

# THE TWIG

MEREDITH COLLEGE



## Letters to the editor

Dear Editor:

I want to comment upon the implication made in the anonymous letter in the November 27, 1973, issue of the TWIG. The letter asks that the President put "pressure" on me "to investigate students' complaints about certain faculty members and listen to students' desires about new majors and courses." Every complaint that has come to me has been investigated and either I or the departmental chairman has discussed the matter with the faculty members in question. I have discussed with a substantial number of students - including SGA officers - the question of curriculum changes, explained the process of academic change, and offered my advice and assistance on the substance as well as the procedure for change.

Sincerely,  
Allen Burris  
Vice President and  
Dean of the College

Dear Editor:

There is a serious oversight in our judicial procedures. Where is the "precedent" whereby a Judicial Board member may be tried for serious offenses of which she is accused? I have found none. Certainly Judicial Board members are not above the laws of Meredith College, but any trial of a Judicial Board member without precedent would be a "trial and error" effort. If it would be improper for the Judicial Board to try one of its own members, as I have been informed, then the Judicial Board should establish an appropriate board. If there is a precedent for the trial of Judicial Board members, why does the Chairman of Judicial Board not know about it? Shouldn't trial procedures for Judicial Board members be clarified as are the trial procedures for other students? Shouldn't these procedures be made readily accessible to every member of

the student body by means of the HANDBOOK?

I would also like to ask, "What assurance do these students brought to trial have that their cases will not be discussed outside Judicial Board Chambers?" It is the Judicial Board Chairman's opinion that it is "not necessary" for each Judicial Board member to take an oath regarding the confidential nature of her position. I am of the opinion that such an oath becomes a necessity when the mere reminder of a Judicial Board member's responsibility in this area has not sufficed. Now, if a Judicial Board member discusses a case outside of the legal bounds, there is no punishment save a possible reprimand. The discussion of a case in this manner is a serious infringement of the defendant's rights. If Judicial Board members were required to take an oath upon assumption of office, then the breaking of such an oath would constitute perjury and would require the offender's removal from office. Some measure must be taken to insure the protection of the accused; we at Meredith College can no longer feign blindness to these shortcomings of our judicial system.

Meredith McGill

Dear Editor:

I am greatly concerned about the present renovation in Jones Auditorium. I was recently measuring the stage to begin the set design for the upcoming spring production and was absolutely appalled to discover that over an 11-foot extension has been added to the existing curtain line. Why is such an atrocious extension being added? Who is responsible for this mistake? I am sure the theatre consultant who Meredith is so proud to have secured and has paid a large sum of money for is not responsible. Anyone involved with theatrical

productions is more than aware that any extension to a stage beyond 6 feet is totally inconducive to effective staging. There will not be enough room for a production in front of the curtain. But to use the extension along with the rest of the stage means that the curtain will slice the set in half, leaving furniture, etc., in front of the curtain when it closes. I would like to know why Meredith College is making what was to begin with an ineffective stage, even more disastrous for dramatic productions. I deplore the ineffective planning displayed by Meredith College.

Marlene Hart

Dear Editor:

In light of all of the debate and discussion about convocations, we would like to inform the Meredith Community of convocation plans for next semester. The SGA convocations for this semester were very well received. We have assumed responsibility for six convocation programs next semester. Ms. Wilma Scott Heide, President of the National Organization of Women, will speak on "Sexism is a Disease and Feminism is the Cure" on Monday, February 4, 1974. On February 18, Dr. Renee Wescott, head of the North Carolina Department of Social Services, will speak on day care in North Carolina. On March 11, Stage '74 will present their poetry and prose. On March 18, the Young Democrats club will provide a politician, (possibly Senator Sam Ervin or Lt. Governor Jim Hunt). On March 25, SGA and the Cultural Affairs Committee will present Senator John Tunney (D., Ga.). The week of March 25-29 will offer "The Press, the President, and the People." This political forum is a "first for Meredith and should prove to be one of the highlights of the spring semester. Our programs will conclude on April 1 with the installation of new association officers.

The major problem is getting quality programs is financial. We would like to express appreciation to those groups which gave financial support. Students are to be commended for giving us support, especially those who have expressed concern in the TWIG. We would also like to thank Dean Burris for letting us assume the responsibility for planning these programs. We hope we have helped to lighten his load. Dean Burris will be responsible for planning two programs next semester.

