

Dear Ms. Britt . . .

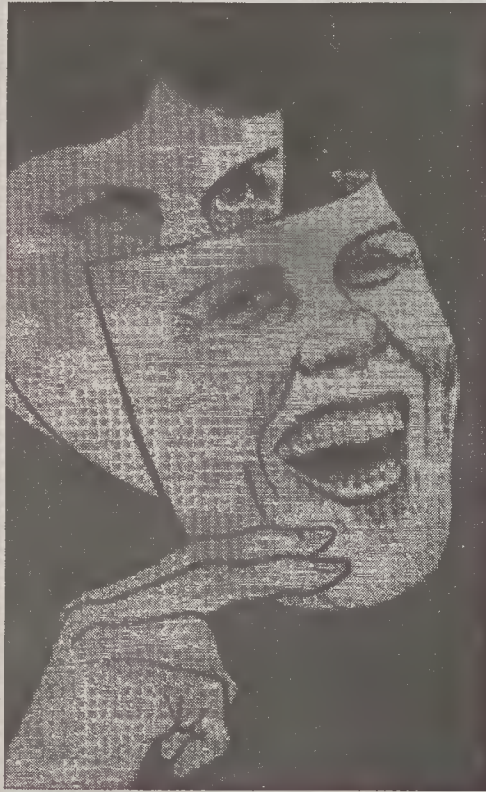


image via Ashleigh Phillips, cover of Show & Tell, design by Dwane Powell

Since Suzanne Britt's final year at Meredith College is coming to an end, the Herald dedicates this front page to her. We contacted previous and current students, requesting submissions that reflect the influence she has made in their lives. We also asked Ms. Britt to provide an introduction of herself, telling her it would be used in one of our many end of the year projects. She willingly sent us a brief bio and it is printed below. What she didn't know was that we had already received numerous submissions from her students. It's not surprising that as she called her students "friends" in her bio, her students called her a "friend" in their submissions. Here's to a hell-raiser and a weilder of words; a woman we admire and love. Ms. Britt, this is the front page we wouldn't let you edit. We hope we did a good job.

-Emily Gamiel and Ashleigh Phillips

"Suzanne Britt was born in Winston-Salem, NC and spent most of her childhood growing up in that city. She graduated from Salem Academy and from Salem College, earning a bachelor of arts degree with a double major in

English and Latin. She then earned her master's degree in English from Washington University, in St. Louis. Married for fifteen years, she has two children, Carrie and Tom, and two grandchildren, Ella and Isaac. After living in St. Louis for a year, she and her family moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where Ms. Britt did additional studies in psychology and in 17th century English poetry. After moving to Sanford, North Carolina, she began writing poetry and was pleased to have several poems published in literary magazines. After moving to Raleigh, NC, she taught English at North Carolina State University, at Peace College, and at Duke Divinity School, where she worked during summer sessions. She has taught English at Meredith College for twenty-five years. She has also published several books, been a newspaper columnist, and has seen many of her essays published in college textbooks in the United States and in other countries as well. At Meredith, she has taught freshman composition, American and British literature, world literature, and courses in writing opinion pieces and in creative nonfiction. In recent years, she has served as advisor to Meredith's campus publications. She will be retiring officially in May of 2012 but will continue to teach courses on occasion. Her students have been the strength of all her learning, and she is grateful for the experience of being enlightened and entertained by so many excellent students throughout her time at Meredith. Many of those students have become her friends."

