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Educating Women to Excel

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Juniors celebrate unbroken circle

☐ **The class of 2001 receives their Meredith rings.**

LESLIE MAXWELL
Editor in chief

After two years of waiting, juniors received a symbol that they are upperclassmen: the Meredith ring. Last week, Oct. 25-29, was Junior Ring Week, and Friday, Oct. 29, was Ring Dinner.

Ring Dinner co-chairs Hilary Allen, Wallis Kirby and Lesley Parr planned the evening.

The dinner began at 6 p.m. as juniors walked into a balloon-filled Belk Dining Hall. After an introduction by the co-chairs and a prayer, juniors had dinner.

Speakers for the evening were Ginger Hudson, '99, senior class president for 1998-99; Shannon McFarlane, '99, SGA president for 1998-99; and Dr. Jean Jackson, '75, vice president for student development.

Each speaker talked about

what their Meredith ring meant upon first receiving it and what it means now.

Jackson spoke of the history of Meredith's ring. She noted that the current design of onyx, the off-center seal and the oak leaves has been the official ring of Meredith since 1954.

Jackson then invited the class of 2001 to don their class

rings, with the seal towards the wearer.

Ring Dinner co-chairs then made several presentations to the class of 2001, including a slide show and a letter.

The class of 2003 serenaded their big sisters in the luminary-filled courtyard.

Allen, Kirby and Parr agreed, "We thought Ring Din-

ner was a huge success and we were happy to be able to do it for the class of 2001."

Ring Week co-chairs Christian Melvin, Julie Clayton and Jessica Garton planned activities throughout the week.

Monday, they sponsored a big sis / li'l sis look-alike contest. Big sis / li'l sis teams Kate Breen & Jenny Altier and Hilary Allen & Erin Taylor won.

Tuesday, the class saw the Adam Sandler movie *Big Daddy* at Blue Ridge Cinemas.

Members of the class participated in Wednesday's 10 a.m. worship service.

Ring Jam was Thursday night. In Belk Dining Hall, juniors played games and won prizes. At that time, juniors also received their Ring Dinner T-shirts and Ring Pops.

Juniors awoke to congratulatory messages from the class of 2003 on Friday morning. All that day, juniors wore their Ring Dinner T-shirts and Ring Pops in anticipation of the dinner.



Ring Dinner co-chairs (l-r) Lesley Parr, Hilary Allen and Wallis Kirby prepare to receive their rings.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY WALLIS KIRBY

Initiative 2000 results announced

OFFICE OF MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS
Press Release

The Meredith College Board of Trustees and the College's administration have announced the results of a three-year strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process began in 1996 when the Meredith trustees authorized INITIATIVE 2000, a comprehensive and inclusive effort which engaged all campus divisions and departments, as well as alumnae, students and trustees. A detailed report was compiled and presented to the full Board. Subsequently, the Board appointed six of its members to a Long-Range Planning Committee to study and prioritize the plans.

The final major recommendations aim at directing Meredith College into the 21st century. The committee approved a

strategy for Meredith that recognizes and balances three foci for the College: traditional undergraduate programs, non-traditional undergraduate education and graduate education; endorsed a continued emphasis on excellence in the College's entire offering; and renewed the Board's commitment to sustain Meredith as an undergraduate college for women.

Dr. Maureen Harford, president of the College said, "This strategic planning process will ensure that Meredith remains a leader in education. We want to reaffirm our historic mission and purpose while committing the College to the pursuit of excellence in the new millennium."

The Board of Trustees instructed the administration of the College to develop action plans for specific initiatives. One such plan is reinvigorating traditional undergraduate educa-

tion at Meredith by developing new programs and facilities that build on the strengths of the College and the region. The plan may include the following: new science programming to include construction of a new science facility; a Meredith Scholars program to recruit young women of outstanding academic potential; and an undergraduate research program that could partner students and faculty with Triangle corporations, research labs and other experience-gathering opportunities.

The initiative also aims to strengthen the general education curriculum that integrates critical thinking and communication skills into specific majors, to provide professorships in key academic disciplines to promote innovative academic leadership, to enhance co-curricular programs for spiritual and leader-

ship development and to expand the availability and use of technology on campus.

Specific initiatives for the graduate school were also targeted. The Board of Trustees approved the Long Range Committee's recommendation to expand the Graduate School and to admit men. The recommendation said that a new graduate facility should be constructed to provide a physical separation from the undergraduate program and should be self-sustaining, creating no financial drain on the undergraduate program. Current graduate school offerings should be enhanced and expanded by working with community leaders and businesses in the Triangle.

"Meredith is aggressively pursuing excellence, and we're now poised to greet the new millennium with renewed energy and focus," said Harford.