Many and varied possible programs were reviewed. It was suggested that Sidney Abbott, a lesbian author of SAPPHO WAS A RIGHT-ON WOMAN, speak at convocation March 18. Because her lifestyle is termed "a delicate issue" and because students would be required to hear such a controversial speaker, Sidney Abbott has been rejected by Dr. Weems and Dean Burris for the Monday convocation program. The ultimate concern implied was not whether such a controversial speaker would be enlightening for students but how such a controversial speaker would be received by our Board of Trustees and the outer community. It is often difficult for students to recognize this perspective and this responsibility our top administrators must consider. While we personally understand this opinion, we believe that "what other people think" should not take

precedent over the enlightening programs we could offer. If we must defend our programs, we then can not take such risks as having a lesbian speak at the Monday convocation hour. After much deliberation, a good compromise was reached. Sidney Abbott will speak on "Lesbianism, Feminism, and Huam Sexuality" on Monday, March 18, 1974, at 7:30 p.m. in Jones Auditorium (if Jones is finished!). The only stipulation is that there is no off-campus publicity. We are very happy that Sidney Abbott can speak here at night and we appreciate the efforts made by our administrators in trying to work out a reasonable compromise.

So, to all of you who have been concerned or depressed over the convocation crisis, next semester looks to be more promising.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Williams  
Genie Bailey

Dear Editor:

Your editorial of November 27, 1973, has prompted me (even at the risk of sounding defensive) to offer some reflections on convocation at Meredith. Many people consider the idea of a REQUIRED ASSEMBLY to be anachronistic and alien to the principles of a free society. This may be true, but whatever the case, it is a fact that college students in this generation as well as in my own resented required convocation, or "Chapel." But, whatever you and I think, it will never be popular, no matter what its caliber. Mediocre or excellent, a requirement that does not carry academic credit is seldom acceptable to students. Nevertheless, Meredith has continued to think that convocation is an important experience and has, therefore, continued to require it.

Now, it does seem important that I make clear the procedure for arranging the programs. Contrary to what was implied in the anonymous letter to the editor, only a few of the programs are planned directly by me. The idea is to give the various organizations on the campus the opportunity to plan a program. You complimented the Student Government Association programs. They have been a part of the process for a good while - planning 25 percent of the programs over the past two years. Other organizations, including the academic departments, take the responsibility throughout the year. Personally, I think that this is a sound approach. My function is to coordinate the efforts and to arrange

occasional programs.

I am not here going to defend or apologize for any particular program. I think that they have generally been good, stimulating, and even entertaining. Whatever the case, they have reflected the taste of the various organizations on the campus. Only occasionally has the convocation been utilized to bring "stars" to the campus. This has been the responsibility of the Cultural Affairs Committee and they have on occasion utilized the convocation period for that purpose. The Lectures in Religion have featured a series of prominent, nationally known people. But, for the most part, the idea has been to utilize people who are from the local area and who have something to say. I think that this has been fairly well accomplished. The calibre has been mixed but that is not surprising.

I doubt seriously that the faculty doesn't attend because the programs are mediocre. Many do feel an obligation to attend convocation, chapel, and other public programs but many do not. I wish that they did but I also know what kinds of demands are made on their time and that it is inevitable that they must make some choices. Certainly some, perhaps many, of them do not approve of required convocation and, therefore, do not support it as a matter of principle. They have that prerogative. It may well be that convocation as a required activity has had its day. I have discussed this with several student leaders and with the President, long before the thinkeditorial, and the matter will be given careful study by responsible students, faculty, and administration.

No doubt, short of making it voluntary, convocation could be improved. The renovated auditorium will be an improvement over the gym. More money could be spent and more glamorous programs be brought in. We could concentrate on having more controversial speakers and thereby create excitement. A single committee or person could do the planning and thereby present a more cohesive schedule. I and the various campus organizations could give more thought to our programs and thereby improve them. Students could decide to be attentive and work at listening to whatever is going on with the expectation of gaining something from it. Some students could decide to be respectful to the speaker and their fellow students by just being quiet and looking attentive - even though they are bored stiff. What I am saying

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## REW receives "no small praise"

REW '73 is over and deserves some words of praise. Sue Tripp and Michelle Lee put together a generally well-received week. Anyone who has ever tried to organize anything on this campus to attract student interest knows how difficult it is to do. Most student opinion I've heard around campus has been favorable in reaction to REW. And that in itself is no small praise. Michelle commented Monday that she and Sue were "well pleased with the turnouts at everything", and that she was particularly pleased that "all three morning speakers tied everything together so well."

While the attendance might have been down at the dorm discussions, Michelle noted that great attendance was not expected at each event, and small groups actually added to better group meetings in some cases. Perhaps best of all, Michelle also noted that the organizers learned a great deal from putting the week together. Since the idea is to let student leaders plan college events such as REW, it is good to know that the girls are profiting from the experience. REW has again shown that students are responsible enough to plan and execute school events, and, most importantly, that it is possible to get student response without requiring attendance.



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