Ms. Britt was my first frenemy. My first English paper of my college career got mutilated by Ms. Britt's red pen. But she didn't just stop at the "F". She wrote, "Do you even know how to write?" And I cried. I did not like her, but I really needed her to pass me out of English 101. She was the reason I changed my major from English to anything else. But by the end of that first semester, she was the reason I went back to majoring in English. I wanted to be just like her. Once, Pat and I sneaked into her office and covered it in toilet paper and Bette Midler lyrics. I think she realized then that I wasn't a good frenemy to have because we became friends after that. I remember crying to Ms. Britt that I

hated economics and that I just knew the teacher hated me. She listened patiently and then said "Now, Meredith. I am not even going to ask you why in the world you're taking Econ. But that man is an idiot! And don't you forget it!" Talk about validation. She asked me to be her assistant, and it is without a doubt one of my most favorite college memories. I spent countless hours in her office, listening to her laugh that deep belly laugh as she would tell me, "Dating is as good as it gets, Meredith!" When I graduated, she told me to stop calling her Ms. Britt. "Ya know, Meredith, my name is Suzanne. You can call me that now that you're out of school. Besides, we're friends," she said. They say you just have to experience Meredith College. Well, the same goes for Suzanne. And it was the very best experience.

-Meredith Robertson, '05

Once in a while, Ms. Britt would announce to me (her student worker) that she was going to take a nap. A pillow randomly appeared as she got comfortable on the floor and propped her feet up on the chair. Suddenly aware of how loud grading papers was, I always did my best to remain quiet. Soon after, she began to talk. Then she waved her arms around with enthusiasm while I sat cross-legged, nodding my head, pencil-in-hand. Later I realized I'd become her makeshift psychologist.

Well, if she was going to be that open with me, then I felt comfortable doing the same. One of my most stressful days at Meredith involved having to make a big decision regarding a study abroad program—by 5pm that day. Completely out of sorts, I eventually made my way into Ms. Britt's office. I don't even think I knocked. It had to have been the more-than-average amount of white showing in my eyes that made her stop as she was doing and shift every bit of her attention to me. After explaining my dilemma and its complications in random 100 mph spurts, she asked me a simple question, "What do you want to do?" "I want to go!" Not allowing the time or space for the "BUT!" that was about to follow, she said, "THEN GO!" So I signed up for what was the best summer of my life.

It's worth noting that, a moment after

we'd resolved this, she began to set me up on a blind date with her personal trainer. I reluctantly agreed, seeing as how I was a student at a women's college with zero prospects. I never saw him again, but at least I got a good story and a Hurricane's game out of it.

-Hillary Morgan, '09

During my first year, I had Ms. Britt for Honors CORE 100. I was a fairly opinionated student, and by the end of the semester, I wasn't sure she really liked me, since I argued with her whenever I disagreed. A full year later, when I returned to campus for the spring of my sophomore year, I was in Joyner Hall and said hello as I walked past her office. She invited me in and asked about my winter break. As we chatted, I mentioned in passing that I hadn't found a job over break. Ms. Britt then reached into her purse, pulled out a \$10 bill, and gave it to me, saying that she had a little money left over after the holidays and that I should spend it on coffee with friends. That small act of kindness made a huge impact on me, just as Ms. Britt has made an impact on every student she has taught. The halls of Joyner will be just a little less colorful without this spirited woman who is so passionate about her students. Thank you, Ms. Britt, for everything!

-Maggie Lally, '10

Tuesday and Thursday afternoons were spent in English class with Ms. Britt. For an hour and twenty minutes, I sat in the back of her class wide-eyed and astonished, possibly succumbing to mental shock. Never had I encountered a teacher with such a sharp propensity for engaging the depth of everyday thoughts and actions. Class involved reading and writing of course, but Ms. Britt upped the ante with bold opinions and stories that seemed almost unreal. I often left her class wondering if maybe I had imagined the entire dialogue. To this day, I still have thoughts and questions and ideas jostling around in my head from just one class with that woman. Ms. Britt wasn't even supposed to teach the course that semester.

-Sally Malaka Yacout, '13

(cont'd on pg. 6)

IN THIS ISSUE...

State & Local: Amendment One, El Anatsui review

Arts & Entertainment: Style Stalker, Rebecca Rants, Ask Gigi, MC Opera, What's Up in Raleigh, Campus Calendar

Campus Life: Confessions of a Fiancé, Kony Kraze 2012, Non-Profit Work, front page cont'd

Opinion: Second British Invasion, The Power of the Written Word, Whines and Gripes