

## **MIA Spotlight**

# **Zabala-Roberts Describes Life in Ecuador**

by: Carolina Mata

Ecuador, located in the Northwest region of the South American continent, is the size of North Carolina. It has three main regions: coastal, jungle, and the highlands. The languages spoken are Spanish and Quechua, the latter spoken by the Indians who, along with the Mestizos, make up 75% of the population. Like most other Latin American countries, Ecuador is Catholic and full of warm, friendly people.

This colorful country is represented at Meredith by the equally colorful Gabriela Zabala-Roberts. Zabala-Roberts says she admires the campus and the opportunity to learn from courses that promote the spiritual and intellectual growth of women. When she compares Meredith to colleges in her country, Zabala-Roberts states that more

colleges in Ecuador are public, but that higher education is not as widespread due to the economic and political problems in the country. Even though women of the upper and middle classes pursue professional careers, many still choose family over work. As Zabala-Roberts says, "Marriage there is still considered a career and has been chosen by many." There are a few women, however, who reach executive positions, including government appointments to the administration of the recently elected President Rodrigo Borjas. Even though women are still considered inferior to men, paid less, taught to please husbands and raise children, Zabala-Roberts feels this attitude is changing and women are looking for other ways to be fulfilled.

Ecuador, like other countries, tries

to imitate the United States, especially in the consumption of material goods. But, due to slow economic development, it does not have the capability to keep up with the ever changing technical complexities of today. "That is good," she adds, "because it's important for us to keep our own traditions and culture." Zabala-Roberts believes, however, that the United States could profit from Ecuador's mix of the primitive and the technological.

If you think frog legs are unappetizing, then you wouldn't want to try two of the typical dishes in Ecuador - roasted guinea pigs and "Mondongo," a broth made of calves' feet and vegetables. Another typical dish is potato pancakes with cheese and a vegetable called "Achiote," the Ecuadorian equivalent of Paprika.

Learning about other women has led Zabala-Roberts to understand herself better as well. She has been met by a supportive faculty here at Meredith. Attending a co-ed medical school in Brazil in her 20's was "no fun" compared to her experiences at Meredith. She says, "The benefits of being with younger and older women is a learning experience I will never forget."

## **For Your Information**

Speech 350/ Oral Communications for Business and the Professions (3 credit hours) was accidentally left off the schedule of classes for Spring 1990. If you are interested in the class, go by the Registrar's office for more information.



The above photo shows Gabriela Zabala-Roberts with her husband and two children.