

Meredith Herald

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We attract bright, talented, ambitious students. Naturally we're a women's college.

March 5, 1997

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☐ Meredith security warns students to be on the lookout for a trespasser/shoplifter on campus.

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Meredith breaks from Baptist Convention

☐ Board of Trustees cut from Baptist Convention causes tuition hike.

Addie Tschamler
Staff Reporter

Fearing a conservative takeover, Meredith College decided officially last week to cut off ties with the Southern Baptist Convention. Although the decision, made by Meredith's Board of Trustees, will allow Meredith more freedom to make its own decisions, it will also call for an increase in tuition.

In the past, the Convention has contributed about \$1 million annually to Meredith. The loss of this contribution has forced Meredith to raise tuition by \$1070.

The Board of Trustees made the decision to break with the Convention because of concern that if Meredith remained a part of the Convention, it would lose its independence. The decision will also protect Meredith from the political influences of the South-

ern Baptist Convention, which has become more conservative in recent years. For example, the Convention has become disinclined to ordain women as ministers because of biblical passages such as I Timothy 2:12, which calls for women to be silent in church. Without ties to the Convention, Meredith will not have to worry about outside pressures.

"Our redefined relationship with the Convention will be somewhat similar to that of Wake Forest University's," Meredith President John Weems wrote in a statement to faculty. In addition, Meredith will also begin choosing all of its own Board of Trustee members, rather than the Convention selecting them.

A letter was sent out at the end of last week to parents, explaining Meredith's reasons for making a break with the Southern Baptist Convention and explaining how it will affect Meredith financially. In a telephone interview, Chuck Taylor, vice president and director of business and finance, said that Meredith would not

really be affected financially in any way other than the tuition increase. The tuition increase, he said, was based on a budget submitted to trustees. The trustees decided on the particular increase in tuition based on three areas: 1) the normal increase that comes from operating expenses, 2) approximately 20 different proposals for improving the college, 3) the loss of the Convention's annual gift. The total cost of tuition, room and board for 1997-98 school year will be \$12,240, as reported by Weems in the statement to faculty.

Taylor said that Meredith will do everything it can for students on financial aid. There will be an increase in the amount of financial aid that is available, Taylor said.

"The tuition increase will impact students," said SGA President Erica Balmer. "But compared to other private schools, Meredith will still be one of the most affordable, high-quality schools in the state."

Despite the break from the Convention, Meredith will remain a Bap-

tist college as it has been for the past 106 years.

"Under our revised bylaws, the majority of our trustees will continue to be members of Baptist churches," wrote Weems.

Meredith hopes to offer new programs and majors in the fall, as a result of this new decision. Taylor said, "We are excited about other programs that we will begin to start working on."

Students expressed mixed reaction to the decision. Most were more concerned with the rise in tuition next year.

Most students agreed that the official break from the Southern Baptist Convention was a positive one.

Balmer said, "I feel it is a very positive step for students. It will give us greater control in the future."

Weems wrote that as the Board of Trustees plans ahead for the next century, they have embraced this goal: "Meredith College will define higher education for women for the 21st century."

History/Politics club sponsors kick-off event

☐ "Something to talk about" first program in "In praise of women."

Allison Carter
Layout Editor

Women's History Month has arrived. And Meredith's goal is to work to make Meredith College the center of Women's History Month for the Research Triangle and surrounding areas, according to Dr. Barbara True-Weber, sponsor of the History/Politics Club.

The club, along with WINGS, AMC, Programming Board and other campus organizations, is sponsoring "In Praise of Women - a Celebration of Women's History Month." The kick-off for the month, entitled "Something to Talk About," was held Monday, March 3.

Prefaced by Bonnie Raitt's hit "Something to Talk About," the program consisted of four area professional women as panelists discussing issues of women and their careers.

True-Weber hosted the discussion with the mission to "instigate and fa-

cilitate conversation" between the students and panelists.

The four panelists, all media personalities, should be seen as role models for women, as well as public figures, said True-Weber.

The first of the panelists was Linda Belans, host of *The Linda Belans Show* on WUNC Saturday mornings. Belans

is also a guest dance writer for the *News and Observer*, and a former adjunct professor at Meredith. Nicole Brodeur, the second of the guests, is a tri-weekly columnist for the *News and Observer*.

The other two panelists, who both work in front of the camera instead of in print media, were WNCN news anchor Brooke Hart and WRAL news anchor Debra Morgan.

True-Weber

started the discussion with thought-provoking questions centering on one issue: what were the panelists biggest challenges in getting their present jobs?

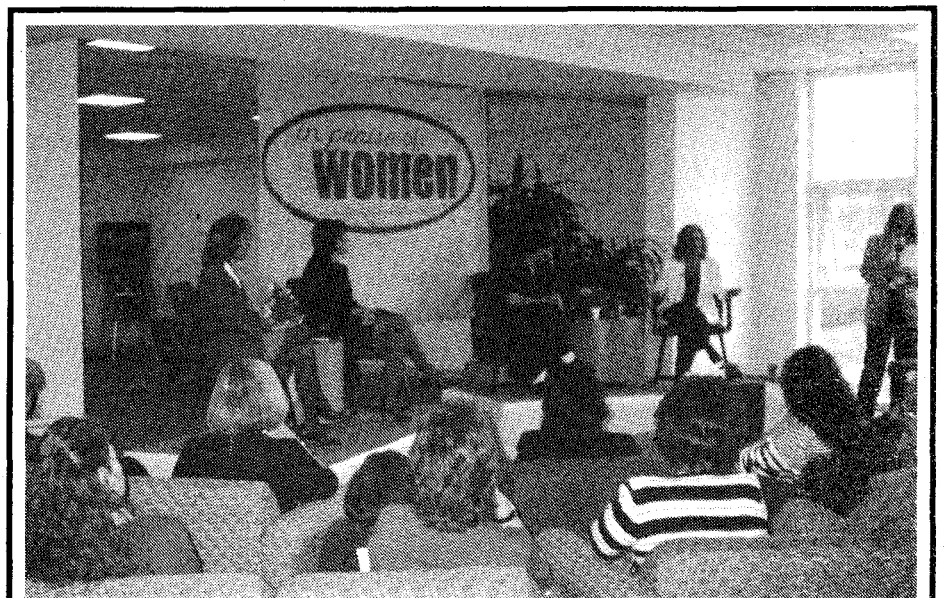
Hart answered first by noting that she never felt challenged because of her gender, but rather in figuring out what she wanted to do with her life.

The Stanford graduate continued by

saying that everyone must decide their own path in life.

Brodeur spoke up with the same thoughts, but added a bit of her own advice: "Build that ego!" "Don't doubt your abilities," she said. "If you do, your enemies will doubt you more."

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Dr. Barbara True-Weber hosts "Something to talk about" with Debra Morgan, Brooke Hart, Nicole Brodeur, and Linda Belans.

Photo by Swantje Macleay