

# Meredith Herald

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

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## On the inside:

High school students visit Meredith with alumnae for Legacy Day.

Page 2

The Class of 2000 gets a chance to explore job options during Sophomore Career Week.

Page 2

Ever wondered where all the tuition money goes?

Page 3

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## Class of 1999 sponsor first Ring Dinner Week

□ Juniors can officially wear their rings "wrapped around their finger."

ALLISON CARTER & JENNIFER REDINGER  
Layout Editor & Business Manager

The Class of 1999 could officially wear their Meredith rings "wrapped around their finger" Friday at the Junior Ring Dinner. The dinner itself was the culmination of Junior Ring Dinner Week. This was the first time a class has sponsored an entire week of events leading up to Ring Dinner.

"The week was an excellent new tradition, and I'm thankful to our class co-chairs who gave us an entire week for class unity," said Junior Class President Ginger Hudson.

The week began Monday with a bonfire, where class members took a study break to roast marshmallows and socialize. A class meeting was held on Tuesday night, followed by a

Big Sis/Lil' Sis social with the Class of 2001. Juniors wore their class spirit shirts on Wednesday and "Colored the Campus" with their class spirit on Thursday. Ring Pops were the decor on Friday as the anticipation grew for the dinner that night.

Ring Dinner co-chair Jaime Stafford noted, "We started planning last April and it paid off. We've gotten a lot of positive response from the class.

"Everyone seemed happy with the week's events. It's a good new tradition to begin," concluded Stafford.

Approximately 265 members of the junior class waited in line inside Asbury United Methodist Church where they received their Ring Dinner T-shirts, souvenirs, and letters of encouragement from their parents.

Lori Messina, co-chair, commented on the letters, "I wanted to get all of the parents involved, but knew

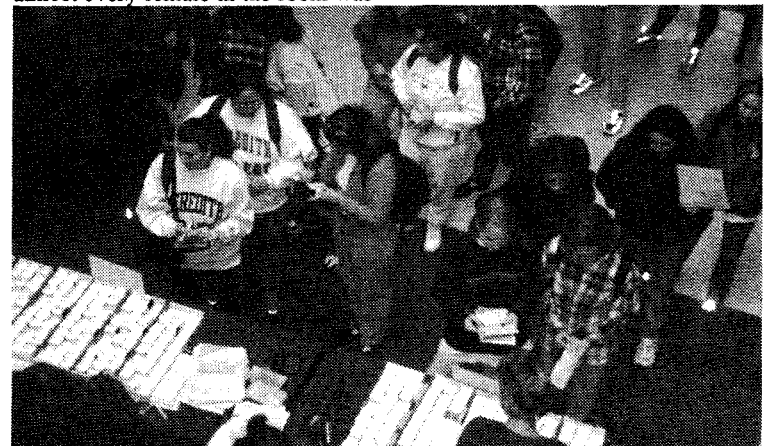
there was not a facility with the space to hold almost 1200 people. So we came up with a way for our parents to be there with us in spirit if not in presence."

After the juniors opened their families' letters, Sugar Hale noticed that almost every female in the room was

crying. "We probably could break a world record with so many women in one room all crying and all wearing black," said Hale.

The buffet dinner included salad and fruit, rolls, green beans, wild rice,

See RINGS page 4



Juniors filled the Cate Center 1st Floor lounge on Monday morning during Ring Dinner Week as they caught the first glimpse of their Meredith rings.

Photo by Alyson Flood

## Meredith plans for the millennium and beyond

□ Meredith community works together on Initiative 2000 plan.

BETH HALL  
News Editor

Initiative 2000, a strategic planning process for the college, is being developed with the help of the entire Meredith community.

"Initiative 2000 will identify the College's institutional strategic plan for the next three years toward the new century. It's an exciting name for an exciting era in Meredith's future," wrote President John Weems last year in the newsletter for faculty and staff, *In a Nutshell*.

"Strategic planning," as stated in the resource book concerning the Initiative 2000, "is a process for envisioning Meredith's future." It includes setting goals, defining strategies and policies, and "developing detailed plans to assure that strategies are implemented, monitored and altered when necessary to achieve success."

The goal is a five-year long "evergreen" contract. "Evergreen" means the plan is continuous. For example, it is not just designated for only the years 2000-2005. Initially, it would be planned for those years, but as soon as the plans for 2000 were accomplished, then the plans for 2006 would be added.

This major campus-wide plan is taking place now for several reasons. Like many organizations, creating a fresh plan for the year 2000 is the ultimate new millennium's resolution.

However, there are other reasons more specific to Meredith for a new, campus-encompassing plan. The re-

source book states, "This is a time of transition at Meredith." Transition comes in the form of Meredith's changed relationship to the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, and the subsequent altered size and composition of Meredith's governing board. Now that the trustees are no longer appointed by the state convention, the board has become self-perpetuating. Its membership also has increased from 36 to 40 members.

Another transition is the retire-

ments of those in academic and administrative leadership positions. Allen Burris, who served as dean of the college for many years, retired from active duty last June. President Weems also is anticipated to retire in the near future.

The initial steps for the planning

began last year. A special faculty committee, chaired by Dr. David Heining-Boynton of the psychology department, decided a current mission statement should be developed to supplement Meredith's historic purpose statement.

A mission statement, which will be the foundation of Initiative 2000, was developed by the faculty committee after having several open forums on the matter. Senior management (vice presi-

dents and deans) then looked over the draft. Dr. Louise Taylor of the English department created a final revision making it more readable and succinct. It states:

*In educating women to excel, Meredith College fosters in students integrity, independence, scholarship, and personal growth. Grounded in the liberal arts, the College values freedom and openness in the pursuit of truth and, in keeping with its Christian heritage, seeks to nurture justice and compassion. Meredith endeavors to create a supportive and diverse community in which students learn from the past, prepare for the future, and grow in their understanding of self, others, and community. To these ends, Meredith strives to develop in students the knowledge, skills, values, and global awareness necessary to pursue careers, to assume leadership roles, to enter graduate and professional studies, and to lead responsible lives of work, citizenship, leisure, learning, and service.*

Meredith trustees approved the mission statement on Sept. 26, 1997.

The senior management team drafted a vision outline to add to the mission statement and aid planning direction. Members of the senior man-

See INITIATIVE page 4

