

# THE PENDULUM

Special Graduation Edition

Informing, entertaining and inspiring the Elon University community since 1974

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## Congratulations Class of 2002

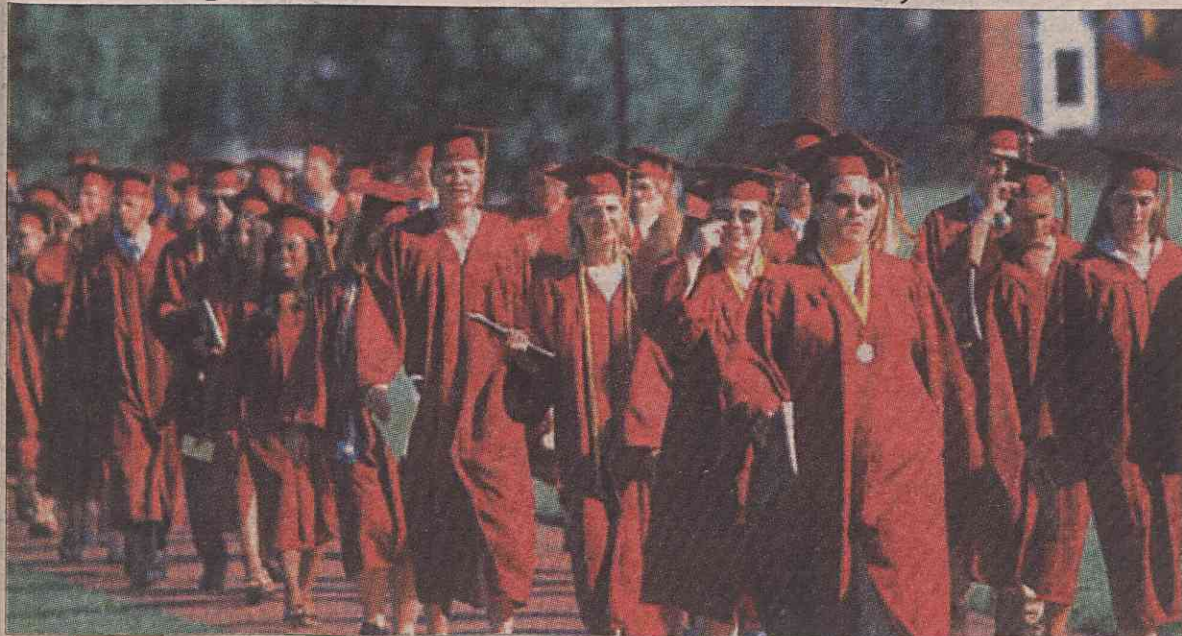


Photo Courtesy of University Relations

The Class of 2002, the first class to graduate from Elon University, is the institution's the largest class with more than 890 students.

## Troxler: behind the scenes man

**Crystal Allen**  
Managing Editor

Most seniors come to commencement not knowing what to expect.

When soon-to-be graduates line up for the processional across campus, they are directed by George Troxler, faculty marshal.

"Stay in line, stop at the 'X' when your name is called, shake with your right hand, receive diploma with your left," Troxler said.

Little do most people know, Troxler has been planning for that day for more than four months.

He knows every detail of graduation, from how many chairs are in the audience to what kind of bottled water is found under the seats. Elon's graduation contingency plan was recently highlighted in the Wall Street Journal, describing how detailed and precise the graduation plan is.

Graduation planning begins in September with the selection of the commencement speaker, and full-time planning begins in January.

