

THE TWIG

MEREDITH COLLEGE



Decision was right; Student voice counts

President Weems' decision to allow Sydney to appear on campus next semester has to be the correct one. That is not to say that the group of students who protested her coming were wrong in any way. To the contrary, it is good to know there are students on campus who have enough spirit to take their views to the college president. But if Meredith is to maintain any kind of academic freedom, Dr. Weems had to decide in favor of Ms. Abbott's appearance. Her speaking engagement, arranged by the Student Government Association, does, indeed, fall within the bounds of the 1966 visiting speaker policy set by the Board of Trustees. Ms. Abbott's appearance here will be for an evening lecture; no one is required to go to the event. Further, she will be speaking on some of the points she makes in her book, *SAPPHO WAS A RIGHT-ON WOMAN*; she has not been engaged to promote her lifestyle. (It should be noted that there is definitely a difference between speaking on a subject and promoting one.) I feel sure that her address will concern not the promotion of her way of life, but will attempt to foster an understanding in others.

It was also encouraging to see a good turnout for last Friday's SGA convocation. After the events of the past week, there can be no doubt that student opinion does make a difference -- if students will voice those opinions so that the administration can hear them. There are many areas that student opinion could affect if enough student would think through the situations and voice concrete sentiments. Take for instance the area of curriculum change. Last year a survey was conducted to see if there was sufficient student interest in adding such majors as political science, drama and physical education. It would be interesting to know what happened to the survey and if it was submitted to the various committees and councils that are supposed to study curriculum changes. President Weems has stated in "The President's Notebook" of July, 1973, that, "Our Curriculum will continue to change and must offer the flexibility to satisfy the needs of our changing student body."

There are majors offered at this school now that have very few students participating in them. With as many students who have indicated to me personally an interest in a political science major, I am not willing to accept a "no" answer to adding this subject as a major. I get the definite feeling that the Academic Council is not in favor of adding any new majors. This is one area that specifically needs immediate attention. I would like to hear the objections or drawbacks to adding a major when enough students indicate an interest. Is it lack of funds? Does it cost Meredith money to retain majors in fields where less than five participating students graduate each year? I wonder.

If Meredith students want new majors, then they are going to have to make themselves heard!

Then there is the matter of SDH for juniors, sophomores and freshmen. If this is something that students want and feel strongly about, then they must make proposals and send them through the legislative channels. Nothing around here will ever change for the better until Meredith students become concerned enough to do something about the situation. No administrative decisions are going to be made in areas like these until students show constructive interest and a willingness to get things done. President Weems' remarks in the "Notebook" of student government run like this: "My observation is that students are showing less and less interest in true student governance. They are more comfortable when acting as a student lobby and feel better representing students than dealing with the very hard problems on a day-to-day basis. Student governments by and large have disarmed themselves by seeking less and less the definition of rules and regulations. After years of this movement they now find it very difficult to effectively enforce their own rules; consequently, making the hope for a meaningful educational experience much less effective." I am not sure I entirely agree with this statement, and I wonder what other students have to say to this. True student government can be effective at Meredith if students will begin to articulate the kinds of sensible rules and regulations they want in order to govern themselves, and then see that these rules are put into effect.

If we as a student body have learned anything this semester, it is that we can be effective by making our opinions heard; no matter how diverse these opinions are, they will be listened to.

EEH



FRED & OTHERS



To the Editor:

I am a human being first of all. Secondly, I am a woman. Thirdly, I am a lesbian. Make sure you understand what I just said. I did not choose to be born. I did not choose to be born female. Most importantly, I did not choose to be a lesbian. That fact concerning my existence was determined for me at some point during my early childhood development -- and I do not know WHY. But the fact remains and I somehow must make the best of it.

Can you even begin to imagine the trauma with which every lesbian is faced when she realizes that when all the girls are talking about boys at recess in junior high, HER thoughts are for girls? And in high school, the possibility exists of being branded "queer" if you don't date. What do you do? You think often of suicide, but hopefully you're strong enough not to resort to that and can make something good out of your LIFE. So here I am in college, trying, with much difficulty, to come to grips with my situation. But it's being made much more difficult when I discover that some of the study body -- AND the administration -- cannot condone the enlightening (yes, I said enlightening) experience of hearing a human being different from themselves in one aspect but the same in that she has the same capacity for accomplishments, fear, hate, and yes, even love, speak to us about her life. Thank God she can do so openly; I cannot. But I have not tried to harm Meredith College or her students by my being a lesbian. Neither will Sydney Abbott. I wish with all my heart that I could sign this letter.

