

B.J. Yeager bids Meredith farewell

by Julia Toone

Enter Joyner, walk down English alley and into an office, where, seated at the desk you will find the backbone of Meredith College. B.J. Yeager celebrated her thirty-ninth year here at Meredith this past November and at the end of January she retired.

During her many years here she has, at one time or another, been secretary to the faculty, worked in the dean of students' office organizing student housing, sponsored the Astros, and organized and conducted school trips to New York, where

she reportedly made the girls wear hats and gloves.

In her recent years here at Meredith, Yeager has resided as secretary for the English and history departments.

Yeager grew up in Hickory and then attended college here at Meredith. After graduation she worked for the state for a year and then was asked by Meredith's president at that time, Dr. Campbell, to join Meredith's community which she has been a part of ever since.

In her spare time Yeager enjoys playing bridge and traveling. Meredith will surely miss this devoted woman.

B.J. Yeager a mainstay at Meredith for almost thirty years. *Photo courtesy of College Relations.*



Part 1 of 3

The lack of minority presence on traditionally white campuses and efforts to combat the problem at Meredith

by Vanessa Goodman

Education figures concerning blacks have caused some concern over the years.

The number of black high school graduates is on the rise, but the numbers of those continuing onto college is falling.

Overall minority enrollment in college has dropped during the past ten years.

According to the American Council on Education, blacks who make up 14 percent of the U.S. population are only eight percent of the total college enrollment.

Also of concern are the numbers of blacks attending traditionally white colleges and universities.

The U.S. Department of Education said in 1976 that black student enrollment in predominately white colleges peaked at 10.2 percent, but by 1982 it had declined to 9.6 percent.

The national problem has also been a concern at Meredith College for a number of years.

In the fall of 1984 there were 1761 students enrolled at Meredith; 46 of them were black. In 1985 there were 1848 students registered and 45 of them were black.

The total enrollment on the undergraduate level for the academic year 1986-1987 is 1681. Out of that number, only 28 students are black—just over 1.6 percent of the total campus population.

Dr. Sandra Thomas, vice president for student development, said, "The recruitment of blacks to Meredith has long been a concern and a source of strong emphasis to me and the Office of Admissions." Nevertheless, the recruitment of minor-

ities to Meredith has long been a problem and a mystery for numerous campus officials.

Despite several efforts each year, the college sees the addition of one or two black students on an average.

The Office of Admissions has designed several programs to attract minority students.

Every year they purchase names from the Office Board Search Program of the PSAT to identify possible prospects. Letters are written to approximately 800 black students during the summer.

"We've tried to include minorities in our various publications-catalogues, leaflets, etc., so that prospects can get a sense of black presence here," said Sue Kearney, director of admissions.

In the spring of each academic year, a phonathon is also conducted in conjunction with members of the Association for Black Awareness for those who have applied or expressed an interest in Meredith.

According to Kearney, the phonathon carries the potential for making people more aware of the campus.

"Students dealing with students can have a positive effect," said Kearney.

The 1985-1986 annual report from the admissions staff describes a project done in cooperation with the vice president of institutional affairs, hosting a luncheon for black ministers in the local area who might serve as contacts for disseminating information about opportunities available at Meredith.

According to the report, about 15 members of the ministerial alliance attended the luncheon, where a program about Meredith, planned by the admissions staff, was presented.

Another recruitment project that began last year is the minority college day.

Invitations are sent to students and schools within a 50-mile radius of Meredith to spend a day on campus.

Students are given financial aid and general admissions information, in addition to having a tour of the grounds and listening to and participating in a panel consisting of ABA Members.

Last year six students attended. Another one has been planned this month to be held in conjunction with Black Emphasis Week activities.

According to Kearney, admissions counselors also travel to areas known to have heavy concentrations of blacks such as Atlanta, Georgia; Washington, D.C.; and Baltimore, Maryland; in order to reach possible prospects.

These recruitment efforts still only seem to attract a limited amount of black students.

"Meredith is not very well-known in the black community," said Kearney.

Because of this, Meredith does not enjoy word-of-mouth advertisement as a means of recruitment.

"Most students who attend Meredith have had someone close to them to come here, but that is not the case in the black community," said C. Allen Burris, vice president and dean of the college.

Dean of students Dorothy J. Sizemore believes that it is hard to attract and make black students feel at home here because there isn't a large number of them already on campus.

Some believe there is a problem in communication between Meredith and the black community.

According to Valerie McCray, presi-

dent of the Association of Black Awareness, there need to be contact persons on campus for black prospects to call and ask questions about the campus.

Black students should also be drafted by the admissions office to attend college days said McCray.

"Many don't realize blacks are here and if they saw them at these programs and saw that they were having a positive experience, it might attract them to the college," said McCray.

Financial reasons have also kept some minorities away.

"The initial cost of coming to Meredith keeps many black students from applying," said Adrienne Gore, a junior at Meredith.

According to Kearney, having several fine black institutions in the area, as well as in the state and competition with the state college system's desegregation policies have also pulled many black students from Meredith.

McCray believes that students choosing to enter predominately white or black institutions have different thought patterns.

Students who attend black institutions believe that they would be denying their culture if they did otherwise, while those who choose to attend predominately white colleges believe they are becoming more well rounded and learning how to deal with the real world.

The need for black role models and the programs of other colleges will be discussed in the next two articles for possible implementation at Meredith to increase the enrollment of blacks.