



MEREDITH HERALD

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Educating Women to Excel

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New building breaks ground

□ **Building will be home of math, science departments**

CHRISTY SADLER
Staff Writer

On Monday afternoon, Meredith took yet another giant step forward into the twenty-first century.

A large crowd of students, faculty, staff, alumni and members of the community gathered on the lawn of the Alumnae House at 2:30 p.m. to witness the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Science and Mathematics Building.

The 80,000 square foot facility will be built on the current site of the Alumnae House and will house the departments of mathematics and computer science, biology and health sciences and

chemistry and physical sciences.

Though the heat was stifling, the atmosphere at the ceremony was festive. Buttons and T-shirts commemorating the event were handed out to stu-

dents as they arrived.

The ceremony opened with a welcome by Dr. Jeff Hockaday, chairman of the Meredith Board of Trustees. Hockaday discussed the planning that went into the facility and the

many benefits that students and teachers would reap from it.

Hockaday said that the facility would "establish Meredith College as a flagship institution for women in maths and sciences" and "will forever change the appearance of Meredith."

Hockaday's welcome was followed by remarks from Dr. Hartford. Hartford focused on the important contributions that various scientists and mathematicians have made to our society.

She stated that the opportunities provided by the new building will enable future Meredith graduates to make these same contributions and "impact our world in positive ways."

Hartford also promised, "This building will ensure



Dr. Maureen Hartford speaks to the crowd gathered at Monday's groundbreaking for the new math and science building.

PHOTO BY TANESHA WILLIAMS

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Theologian explores women's rights

CHELSEA DESANTIS
Staff Writer

Dr. Riffat Hassan is "a woman of courage and vision," said vice president for Academic Affairs Dr. Rosalind Reichard in her introduction of the noted feminist theologian.

Hassan, Professor of Religion and Humanities at the University of Louisville, said during Chapel on Wednesday, Apr. 4 that "mutilation, burning, hacking, shooting" all sound like crimes that would put you behind bars, unless you live in Pakistan, Morocco, Turkey, Jordan, Syria.

Her lecture was on "Violence Against Women and Religion."

Hassan, founder of The International Network for the Rights of Female Victims of Violence in Pakistan (INRFVVP), came to Meredith to inform students of the violent acts that are legal and euphemistically described as "honor killings" in these coun-

tries.

"Honor killings," Hassan said, "have been going on for a while yet only recently been brought to attention by International Rights Groups."

A BBC program featuring honor killings in Pakistan, Hassan's country of origin, sparked outrage primarily in American women and students from South Asia. E-mails poured in to Hassan, a commentator on the program, from concerned women around the globe who wanted to do something.

Hassan took that opportunity to create the INRFVVP, an organization that rapidly became a movement.

Hassan began her career as a theologian in 1974, analyzing the Koranic texts to find "Muslim discrepancies in teaching with the actual treatment of women." She wanted to challenge the "patriarchal perspective" of the Koran, which had only been interpreted by men.

In her studies, she attributed much of the mistreatment of

women much to a 1970s phenomenon called Islamization, "an imposition of Islamic laws on society."

Women were the primary focus of Islamization and the secondary focus, punishment, was most often applied to Muslim women.

Hassan spent two years in Pakistan at the height of Islamization. During this time, a woman who was raped and then got pregnant was held accountable for a crime that was committed against her.

Because of a law stating that the only admissible evidence in a case such as this was the testimony of "four male believers," Hassan said, the woman was sentenced to a punishment of 100 lashes and prison time.

This show of "compassion" was substituted for the typical punishment of being stoned to death. As a result, feminist movements in Pakistan began.

Realizing the futility of getting an Islamic law retracted, Hassan began a systematic

study of the Haddith, the traditions of the prophet.

The Haddith, a secondary text to the Koran, relies on the creation story in which Adam is God's primary creation and Eve is his secondary, taken from Adam's rib. Eve is inferior to Adam and not to be trusted.

In the Koran, however, Hassan found that all 30 creation passages describe a totally egalitarian view of creation, that is, man and woman created at the same time, equally.

However, when Hassan asked several Muslim women how women were created, all said "from the rib of Adam." Hassan was distressed that Muslims were perpetuating a view not even found in the Koran. A statement in the Koran, said Hassan, cannot be superseded by the Haddith.

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