

Ellen Goodman Speaks at Meredith College

Erin Etheridge, Staff Writer

A Pulitzer Prize winner and nationally syndicated columnist gave the 2009 – 2010 academic year's second Presidential Lecture at Meredith College's Jones Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23.

Ellen Goodman, whose column has been syndicated by The Washington Post Writers Group for 34 years, spoke about the current state of media and politics in the United States. In her lecture, titled "The Political is (Too) Personal, the Media is (Too) Polarized, and Television News in an Oxymoron," Goodman maintained that political commentary has evolved into "food fight journalism."

"Journalism is supposed to be about keeping us connected," affirmed Goodman, who won the 1980 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary. However, she explained that because of the pursuit of money, what she deemed "infotainment" and "unreality" have taken over the nation's television sets.

Goodman, a self-proclaimed member of "what it means journalism," went on to argue, "Politics has become polarized and commentary has become a contact sport." She attributed this trend to the popularity of cable and reality television series because of the drama involved, the desire for conflict in place of reasonable discussion, and a need for quick and dirty resolutions to

problems. Referring to such political coverage as "opinion hurling rather than opinion sharing," Goodman concluded, "It has become much harder to tell the pundit from the politician, and the information from the entertainment."

In order to improve the United States' media coverage, Goodman suggested emphasizing the premise of the nation's membership in a global community. She reasoned that if the media realized it represented the image of America throughout the world, then it would become aware of the need to patch up itself. "Telling people what you think begins with thinking," Goodman stated.

Goodman, who referred to herself as a "newly discharged civilian" due to her retirement from column writing earlier in the year, also offered several remedies for food fight journalism in particular. She rationalized that this particular form of media coverage will cease if citizens have enough of it and turn away from it. She then exclaimed simply, "Turn it off!"

However, she also left her audience with a warning regard-

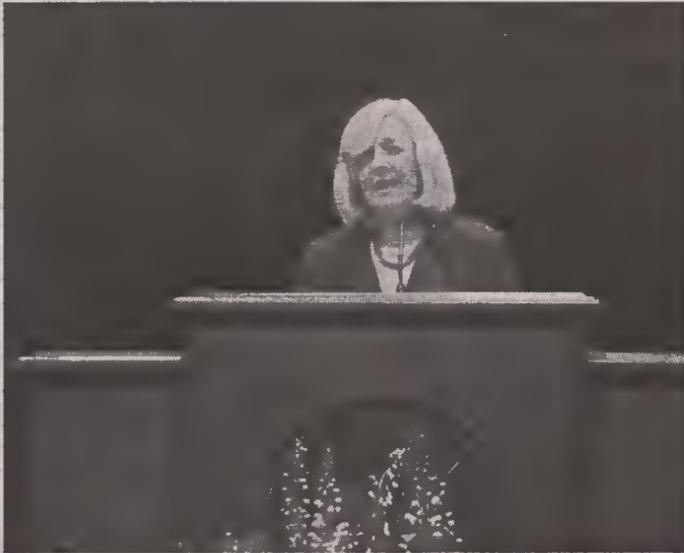


photo courtesy of Dr. Walton

ing the pace of such media change. Quoting Jack Kerouac, an American novelist and poet, Goodman reminded her listeners, "Walking on water wasn't built in a day."

Goodman's visit to Meredith College began earlier in the day when she talked informally with students at a 3:30 p.m. discussion session in Kresge Auditorium. A reception was then held in her honor at 5:30 p.m. in the Atrium of the Science and Mathematics building. This event was attended by the college's alumnae, faculty, friends, staff, students, and trustees.

Following Goodman's lecture, a brief question and answer session, moderated by Doctor Eloise Grathwohl of the English Department, took place in Jones Auditorium. Goodman concluded her visit to campus with a reception in the Rotunda of Johnson Hall, to which the Meredith and greater Raleigh communities were invited.

Goodman's campus visit was one of this year's events celebrating Meredith's Founder's Day. The campus community gathers every year to commemorate the granting of the college's institutional charter by the North Carolina Legislature on February 27, 1891. Goodman's lecture was also one of three comprising the college's Presidential Lecture Series, sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina since the series' establishment in 2005. Goodman, as well as her fellow speakers, was selected to address the 2009 – 2010 academic year's

Nuclear Enrichment in Iran

Mariamawit Tadesse, Staff Writer

For years, there had been suspicions of an ongoing nuclear program in Iran, so the world was not surprised when Iran finally announced its nuclear program. Tehran has said it wants to enrich uranium up to 20% to produce isotopes for medical use and to generate electricity. It currently has plans to build two new nuclear sites this year.

According to France24 News, Yukiya Amano, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), expressed concern that Iran might be trying to develop a nuclear warhead. Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the IAEA, told Al-Jazeera News that the report was "baseless and that Iran's nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes." Even though weapons-grade uranium is at least 90% enriched, some experts believe enriching 20% is a forward step towards acquiring nuclear weapon.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has dismissed US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 'military dictatorship' labeling of his presidency. He went on to say that "any country trying to impose new sanctions on Iran would regret its actions."

Since 2007, the United Nations Security Council has put three rounds of sanctions on Iran in relations to its nuclear program which the country has not fully been cooperating with, according to the BBC. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has made recent trips to Saudi Arabia and Russia to discuss about Iran's uranium enrichment. The US is pushing the UN Security Council to impose a fourth round of sanctions. China on the other hand is against any new round sanctions, saying greater diplomatic efforts are needed.

campus theme, "Catalysts for Change."

Besides being awarded a Pulitzer Prize, Goodman has been the recipient of the American Society of Newspaper Editors Distinguished Writing Award, the Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award, the Ernie Pyle Award for Lifetime Achievement, and many more. Following her 1963 graduation from Radcliffe College, she worked at Newsweek, The Detroit Free Press, and The Boston Globe. For more information on Goodman and her work, look for any of her three books or six collections of her columns, which have been published in over 300 newspapers, affording her the distinction of being one of the nation's two most syndicated columnists.

The last speaker of the 2009 – 2010 Presidential Lecture Series, Nancy Goodman Brinker, is scheduled to speak in Jones Auditorium on April 21. Brinker, who founded the Susan G. Komen for the Cure breast cancer organization, will give her address at 7:00 p.m.

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