

# Meredith Herald

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Celebrating Meredith's Charter Centennial

## What will it cost Meredith to change its relationship with the Baptist State Convention? The Price of Freedom

by Karen Nipper

Friday, February 22, 1991, Meredith College unanimously decided to redefine its relationship with the Baptist State Convention. Dr. Alan Page, head of the religion department, answered some questions about the Baptist State Convention and its relationship with the College.

There is a national convention, known as the Southern Baptist Convention, and each of the forty participating states has its own state convention that acts separately from national. The state conventions allocate funds within and without the states; support missions, camps, campus ministries and state-wide ministries; decide the Baptist Church's views on issues; and (here's the punch, kids) appoint trustees of the Baptist colleges who are joined with their state conventions.

Trustees are not just those persons for whom Meredith turns on the fountain lights or sets the cafeteria tables. The trustees are legally responsible for the operation of the college, holding the deed to Meredith property, balancing its budget, and hiring the president of the college. It is the president who, in turn, hires the deans and faculty members of the college. In short, trustees have complete control over the college. Where the state convention fits is that its president elects the trustees for the colleges. In the past, North Carolina has had moderate Baptist presidents, causing little cause for apprehension at the colleges under the Convention's jurisdiction. However, Baptist fundamentalists have been struggling to take control of the convention and last year an ultra-conservative fundamentalist was elected, spreading fear throughout those schools that his views would be thrust upon them through hand-picked like-minded trustees.

Although presidents of conventions face yearly elections, they typically hold two-year terms. Meredith College decided not to wait around to become one of the "spoils of war" and decided to take back its right to nominate and elect its own trustees. This action does not mean that Meredith has broken from the Convention or that it would no

longer be a Baptist college. What it does mean is that Meredith will retain its academic freedom for the small price of \$900,000, which represents the amount it would have received from the Convention.

Meredith's administration is doing all that it can to avoid tuition increases to cover the shortfall, but if tuition is raised, Dr. Page thinks it will be minimal and phased in over an extended period of time.

Dr. Page does not foresee a complete break with the Convention, unless it decided to make a break from Meredith. Dr. Page sees the College as returning to its 1891 Charter, becoming even closer to its traditional ties.

## Students to receive \$6 million

by Jamie Mullis

Wishful thinking, right? Maybe not. Meredith College has devised a "Capital Campaign" to raise \$10.6 million to maintain the high quality of a Meredith education.

Three and a half years ago, President John Weems appointed a committee chaired by Dr. Alan Page and including a large contingency of students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and alumnae to determine what Meredith needed to do to maintain her high quality. The result: Second Century Challenge.

The first priority was to give the majority of funds raised to the students, because much of the success of Meredith is due to obtaining and graduating high calibre students. The six million dollars

being raised for student development will be used in the area of scholarships, specifically the Teaching Fellow Program. In addition, one million dollars is allocated to faculty development in the form of sabbatical, writing time and additional education to assist the faculty in stretching their own potential.

The remaining \$3.6 million will expand Meredith's facilities. The primary problem of additional space for classrooms and offices will be solved by the construction of a new classroom building for the departments of education and psychology. The Hubert Ledford building will be constructed on the South campus. Weatherspoon Gymnasium expansion will offer additional office space and additional dance studios. The International House will benefit from the campaign by receiving much-needed updating and renovations. Finally, contributions to the Capital Campaign will help to modernize the dining hall with improvements to the President's Dining Hall and additional rooms for student meetings.

The Capital Campaign is organized with two co-chairs overseeing the project—Barbara Allen, department head at Carolina Power and Light, and Phillip Kirk, president of North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry. There is also an all-women cabinet whose operations include solicitation units throughout the state and a Governance Council of thirty people interested in Meredith's future. A ten-member Executive Committee oversees and advises the President of the College, the cabinet and the council. Meredith's Student Life Committee has input into the committee as well, offering student insights and ideas.

The funds will be raised through pledges from alumnae, foundations, corporations, and friends of the college. The Parents Association has already donated \$100,000 to the Hubert Ledford Building. The school has hired a consultant to handle the myriad details of this large undertaking. According to Mr. Murphy Osborne, Office of Institutional Advancement, the campaign is predicted to be completed in five years.

Wouldn't it be nice to have a photograph right here to break up all this TEXT?

If you would like to be a photographer for the Herald, see inside for more info!

## Are Texts Creditable?

by Karen Nipper

Will that be cash, check or charge? The use of credit cards to pay for purchases at Meredith's Supply Store is currently being discussed by administration. Major credit card companies charge merchants a percentage of each purchase paid with plastic, depending on the total charge purchases made over a period of time. If administration can find a way of allowing credit card purchases without having to raise the prices of all items in the store to cover the surcharge, then it is quite possible that Meredith could hit

that "plastic plateau" next fall. One option being discussed would allow students to charge only textbooks, which can be a major expenditure.

A second inquiry about textbooks brought some interesting responses. There are no limitations on what books professors can choose for their classes, and the only regulations on pricing textbooks seems to be Meredith's own decisions on how closely to follow the national textbook pricing averages. Hmmm...