Name withheld upon request

Dear Editor:

It was recently brought to my attention that I have been laboring under the misconception that Meredith College is a community in which a free flow of new and controversial ideas has an established place. I call this a misconception because there are certain members of the community who feel it their self-appointed, sacred duty to "protect" themselves and others from viewpoints with which they disagree. I refer specifically to the destruction of posters which advertised the Impeachment Rally held on December 1. These posters had been up no more than two hours before they were ripped down and (to make matters even worse) thrown on the ground to litter our campus.

I realize that impeachment is a highly controversial issue and that many Americans view it as an unnecessary and unwise move. There are others, however, who feel that this is the next logical step in setting our government straight. These people should be allowed to voice their opinions without fear of hostile reaction from

By Ron Tandberg

Letters to the editor

more conservative quarters. Hopefully, the guilty parties in this case will think twice about the "American way" (which they most likely thought they were protecting) and how freedom of speech and press are a part of it before they strike again.

Sincerely,
Cookie Roberts

Dear Editor:

In the November 27th issue of THE TWIG, a senior at Meredith raised some very important questions that I feel need to be answered explicitly and forthrightly.

I have been on the Meredith campus for almost two years now. Without question they have been the most vigorous and taxing years of my life. Being President of Meredith College requires many things of a person. Each and every one of them I consider enjoyable and profitable, but I have also found my time is completely scheduled with little opportunity for outside enjoyment and relaxation.

This year the Meredith College enrollment is the largest in history. There are more than 1700 people being served in one capacity or another by the college during the fall semester. The demand for our services continue to grow. Even during times that many women's colleges across the country are experiencing great difficulties, our college is being operated on a firm financial foundation. There has been no deficit spending and we completed our last fiscal year well in the black. More than one million dollars was raised from various sources to supplement the fees paid by our students. It is necessary to have this support in operating a quality institution. Each year the gap between the income received from student fees and the total college budget grows wider.

When coming to Meredith College, I decided I would like to be the most available college president in the United States. I have always tried to practiced an open-door policy making myself available to any and all that want to confer. By practicing this policy, I find that my schedule does stay very full indeed. There is usually someone waiting to see me before the preceding conference is completed. I have always wanted these conferences scheduled in such a manner that matters can be talked through. This has allowed me to know many of our student body and faculty. This semester I have met with each of the department chairmen at least once, and in many cases we have had several

meetings. We discussed academic plans and academic personnel.

Since moving into the president's residence in 1972, we have had more than 11,000 guests visit with us during an eighteen-month period. The senior class has been invited to dinner in our home for the last two years and will be invited again. This year we were able to hold the freshman reception in our home for the first time. The dinner meetings and the campus organization meetings have been hosted in this beautiful facility now number in the scores. Each of these occasions I have thoroughly enjoyed and felt very pleased that I had the opportunity to participate.

During the last two years, I have worked incessantly for Meredith College. During 1973 alone, I will have spent more than one hundred nights away from home involved in Meredith College activities. The Baptist institutions of higher education work closely with the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in promoting the Cooperative Program. Each school has the responsibility for providing promotional activities for two associations. This promotion includes speaking at Sunday morning worship services for the Cooperative Program and attending associational meetings. The president of Meredith College is also invited to speak at Sunday morning worship services all across the State of North Carolina. This schedule has been extremely heavy, consequently, I have had the privilege of worshipping in my home church only two times during the last four months.

During the first two years in Raleigh I have had the opportunity to speak to most of our organized alumnae groups. These meetings are usually scheduled on Saturday tying up many complete weekends throughout the year. I held season tickets to the North Carolina State football games, but was able to attend only two because of college obligations. I mention this only to point out that the weekends are part of the work schedule.

There are many things going on at Meredith that will interest the students. Many of these are outlined in the REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT 1972-73 TO THE TRUSTEES. This report is in the library, but I am making it available to THE TWIG asking them to reproduce it in its entirety or excerpts as they see fit. In the "Blueprint for the Future," I think you will

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Member Associated Collegiate Press. Entered as second-class matter at post office at Raleigh, N.C. 27611. Published weekly...except during holidays and exams. THE TWIG is served by National Educational Advertising Service, 18 East 50th Street, New York. Subscriptions rates: \$3.70 per year.