknowledged is how involved black Americans are in the struggle of black people around the world for dignity and opportunity. He said people should have a broader outlook on the whole situation. Miller related Bennett to his trip, saying, "It makes sense for our students to learn from and about international students just as they learn from us. That's one of the principal lessons I learned."

"I saw so much that I need to go back and see it all again to understand it a little better . . . It's just too big to comprehend in such a short time," said Miller, who hopes to start an international studies program on campus. Laughing wistfully, President Miller said, "I wouldn't mind going back to teaching for a while as a visiting professor."

Miller's discontent with what he witnessed firsthand clearly marks a turning point in his life.

### THE PRESIDENT'S COLLEGE PARTY

April 26, 1986

David D. Jones Student Union Foyer

10 p.m. until 12:30 a.m.

SEMI-FORMAL AFFAIR



Key ceremony: Proudly wearing their caps and gowns seniors Fredericka Watson and Karen R. Taylor talk with President Miller during the annual Senior Day activities. (photo by Otis Hairston)

## Ceremony stirs seniors

by Vennessa McLaughlin

"There were times as a student I felt I would not be robbed on Senior Day" stated Phyllis Jones.

Jones, a senior accounting major from Fayetteville said "when I robbed my big sister, as a sophomore, I saw Senior Day for myself a far-off dream that may never come true."

Jones said, "During all the humdrum planning I talked with another senior who is not supposed to graduate until December, and she was more excited than I was. I knew I had to be missing something. Not until then did I see the significance of participating."

After Senior Day was over, Jones had a change of attitude about all the events leading up to graduation. She is excited and ready to march.

Karen Fisher, senior class president, stated, "I'm excited!" "I was excited before

Senior Day and I'm still excited about all the events yet to come during Senior Week."

The senior class upheld a tradition that had diminished through the years. It gave as its present to the college a magnolia tree dedicated to the late Dr. Lloyd Milton Harris, biology professor. Fisher stated, "We hope by planting the tree we will reinstitute the forgotten tradition. It has been a while since one was dedicated."

Angela Wright, a senior from Phoenix, Ariz., saw Senior Day and the dedication of the Magnolia tree as just another traditional ritual.

"It was nothing to get excited about. I feel instead of a tree they should have contributed the funds to start a picnic area, with tables and benches, so that students won't have to sit on the stairs, the flag-pole and on the walls," Wright said. "Bennett is not going to supply us with this type of environment, so

we as students must initiate these types of things ourselves."

Dean Chelsea Tipton announced the names of seniors receiving caps and gowns. The senior class did its class song, "That's What Friends Are For."

The address was given by Mrs. Gladys Robinson, a 1971 graduate, who is presently the executive director of the Triad Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation in Greensboro. Her message to the senior class was "Be Prepared."

The dedication of the magnolia tree followed Mrs. Robinson's address. The senior class led faculty, staff, students, relatives and friends to the front of the science building where the dedication was made by senior class parliamentarian, Stacey Goode.

The senior class selected lavender and rose as its class colors, and as their class motto, "To whom much is given, much is expected."

## Seniors reflect before graduation

by Maddell Griffin

Each young woman leaving the school in May takes with her an individual impression of the institution and what it stands for.

The month before graduation is often used for reflection by seniors. The excitement they feel at preparing "to go out into the real world" is mixed with sadness at leaving the college family. As they prepare to go on to everything from medical school to careers in special education, some members of the graduating class took time to share some of their reflections.

"What was the most important thing about Bennett or the thing that affected you the most?"

"The different experiences at Bennett have helped me mature," said Karen Fisher, senior class president who is planning to attend medical school in Chapel Hill. A native of Merritt, she plans to practice pediatrics.

"The development of my leadership skills," said Evelyn Fulmore, SGA president who plans to study pharmacology at Mercer University in Atlanta and then pursue a career in research.

"My reign as Miss Bennett has given me opportunities to work with students and people outside of the school which have really helped me grow as a person," said Penny Hill of Winston-Salem who plans to attend school at Wake Forest.

"The sisterhood," said Wendolyn Abel. "Because of its small size, Bennett is like a family. It's like having 500 other people who care about me when something goes wrong."

"Being away from home. It really taught me to be totally independent," said Sharon Highsmith of Philadelphia, who is going to attend graduate school at Atlanta University in marketing.

"The faculty. I feel like I can

go to them for anything academically or personally," said Allyson Berry, Miss Senior from Leesburg, Fla., who is trying to land an accounting job with the federal government.

"The leadership responsibilities that were put on me helped a lot," said Francena Brown of Sumter, S.C. who is looking for a computer science related job in Columbia, S.C. "I'm more independent and strive a lot harder for what I believe in."

"My instructors. Some were very inspirational, and they seem to have a love for the students and were concerned about our well-being," said Vicelia Howard of Oakland, Cal. who plans to attend summer school and then look for a job.

"What do you feel is the most important thing that you are taking with you from Bennett?"

"A sense of competence, confidence and pride in my people and

myself," said Fisher.

"Tradition," said Fulmore. "I had never thought much about tradition before. But the little traditions, like big sister/little sister, at Bennett are what make it special."

"Besides a wealth of knowledge that I have gotten," said Hill, "Bennett has taught me a lot about my culture and taught me how to be myself, even when working in a group. I can venture out on my own."

"The vast experiences," said Able. "The different cultural, academic and social events gave me the exposure and preparation to face the real world."

"From having to depend on myself, I gained a lot of independence and self-confidence," said Highsmith.

"A lot of memorable experiences, happy and sad, good and bad," said Berry.

"My leadership qualities and

sisterhood," said Brown

"Living with the young ladies on campus has given me a dose of the real medicine that is out there," said Howard.

"What is the best advice you can give to a freshman?"

"To become involved in extra-curricular activities and work hard in academics," said Fisher.

"To make the most of these years. A Bennett experience is what you make of it," said Fulmore.

"When you come to Bennett have your priorities set," said Hill. "Take advantage of what Bennett has to offer."

"Have a good head on your shoulders," said Abel. "Know your purpose when you get here because there are a lot of things to distract you."

"Be patient," said Highsmith. "I noticed the past two classes and even our class expected everything when they wanted it."