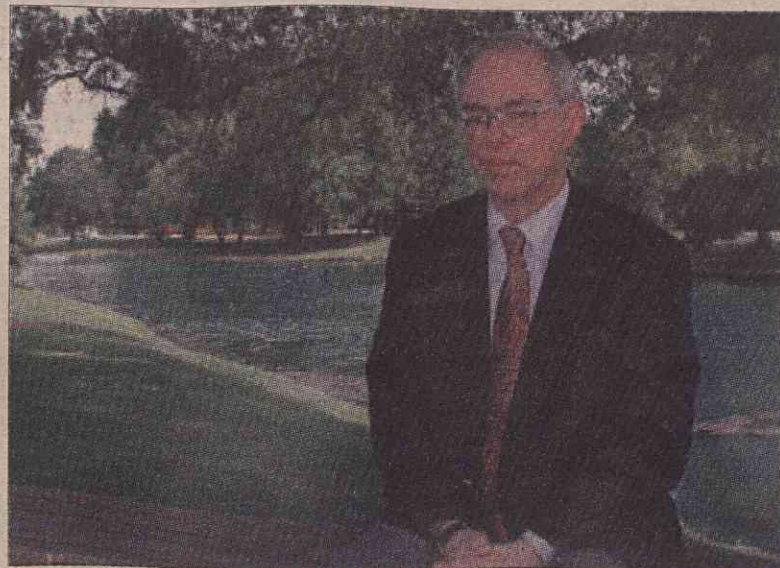
Troxler has been the senior fac-

ulty marshal for more than 10 years. The first year Troxler was faculty marshal was also the first time graduation was held Under the Oaks. "We decided to move it outside because we thought it would be more attractive," he said. "It wasn't really a space issue at the time."

The class of 2003 is the largest

graduating class to date, which causes logistical problems with the outdoor ceremony. Troxler said there are about 10,000 chairs placed Under the Oaks, and setting up the chairs begins two days prior to graduation.

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Tim Rosner / Photography Editor

George Troxler is the senior faculty marshal for graduation. Planning for commencement begins in September.

## Sullivan ready to speak after 22 years of waiting

**Katie Beaver**  
Copy Editor

It's a moment John Sullivan has envisioned many times: standing at the podium in full academic regalia, staring out into a maroon sea of eager graduates waiting to take their place in the world. He had it all planned, down to the very tone of voice he would use as he addressed these young people he had seen grow throughout the past four years. But it wasn't to be.

Until now.

Sullivan, Maude Sharpe Powell professor of philosophy, has been Elon's backup commencement speaker since 1980, patiently waiting in the wings while others had their moment in the sun. This year, at Elon's 112th commencement exercises May 25, Sullivan will finally give the speech he's rewritten or revised every year for more than 20 years.

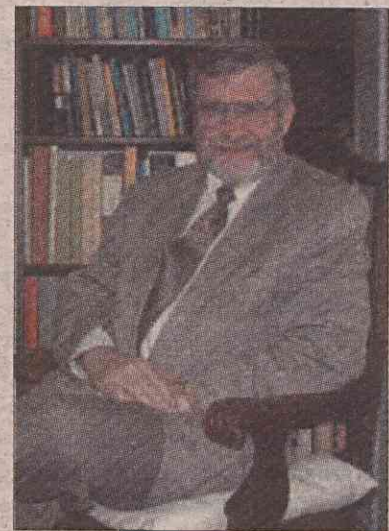
He will speak in the place of Mae Jemison, the first black female NASA astronaut. She withdrew from commencement because of an illness in her family.

Sullivan's milestone has gained national recognition; media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, the "Today" show, the Greensboro News & Record and the Burlington Times-News have featured Sullivan in the past month.

"I'm honored," Sullivan says. "But this is not about me. It's about graduation—these students who have completed their career here and are going on to new things. We are just their cheerleaders."

Students have been first priority for Sullivan since he arrived at Elon in 1970. His teaching style and concern for his students quickly earned him a reputation as a respected professor and scholar.

When former President Fred Young asked him to be a backup



Tim Rosner / Photography Editor  
Philosophy professor John Sullivan will deliver Saturday's commencement address.

speaker in 1980, Sullivan was pleased to oblige.

"Dr. Young was concerned that they have all possibilities covered," Sullivan says. "I was their insurance policy."

Since then, Sullivan has given hundreds of speeches on Elon's campus and off, including an address immediately following Sept. 11, but he was never called upon to fill in for a commencement speaker. As time went on, he noticed a significant change in both the audience and the speakers.

"Times were changing, students were changing," Sullivan says. "When I started, Elon had mostly first-generation students, but students are wealthier now. You have to appeal to a different kind of audience."

Speakers used to cover serious, complex topics, delving deep into philosophical and political issues. Now, Sullivan says, speeches are shorter and more celebratory.

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