

'72 graduate returns to teach voice

by Kim Dale
Ellen Barney Williams, the musical director for Meredith's fall musical production, CABARET, is a new face in the music department to many people on campus but not so new to many others. Ellen has "come home" in a sense, for she is a 1972 Meredith graduate.

This year Ellen has joined the Meredith faculty as a part-

time instructor of voice and phonetics, or as she explained, "stage diction for singers." She received her BA in music and religion from Meredith in '72 and her masters in '75 from the New England Conservatory in Boston.

Originally from Burlington, N.C., Ellen remarked, "My husband and I

went there (Boston) so I could get my masters. I was pretty lucky. There aren't many husbands who go where their wives want to go."

Ellen commented on the changes Meredith has undergone since her days here as a student. Concerning the dress code, she said, "The first year I was here, in '68-'69, we had to wear dresses and skirts except in the dorms. My sophomore year, we could wear pantsuits or nice pants and tops, but not jeans. My third and fourth years, they started wearing jeans." She also said that she thought girls were "starting to dress and go back to what it was before."

Ellen said curfew hours got "progressively later" each year. "On weekends, seniors had SDH."

Ellen remembers when the library was on the second floor of Johnson Hall during her freshman year. When the new Carlyle Campbell Library opened, Ellen said, "Everyone helped take books to the new library and everyone felt they had a part in it."

She also remembers when the gym was a white wood building in front of where Barefoot dorm now is. Weatherspoon Gymnasium was open, she said, by her senior year.

Ellen loves musicals and operas. She remembers the first musical done at Meredith while she was a student - "The Sound of Music" - her senior year. She was in operas in graduate school, she said. Ellen remarked that it is "really fun" working on Cabaret. She commented that the play gives her a "chance to get to know people."

Commenting on the music in Cabaret, she said, "The music is not easy to learn but it's singable and interesting. It's up-to-date and has lots of rhythm and syncopation." She also mentioned that the show contains such popular songs as "Willkommen" and "Cabaret".

Ellen's husband, Douglas, is also interested in music. He runs an instrument maintenance business which involves rebuilding pianos and harpsichords, working on antique pianos, and tuning pianos.

During the interview, Ellen remarked that she really enjoyed the Meredith traditions like Cornhuskin', Stunt, and Play Day. She said that at Meredith, "The communication and rapport is so good between the faculty and students. Everyone is so friendly."



Musical director Ellen Barney Williams looks over the "Cabaret" score at a recent practice.

Thomas attends conference in Miami

by Rosie Bowers
Dr. Sandra Thomas, vice president for student development, joined women and men from 24 countries in the first Hemispheric Conference for Women, held August 5-8, in Miami, Florida.

Presenting her remarks in English and Spanish, Dr. Thomas spoke on the subject of research on women in Latin America.

Through workshops and seminars, participants examined hemispheric goals of development, dynamics of societal changes, and research programs to improve the status of women in the Americas.

Attempting to provide dialogue between women of the hemisphere, the conference was concerned with such themes as education, health, economics, and political participation.

Summarizing the purpose of the hemispheric conference, Dr. Thomas said that women from diverse backgrounds came together with the knowledge and ideal

"that to improve the condition of women in the Americas is to improve the condition of all people in this hemisphere."

Participants in the conference included women from throughout the hemisphere. The United States, Canada, and the nations of South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Bahamas were represented.

Delegations to the Assembly of Inter-American Commission of Woman and members of national committees of Cooperation met with women in government, professions, industry, communications, education, and the public sector.

A cross-section representation of women from Latin America increased the opportunity for meaningful cultural exchange among participants, said Dr. Thomas.

With some 10 million Spanish speaking people in the U.S. alone, the hemispheric conference provided significant influence for the Hispanic people of the Americas, Dr. Thomas concluded.

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Byrd sees quake's effect

by Carolyn Morton

Sophomore Denise Byrd spent her summer in the Central American country of Guatemala, where her father is a Southern Baptist missionary. Denise wanted to be with her family and to work with people who have been stricken by earthquakes in Guatemala.

Denise had several odd jobs. She worked weekly at a hospital with paralyzed patients. She said, "I'm interested in nursing, so it was a good experience". She also worked in the seminary library and at a Baptist book store.

Denise also worked with a reconstruction team in an earthquake-destroyed village. She explained that they stayed in tents with no hot water or toilets.

"It really got me close to the effects of the earthquake," she said. The earthquake took place on February 4, 1976. According to Denise 23,000 were recorded dead, 77,000 were wounded, and about a million were left homeless. At the time of the quake her father was in the U.S. for medical treatment. "I considered it a miracle that he was not in a Guatemalan hospital during the earthquake," Denise said.

"One night we were watching the news on television when they showed a man sitting in front of a

destroyed house", she stated. "It was a friend of ours. That really brought the quake close to home."

Denise was born in Raleigh, but she moved with her family to Guatemala when she was ten. She speaks fluent Spanish having lived there until her junior year in high school in 1975.

The trip to Guatemala this summer gave Denise a chance to see old friends and help the earthquake victims. She left the U.S. May 17 and returned August 16 just before the opening of school. "Everyone kidded me about going back and another earthquake occurring. The first night I was back we had a tremor," Denise chuckled.

Denise's room decor shows influences of her life in Guatemala. Everywhere there are South American posters, statues, and wall hangings. She spoke of the adjustment of coming to America, "I found that since my parents provided me with an American home life that it was easier to come."

Denise loves Guatemala, but she feels that America is also her home. When asked about her choice of Meredith as a college Denise commented, "I checked around and Meredith seemed like a good place. Everyone I talked with liked the school. I particularly like the location and the academics."

Denise commented on the increased enrollment of foreign students at Meredith. "It is good that Meredith is getting more international students. There is a girl on my hall from Costa Rica," she noted.

What are the advantages of living in Guatemala? "Being able to speak Spanish helped me place out of some of the required hours," Denise explained. Pam Dail, her roommate, quickly added, "Tell her about the guys you met." That's one subject that is popular in all countries!

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