

## Faculty Profile: Kathy Adams

by Taylor Moore

Psychology professor Kathy Adams breezes into her office with unbelievable exuberance for someone so very busy. She only has a few minutes, she tells me, and suggests that we move away from her office for this interview.

She smiles, her whole face brightening as she does so. She is petite and quite pretty, with high cheekbones, gracefully arched eyebrows accenting light brown eyes. She sits down and begins by talking about her childhood.

"I was born in North Alabama ... we lived in Delaware and in West Virginia, but primarily we lived in Pensacola, Florida. I was a tomboy - I have two brothers, and I was in the middle kid, the troublemaker. I did what my brothers did, and I was very much into sports - I was a very good softball and baseball player, and I played shortstop on our neighborhood team. I loved to run and tumble, take hikes... So, [it was] a pretty average childhood, a middle-American family.

"I read a lot of biographies in the fifth and sixth grade, as well as a lot of autobiographies, and I read a lot about women. Even at that point I knew I was interested in women although I couldn't articulate that. And I remember reading Jane Adams and some of the historical figures ... I pretty much knew as a little girl that it was a man's world ... My brothers got to do things that I didn't get to do ... I remember thinking that they had more power, or something that I didn't have.

"I think that as I've grown older I appreciate being a woman more and more. I definitely push towards women's rights - I definitely would call myself a feminist. Some people would apologize for that, but I don't apologize for that at all! It happens that what we push men towards are positions of power, and I would like for women to have more power. And I think that by

women gaining rights, men will also gain rights ...

"From a very young age I knew I wanted to work outside the home. When I was six or seven I wanted to be a surgeon ... I knew I didn't want to teach, but my concept of teaching had nothing to do with college teaching!

"I started college at the University of Alabama as a math major ... but by my junior year I knew I didn't want math. I had to declare a major, and I had the most credits in psychology, so I decided to major in psychology! I had a psychology course my first year in school, because I needed a social science requirement. And I liked it, so I kept taking more psychology, but not necessarily with the idea that I was going to major in it!

"The other thing that happened in my junior year was that the first woman in the psychology department came, and she was very influential. I had a class with her called 'Psychology of Women.' She was the one who encouraged me on into graduate school ...

"As far as teaching, I knew that I did not want to teach at a state institution, that I wanted to teach at a liberal arts school ... I had become disillusioned as an undergraduate with the kind of education you get at a large university: large classes, and no contact with your professors

"As a graduate student I assisted in classes and I taught a couple of classes - I thought it was great fun! And I loved doing research, so that was a way to combine research and teaching ... And teaching was more fun than I'd ever imagined!"

"Anyway, I knew I wanted to teach in college, and I went to Wake Forest for two years, and then I taught at Guilford part-time for a year. I taught at Birmingham in Birmingham, Alabama, and then came back to Guilford. This is my eighth year here."

"One thing that keeps me here is my department. The people are both colleagues and friends. We're all very different, but we all work very well together. And Guilford encourages creativity in teaching and likes people to put efforts toward teaching. I like student contact, and certainly the students. It is an interesting combination of students."

"Students eight years ago didn't come in as career focused ... I think that's a national movement. I think as the economic situation has become worse people have become much more concerned about their jobs.

I think there used to be a lot more activism in political and social issues. I think there is still a core of students that are very active, but I think its less campus-wide."

## Merry Christmas



"I feel much more radical politically than I used to. I don't think I've changed so much as my comparison group has changed."

"I think there are many kinds of excellent teachers. I think that the way you teach is somewhat reflective of you as a person. I think that the best teachers are

real people as opposed to going in and putting on a performance or pretending to be a teacher ... I think the common denominator is a real, genuine love of learning - for oneself, and wanting to share that with other people. And not assuming that you have all the answers, but that you can help people find the answers."

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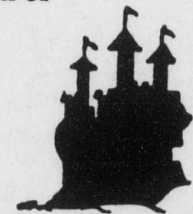
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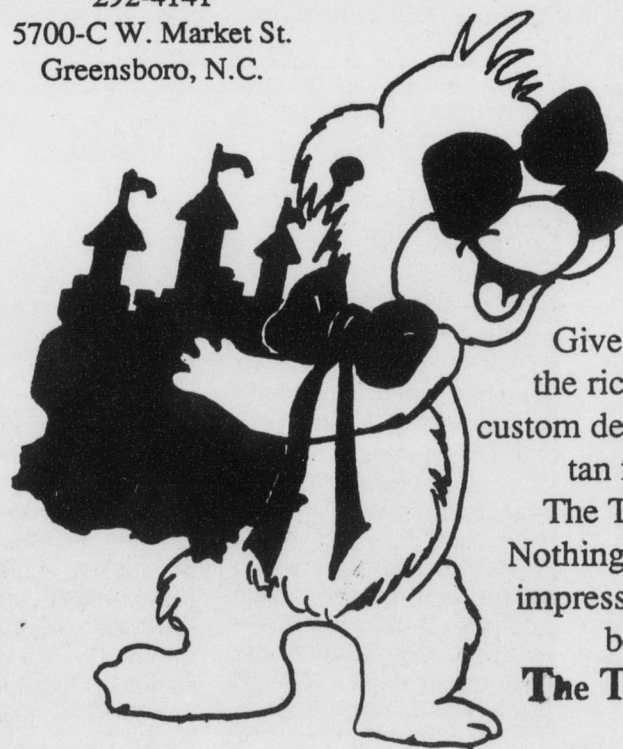
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