



Science and mathematics building reaches summit with "topping out"

□ Ceremony that began in Scandinavia in 700 A.D., is still around today.

CHRISTINA HOLDER
Editor-in-Chief

The last beam of the dome in the new science and mathematics building was secured on Friday at a "topping out" ceremony to mark reaching the highest point of construction safely.

At noon Meredith students,

staff and community members gathered around the construction site to sign their names on the beam before it was lifted by a crane to its final resting place atop the building.

"I'm very proud of the team, especially proud we have reached this point safely and on time," said Pat Rogers, proprietor of Rogers Builders, the company overseeing the construction of the building.

The dome was decorated with an evergreen tree and an American flag to signify a tradition "whose roots reach

back through the centuries," according to Rogers.

The first evidence of a "topping out" ceremony dates back to 700 A.D. when Scandinavian citizens placed trees on top of newly constructed homes to appease the gods they believed lived in the wood used in the buildings. The ceremony was usually followed by pouring wine at the base of the tree and eating food together.

Over the centuries, the tradition has taken on a different look in other cultures: The Britons poured ale at the base of the tree, the Germans danced and gave speeches and the Chinese coated the beams of temples with chicken blood.

Today in the United States--in which topping out ceremonies are held for most large-scale construction

projects--the event takes on a more modern and personal tone. The tree is still there, but so is an American flag as a symbol of patriotism. No longer does the ceremony aim to appease the gods but to honor reaching the apex of construction without any lost lives.

A 160-member crew has been working on the building during the week and on nights and weekends to meet Friday's deadline.

Geoff Crowell, the general superintendent, said that because of the "different scopes of work," coordinating projects on the site with the contractors was difficult. However, he was pleased with the work completed thus far by his team and said that construction was "on or ahead" of the building's final

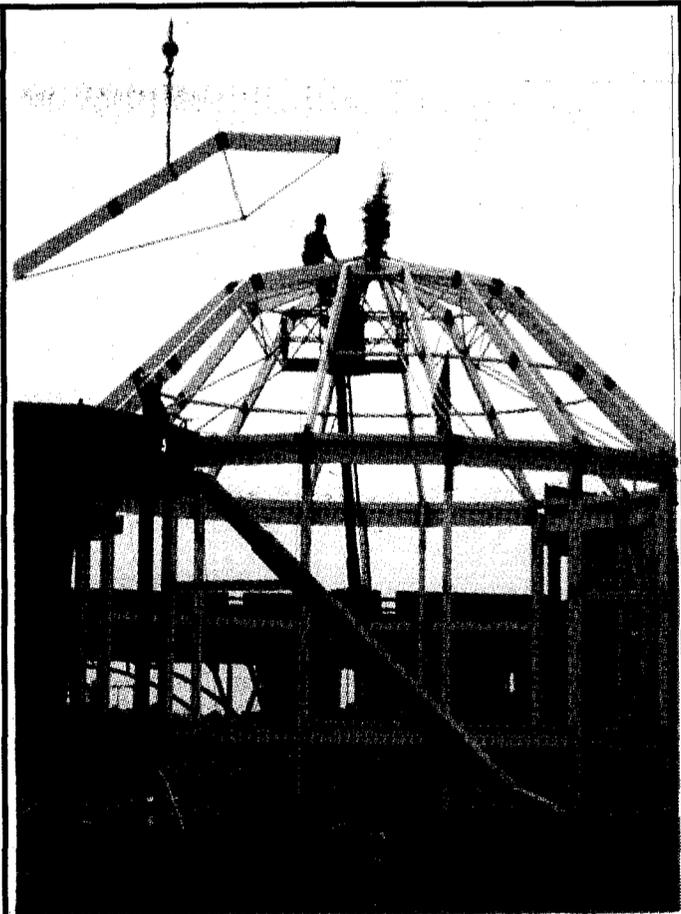
deadline of Dec. 13, 2002.

Lou Jurkowski, one of the architects with the BJLAS firm, spoke to the gathering of people shortly after the beam was placed.

Jurkowski said that the building was "a concrete statement of where Meredith wants to put her future and imagination."

She said that careers based in math and science are the "place to be" and are "a necessity and not an accessory" for Meredith students of the future.

Crowell said that his crew would continue to "close in the building" next. The most noticeable changes will be the addition of brick, windows and a finished roof.



Placing the final beam of the dome symbolizes the summit of construction for the new science and mathematics building.

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRISTINA HOLDER

\$38 million budget officially approved

JONI SMITH
Managing Editor

The College's Board of Trustees approved the \$38 million budget at a meeting on Friday, voting unanimously for the proposal.

Chair of the Board of Trustees George Griffin made the presentation to the Board, according to Vice President for Business and Finance Bill Wade.

Wade said the Business and Finance Committee had previously met to discuss the budget, enabling the final vote to be unanimous without extensive discussion.

The Business and Finance

Committee began meeting in January and the Executive Committee started its series of meetings in February to study and discuss the proposed budget.

President of the College Maureen Hartford presented the budget to faculty two weeks before the Board's vote. The budget was approved in the form that was presented to faculty.

Among the highlights for the \$38 million budget are a 3% salary increase for staff and a 6% increase for full-time faculty.

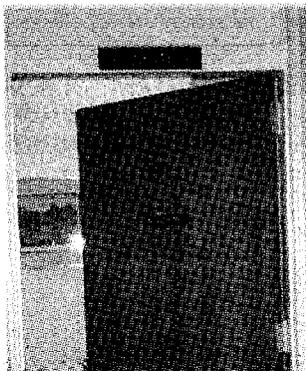
The budget does not include a salary increase for

adjunct faculty.

The budget also focuses on increasing financial aid, beginning bond payments on the new science and mathematics building, adding additional faculty to reduce the teaching load on professors, providing funds for undergraduate research and continuing various leadership programs.

The process of developing and approving the budget for 2003-04 will begin in late fall when the Business and Finance Committee and the Executive Committee meet again.

The 2002-03 budget takes effect July 1, 2002.



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