



# MEREDITH HERALD

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Educating Women To Excel

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## Meredith's Weekly Weather

### WEDNESDAY

Showers  
High 62/ Low 33

### THURSDAY

Mostly Sunny  
High 59/ Low 34

### FRIDAY

Partly Cloudy  
High 55/ Low 26

### SATURDAY

Sunny  
High 54/ Low 28

### SUNDAY

Showers  
High 56/ Low 40

### MONDAY

Showers  
High 62/ Low 45

### TUESDAY

Showers  
High 61/ Low 41

## Biopharmaceutical CEO to address December Graduates

**JACKIE BULLOCK**  
Staff Writer

Inspire Pharmaceuticals CEO Dr. Christy Shaffer will be the commencement speaker for Meredith College's winter commencement, scheduled for Saturday, December 11 at 10 a.m. in Jones Auditorium. The theme of Dr. Shaffer's address will be "By Finding Your Passion You Will Achieve Your Dreams."

Inspire Pharmaceuticals is leader in the field of P2Y2 receptors. P2Y2 receptors are responsible for hydration, lubrication and clearance of mucosal surfaces. Her company continues to aggressively patent the new technologies developed in order to maintain its lead in the P2Y2 field.

Dr. Shaffer has a Bachelor's degree in Biology/Chemistry as well as a Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Tennessee. Dr. Shaffer says she had an interest in science from the time she was in junior high school. She had an "excellent science teacher who sparked my interest when we began studying atoms." Dr. Shaffer said she was fascinated by all scientific subjects and wanted to apply her scientific interests to helping people – thus her interest in the healthcare field. Dr. Shaffer's father also has a scientific background, having worked at Wyeth Labs. She said the two of them often discussed science and medicines when she was growing up.

When asked if she has noticed an increase in women



photo courtesy of Meredith.edu

Dr. Christy Shaffer, CEO of Inspire Pharmaceuticals

pursuing careers in the field of science, Dr. Shaffer says, "There is no question that more women are becoming scientists in comparison to when I received my Ph.D. in Pharmacology in 1985. Women are now taking a leading role in academia as well as governmental agencies and the biotech/pharmaceutical industry." Dr. Shaffer also said that – despite perceptions – she has not found that being a woman has hindered her career progress in anyway.

Located in Durham, North Carolina, Inspire Pharmaceuticals is a public, biopharmaceutical company that is based on technology

exclusively licensed from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1995. It employs over 150 people, which includes staff in Research and Development as well as a 64-person sales force. Dr. Shaffer says that Inspire possesses a "broad portfolio of innovative new medicines in the fields of respiratory and eye diseases. Importantly, we have a potential life-saving product in clinical trials with the hopes of treating Cystic Fibrosis lung disease." Inspire has received several community service awards this year, including the NCEITA Corporate Citizenship award as well as the CED Community Impact Award. In 2003,

Inspire was named "Best Place to Work for Scientists" in the United States by The Scientist magazine.

Dr. Shaffer says that anyone pursuing a career in the scientific field must possess a "real passion and drive for scientific pursuits." Further, she says it is an exciting but challenging career and "one must continually keep up with a rapidly evolving body of knowledge in an ever changing world." Dr. Shaffer says scientists will be greatly needed in the future in North Carolina as it moves toward a knowledge-based economy. She says that Governor Mike Easley strongly supports the development of a state-wide plan in creating jobs in the biotechnology field. This summer, Dr. Shaffer says she was privileged to participate in writing a portion of this plan.

Dr. Shaffer's recognitions include the Council for Entrepreneurship Development Award for Entrepreneurial Excellence and Business Woman of the Year in North Carolina by the Business Advisory Council in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Shaffer says she enjoys spending what little leisure time she has with her husband of nearly twenty years, Joel, her two daughters, Kelsey (12), Liz (17), and doxie puppies, Shadow and Waggles.