

# Weems talks on women's roles

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of interviews by Mary Owens and Barrie Walton with Dr. Weems.

**Q:** Dr. Weems, in your speech supporting women's right at the second ERA hearing, you stressed the importance of equal protection, equal opportunity, and equal responsibility. How does this belief affect what you are trying to do here at Meredith, particularly in the academic area?

**Weems:** My greatest concern right now is not the academic program, but it's literally getting women's sights up. I'm not sure that many of our women recognize some of the very critical problems. For several months now I've been encouraging through our brainstorming committee and also the business committee the idea of executive training for women -- the concept of moving Meredith graduates into executive positions. I think that Meredith does have the reputation of being a good school and if we had a program where we said, "this is executive material," I believe we would have our girls about as salable as any other schools in the state. I'm particularly interested in it because I think we can move our people into some very key positions.

**Q:** Why do you feel the need for executive training is so great?

**Weems:** I've probably hired 130 or 140 women since I have been out of college. Did you know that better than 90% of those have resigned to me in the employment interview -- literally told me when they're going to leave? I know when I hire them they're really temporary.

**Q:** How do you account for this?

**Weems:** I don't know totally -- I have the feeling that there is a lot of "peer-group pressure" -- not the male chauvinist pig now -- but pressure from other women NOT to think in terms of long-range work plans. Even though employed, they tend to look out for what's best for their husbands career-wise as opposed to what is best for themselves. Personally, I have no objection to anybody not working, but statistics are impressive. Half of the women between 18 and 64

are working. Nine out of ten will work sometime during their lives -- and the average female will work 25 years. These are the facts and I'm not sure that women have realized this.

**Q:** So basically, you're saying that women are socially and psychologically unmotivated to think in terms of long-range careers? Do you think the passage of ERA would do anything to help the situation?

**Weems:** I think this would help -- but part of it is going to be mental attitude. The main thing is to get their sights up -- to convince a woman that she can be president or vice-president of hold any executive position.

**Q:** Once a woman has reached such a position, do you think she feels fairly stable in that role, generally speaking? Does evidence show that women tend to remain in these positions as long as men?

**Weems:** Stability in women is as great as in men in terms of how long they will stay on initial jobs. But men talk permanence and stability -- a woman almost prides herself in talking impermanence and instability. The men change jobs, but they won't talk that way -- so consequently you tend to include them in your future plans. You expect them to make a rational, business-type judgment. But, if a woman's husband decides to pull up stakes and move -- no matter what you pay her or how you promote her -- she will leave. Now, I'm not in favor of splitting up families. The only thing I would ask would be for both of them to sit down and make a rational judgment together: Are we better off staying here, or does my wife's job mean anything?

**Q:** As an employer then, you find women less dependable than men?

**Weems:** I have never personally found women to be undependable. In fact, women have some characteristics that are very desirable under office circumstances. They can take a job and get satisfaction out of doing the job well. I have found that in dealing with most men this is not necessarily the motive. Men are more anxious to get credit for their jobs. They seldom get themselves in irreplaceable posi-



Dr. Weems relaxes as he gives his views on the ERA and the roles educated women play.

tions. But women with this initiative become extremely valuable in present positions.

**Q:** In many situations, a female doing the same job as a man will have a lower salary because of titles. For instance, a woman bookkeeper will do essentially the same job as the male accountant, and yet her salary is not usually as much.

**Weems:** No, it's not fair. Secretaries, for example, should be able to have very rapid advancement -- and yet, when you study them historically, they don't.

**Q:** You have attributed a lot of a woman's difficulty in seeking better business opportunities to other women -- "peer - group pressure." Would you mind explaining that a little further?

**Weems:** Women, typically, don't like another aggressive woman -- and yet, this is considered an attribute in men. It is considered unfeminine to be overly aggressive, but this is part of getting ahead, I believe. I don't really see this

interpretation of aggressiveness as unfeminine by men quite as much. A man's woman, very often, is not a woman's woman. And the man's woman tends to be the more outspoken, aggressive type, I do think. I'm not saying that women's problems are other women -- but it is part of the problem. Women tend to whip each other into line. Even on ERA I pick up letters to the editor and this sort of thing and it seems as if most of the letters written against ERA are written by women. It's amusing, anyway that most of the ORGANIZED anti - women's lib comes from other women. I think most women are for what the women's lib group is trying to do, and yet there are reservations.

**Q:** Most of the opposition is based on fear and not under-

standing what the ERA is trying to do for women and men.

It might help if women realize that the ERA is not a product of the women's lib movement.

**Weems:** Women's liberation and the ERA are not synonymous. The abrasive characteristics of some of the Women's Lib people turn many women away from the problems. My main concern is raising women out of any kind of second-class citizenship. Women need to expect to be part of the economy and need to feel they aspire to hold a top management position. You don't protect people by abridging their rights. The granting of rights is progressive and this (passing ERA) seems to be the next step in doing it.

