



# MEREDITH HERALD

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Educating Women to Excel

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## On the inside:

□ **Nominate a book for the Summer Reading Program.**

**Page 2**

□ **Basketball team prepares for season's end.**

**Page 5**

□ **Sweet November pleasing romantic story.**

**Page 8**

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## Stories retold at Founder's Day

□ **Seniors, faculty, students hear Meredith alum**

ELIZABETH CROWDER  
Staff Writer

"Retelling Your Story," the Founder's Day address given by Meredith alumna and acclaimed author and teacher Charleen Swansea, was a reminder that everybody has a story. More remarkable than most, Swansea's story was a reminder that the years at Meredith and beyond hold an infinite number of possibilities.

Swansea, the daughter of a prizefighter and a society woman, came to Meredith determined to remake herself. But little did she know her professors would be determined to remake her as well.

She soon befriended Dr. Ellen Price, her Latin professor, attending Quaker meetings with her and learning the value of solitude and quiet.

Another friend was Dr. Ernest Canaday, whose math classes were the first in which she excelled. It was under his instruction that Swansea learned to treat math as a writ-

ten language, not an indecipherable code.

Equally influential in Swansea's life were her English professors. She lived across the hall from Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson, author of *A History of Meredith College*, and this living arrangement proved helpful when she slept through one of Canaday's exams. Johnson told him that anyone sleeping that deeply needed to be sleeping, so Swansea was allowed to take her exam late and without penalty.

Dr. Norma Rose was "the fierce one," the one who taught Swansea to give only her best effort and to be an equally fierce teacher.

And Dr. Julia Hamlet Harris was Swansea's creative writing professor, a professor who made students read *War and Peace* and think about what might happen next in the story.

All three women taught their students the joy of "turning things around," and Swansea did just that when she researched poet Ezra Pound in the library and began a six-year correspondence with him.

Though confined to an insane asylum due to his anti-Semitic and fascist leanings, Pound sent her writing assign-

ments such as reproducing red tissue paper in a poem.

After graduating from Meredith in 1954, Swansea taught creative writing at Queens College in her hometown, Charlotte. She was fired for integrating her class with a student from Johnson C. Smith College, but she continued the class in her home.

She and her students started the *Red Clay Rambler*, a literary magazine featuring the work of Norman Mailer, Alice Walker and other prominent writers.

Swansea started the *Poehouse Press* several years later, but tragedy struck when her husband contracted lead poisoning and committed suicide by setting fire to their home.

This event prompted the mixing of science and art in Swansea's life, as she traveled to Spain and Germany to research the effects of lead and aluminum on the human nervous system.

Her findings led her to careers in neurobiological research and pharmaceuticals, and she also remarried, confirming the lesson she learned in Price's Quaker meetings—light can be found in darkness.

Senior Rachel Perkinson enjoyed Swansea's address and

said that she presented "the history of Meredith College in a humorous way." Perkinson also enjoyed her discussion of the strong connections she made with her professors.

English professor Dr. Sarah English was intrigued by the different paths Swansea's career took and by her persistence in researching her husband's lead poisoning when "most would have just let that be."

English was also struck by the resistance to integration that Swansea faced. While Queens College was still segregated during the early to mid-1960s, Duke University, where English was a student, had admitted its first African-American students.

Swansea concluded with her resolve to tell her granddaughter about her days at Meredith, tales of her professors and the college's first professors.

Founder's Day also included the processional of seniors wearing their gowns for the first time, as well as faculty in their regalia. After Monday's convocation, the Granddaughter's Club hosted a wreath-laying ceremony on Thomas Meredith's marker.

## Students raise issues at forum

LISA WILSON  
Staff Writer

The spring "Free Your Mind Forum," sponsored by Student Life, took place last night at 6 p.m. in the Stringfield side of Belk Dining Hall. The forum did exactly what it intended: it freed the minds of many concerned Meredith students.

Many heated issues have risen this past semester. Last night, students got to hear the administration's answers to their questions.

Parking was a key issue. Senior Hillary Allen brought up the topic of senior parking. Others agreed that many times cars are wrongfully parked in the senior lot.

Chief Strickland answered this concern by saying, "all we can do is ticket them and boot them." Beyond that, he pointed out, security has little control.

When asked when the new parking lot would be done, he commented, "I've already tried that, all I can say is pretty soon." Strickland ended his time at the podium by giving mediator Leslie Gilliland a "friends of campus police" mug in appreciation for all she has done. "It must be noted that this is the first time in history a parking issue has ended in applause," commented Dean of Students Jean Jackson.

Another question brought up

was whether soft drink machines could have Camcard slots.

Bill Wade, executive vice president of accounting, informed students that they are currently trying a new system to allow drink machines to take money and Camcards. "It is in the works," he concluded.

Next, students asked Bill Cox, director of financial aid, about the availability of scholarships.

"We are working diligently to provide financial aid to all returning students," he stressed. The office of financial aid will begin processing financial information for next fall on Monday. Also, this Friday, the

board of trustees will be voting on a budget. It will not be until after then that the technology fee for all 2001-2002 students will be set in stone.

Tuition was the next topic up for discussion. One student asked for a breakdown of exactly how our tuition money is used. President Maureen Hartford and Bill Wade agreed that it is difficult to say exactly how much of students' tuition money goes where because the revenue comes from other sources. For example, next year \$36 million will be

**See FORUM on page 4**