



# The Pendulum

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Elon University

Elon, N.C.

Congratulations class of 2003!

*"The foundation for all I've achieved has been my experience at Elon. I'm envisioning the group, reminiscing, saying, 'gee, I was doing this in 1974.'" - Deborah Yow-Bowden*

## '74 grad to give commencement speech Saturday

**Kristin Simonetti**

Reporter

When Deborah Yow-Bowden delivers her address to the 900-plus graduates of Elon University on May 24, it will be a sort of homecoming for the University of Maryland athletics director. Almost 30 years ago, she was sitting right where they will be sitting: under the oak trees in front of West dormitory on the school's lush green campus.

"The foundation for all I've achieved has been my experience at Elon," Yow-Bowden said. "I'm envisioning the group, reminiscing, saying 'gee, I was doing this in 1974.'"

Yow-Bowden, a 1974 Elon College graduate, was raised in Gibsonville, N.C., just two miles from the Elon campus. She transferred to Elon after a brief stint at East Carolina University. Her older sister Kay, now the women's head basketball coach at North Carolina State University, was the first women's head basketball coach at Elon. The younger Yow-Bowden played varsity for her sister, and both



Jerome Sturm / University Relations

*The University of Maryland's athletic director Deborah Yow-Bowden will return to her alma matter to deliver the commencement address.*

helped the women's basketball program at Elon take flight.

"I have very fond memories of playing on varsity [at Elon],"

Yow-Bowden said. "I remember when they let women's basketball play in the big gym. We were very appreciative."

Yow-Bowden majored in English at Elon, and remembers her time under the tutelage of Dr. Lamar Bland and former education professor Jo Williams.

"That's what you remember, professors, classes you took. My memories of Elon are all good," Yow-bowden said.

Following graduation, Yow-Bowden went on to teach English at Walter Williams High School in Burlington and Eastern Guilford High School in Gibsonville. She also found her niche in coaching basketball.

In 1976, when the University of Kentucky was searching for its first women's basketball coach, Yow-Bowden applied and got the job.

That began a series of head coaching jobs at the collegiate level. Following Kentucky she coached at Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma and the University of Florida. She enjoyed coaching because she felt that it was similar to teaching. But during her service at Florida, she was presented with an opportunity to take an administrative job. The University of Florida

Boosters, one of the most successful booster organizations in the country, approached her about becoming a fundraiser for the organization. She decided to take the offer and became the first woman to be hired for that position.

"I was a coach for a number of years before the segway into athletics administration," Yow-Bowden said. "It was like having two different careers; I had to start all over again."

Yow-Bowden warned to the idea of an administration job and continued on that track at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro before being named the director of athletics at St. Louis University.

In August 1994, Yow-Bowden took over as athletic director for the University of Maryland, and since has compiled a long list of achievements. In nearly ten years, Yow-Bowden has balanced the program's \$40 million budget, improved academic support services for athletes, increased the school's exhausted eligibility

*See Yow-Bowden p. 4*

## Waiting in the wings: Elon has a Plan B for all occasions

**Kaitlyn North**

Assist. A&E Editor

One year ago, Elon University and national media including The Wall Street Journal and the Today Show were buzzing about Elon's 2002 commencement address. It was delivered by one of the country's most famous graduation "backups," philosophy professor John Sullivan.

Sullivan had been the backup commencement speaker for 22 years when he was finally able to give his speech last year,

and the experience shed light on the importance of backups for the graduation ceremony.

"There are about twenty names on the list," said Dean George Troxler, the director of commencement exercises. "Everybody on the platform has to have a backup."

Beginning last year, religion professor Jeff Pugh was enlisted as the backup commencement speaker for Sullivan, and he will reprise his role this year if Deborah Yow-Bowden-bowden is unable to speak.

Troxler said that the backup for commencement speakers are paid a yearly stipend of \$100 to have a speech prepared.

Speakers are not the only backups that have to practice for a role that might not happen. Troxler said that at the rehearsal meetings for the ceremony, all of the backups will be present and practicing. If, for example, performing arts professor Catherine McNeela is unable to read the list of names on the big day, her backup Provost Gerald Francis will have practiced with her and the registrar's office in case he

needs to step in.

Francis is a typical backup because he will not only be at graduation, he will have other duties to perform in the ceremony.

"In most cases, the backup is somebody who is already involved," said Dan Anderson, director of university relations. Francis will also perform President Leo Lambert's duties if he is unable to, and vice versa.

In the case of an emergency, Hallie

*See Backups p. 4*

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