## TWIG newsbriefs

Want to help keep your tuition down? The SGA is providing you a way to do this by the circulation of petitions to the North Carolina State Legislature. In 1971, that body of legislators adopted a bill to assist North Carolina students who attend private colleges and universities, authorizing \$200 in state funds per student. This sum would go directly to the college to be used as financial aid, helping to counteract the rising cost of tuition fees. However, only \$25 per student has been funded.

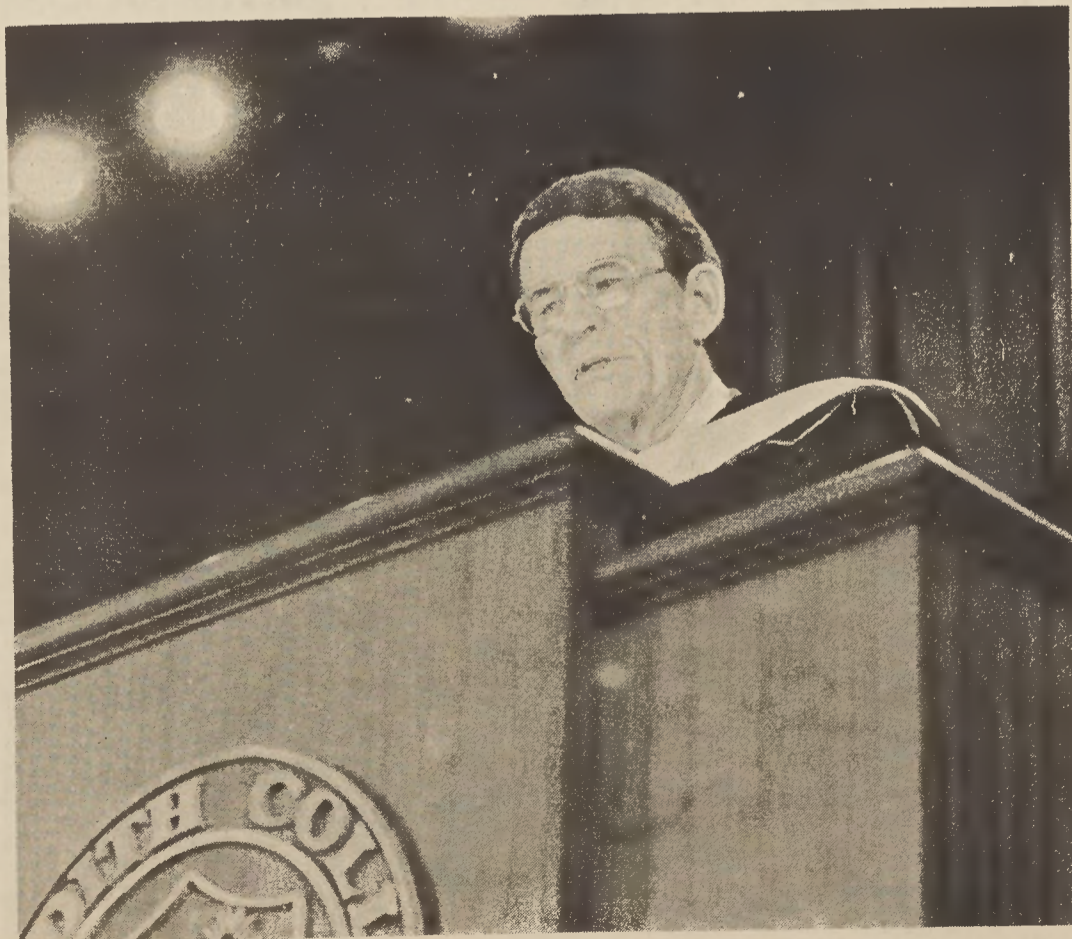
In conjunction with the North Carolina Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the SGA is circulating petitions on each hall of every dorm to be submitted to the state legislature in hopes of securing the remaining sum. As approximately three-fourths of the Meredith student body are North Carolina residents, this would amount to almost \$150,000 in state aid. The legislation adopted to help fill empty spaces in existing private colleges, the bill reflects the state's interest in fully utilizing its current facilities rather than expanding the university system.

The winter meeting of the Collegiate Academy of the North Carolina Academy of Science was held on Friday, January 26, hosted by the Barber Science Club. Morning ac-

tivities included displays in Hunter Hall, a business session, and presentations of individual club projects. The club is interested in studying and helping to preserve Hemlock Bluffs - a tract of land southwest of Raleigh inhabited by characteristic mountain vegetation. Mr. Michael Baronski, guest speaker, presented a slide program and explanation of the possible history of the area in order to make the afternoon field trip more meaningful. The spring CANCAS meeting, scheduled for April, will be hosted by UNC - Wilmington.

### Rules for calendar use

The College Center Association has established rules for the use of the College Calendar located in the College Center. To post an announcement, one must pick up cards at the Student Government workroom on the second floor of the center. Yellow cards designate campus-wide activities such as concerts; whereas green cards designate individualized activities such as club meetings. Announcements cover a two-week period. The use of the calendar is open to any organization or class.



Mr. C. C. Cameron, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, announces the successful completion of the 5-year Advancement Program on Founders' Day.