

Working together and staying together

by Kimberly Zucker

Most people feel lucky to find a job, but what would it be like to be lucky enough to work in the same place as your spouse? Thad and Paula O'Briant were able to find out.

Thad and Paula have been married five years, and they dated for four years before they were married.



They met under unusual circumstances. Thad was cooking for a Meredith function, and he asked Paula how she liked her omelet. Paula thought he was the best looking man she had ever seen and told all her friends. A student went to Thad and told him that Paula wanted him to go with her to the Meredith dance the next night because she had to chaperone. They went and have been together ever since.

Their lives have gone through many changes since they met. Paula started off at Meredith as a residence director. She worked here for six years, but when she married she decided to leave her job. She began working as the director of residence life a year ago.

Thad trained at Meredith for two years and then moved to the director of food services at Elon College. He came back to Meredith in July of 1990 and is the head of food services.

One interesting thing they have had to learn to deal with at work and at home is the fact that they are in charge of the two areas that receive the most complaints at Meredith.

Paula believes that students are of-

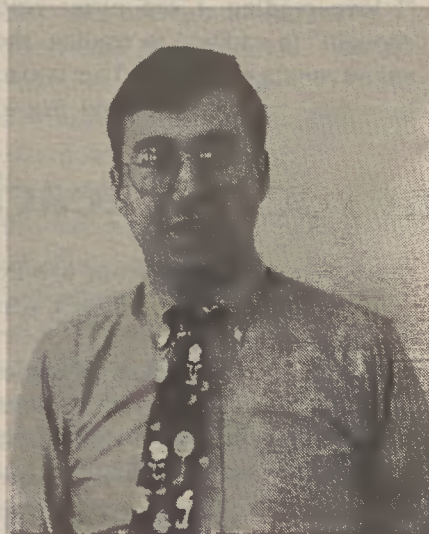
ten frustrated with housing because of male visitation, the unavailability of private rooms, and the choice of which dorm students are housed.

Thad feels that most students complain about the variety of food, the fat grams and calories, and the choices on certain days.

Because of the many complaints and problems Thad and Paula face each day, they made a pact to never bring their work home. They both think this is the best solution. Thad said if they did talk about work "it would consume all of their time together."

Even though they do work on campus, they rarely get to see each other. The only time they might run into each other is during lunch. Thad says that he is sometimes so busy he cannot even see her then.

Often they must also deal with overtime. During the spring, Paula is busy with housing and has to work after hours. Thad also deals with banquet dinners and conferences, so he has to work late, too. Paula says, "Our busy schedules have taught us to treasure our time together."



Paula feels that she has the best of two worlds. She says, "Even though I do not get to see Thad much during the day, it is better knowing that if I do need him he is on campus."

While they cannot see each other as often as they would like, they work hard at Meredith and appreciate the time that they do have together.



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