

The Meredith Herald

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Women's Rally on Raleigh

Rachel Crawford, Staff Writer

On the morning of Saturday, Jan. 20, an estimated 6,500 people gathered on Halifax Mall in downtown Raleigh to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the 2017 Women's March. The rally kicked off at 9 am with an hour of resistance music. After the musical performances, the rally began with speakers, including Meredith alum Eiman Ali, who graduated last spring. Ali spoke to her experience as a Somali-American woman and as an immigrant in the current American political climate.

Organizers of this event worked for over six weeks to prepare. Kirby Jones, a junior and English major, says that being involved on the planning committee has been a rewarding experience.

Jones got involved with the planning committee at the first meeting on Dec. 1 of last year, and she stated that it was amazing to

see how quickly the details of the rally fell into place.

"I would have never imagined being able to put such a big event together on such a compressed timeline," Jones stated, citing the teamwork and determination of members of the planning committee for the rally's successful development.

Jones emphasized the contrast in mood and purpose between this year's Women's Rally on Raleigh and last year's Women's March. Last year, Jones said, the march took place in reaction to the election of President Trump and centered feelings of angst and frustration.

According to Jones, this year's rally had a much more hopeful tone, building on the momentum of last year and encouraging feminist activists to stay connected to the progressive movement, get involved with organizations, and plug into this year's midterm

elections.

Imani William, a Meredith senior receiving a double degree in mathematics and electrical engineering, said that she participated in the rally "to make sure the call for justice is heard and to feel reinvigorated for the fight. I was there as a Black American Muslim woman who wants a better future for all."

Reflecting on last year's march, William stated, "I was brought to tears by the multitude of people from different generations, races, religions, who all came together unified in spirit ready to fight for justice in so many arenas. The crowd last year seemed unending."

This year, she said that while the crowd was much smaller, "the speakers spoke with urgency, and the singers inspired action. Leaving the rally, I felt compelled to do more and I felt there were many others who were on the

same page."

Leena Torkey, a senior double majoring in sociology and international studies, stated, "I participated in the march last year here in Raleigh, and this year's was much smaller and we didn't actually march, but it was still amazing to just listen to the speakers in the area ... I was so happy to see that many of them were WOC, immigrant, and Muslim women." However, Torkey felt "disheartened by the rising amount of transphobia and white feminism in this movement... a lot of the signs did seem a little trans-exclusive or just not that productive."

Torkey hopes that future rallies will be more inclusive: "I was really inspired by my close friends and all the Muslim women at the rally, but I really hope that there will be more discussions about being inclusive towards all people who are affected by this movement."

Campus Security and Safety

On-Campus Safety Tips

Emily Chilton

Meredith has been recognized for the safety and security of its campus, but recently there was an attempted crime reported on campus. In light of this incident, campus security gives the following suggestions for what to do in the event of a crime against you or someone else.

Self-protection means knowing how to avoid being the victim of a crime and knowing what to do if you are a victim. Most crimes are crimes of opportunity.

- Remember! Don't be a hero. If you are faced with a weapon, the odds are against you.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and the people you come in contact with.
- Avoid walking alone if possible. Walk in groups of four or more and try to stay in well-populated areas. Try to avoid working late at night alone; if you must, lock your doors.
- If you are alone at night and find that someone is following you or someone is in your residence or work area you don't know, go to the nearest residence or safe place and call the police for help. Stay on the phone until the police arrive.
- If someone in a car is following you, turn and walk in the other direction.
- Never prop open entry doors to your residence hall, and never let someone you don't know into your residence hall who can harm you and others in the residence hall.
- Stay away from tall shrubbery, dark shadows near buildings, and other isolated areas.

Immediately report any suspicious activity, vehicles, or people to the Meredith College campus police at (919) 760-8888.

Better Safe Than Sorry

Olivia McElvaney

Melissa Palmer is an instructor at Karate International in Raleigh. She has a third degree black belt in Karate, a third degree black belt in Jujitsu, and a first degree black belt in Judo.

The beginning of her Karate classes includes basic self-defense skills. The popularity of the self-defense portion grew so that there is now a separate class offered.

Do college students need self-defense more than other demographics or no?

My initial response is no. However, women at college age are usually the most vulnerable and have the highest chance of being attacked.

Why should people take self-defense?

Few people take the time to learn how to stay safe. Many rely on others or think there's no reason to learn because they don't believe they are capable or feel they will never be attacked. Our lives are our responsibility and it's up to us to protect it in every way possible.

What can people do to prevent attacks?

Educating yourself is the best defense. Learn about why attacks happen and create habits to keep yourself safe. Be aware of your surroundings, aware of how you present yourself (are you walking confidently or do you appear tired or distracted), be smart about what you put on social media, be smart about where you go. Take a self-defense course and learn how to not be a victim. When it comes to defending yourself, there are thousands of ways to defend against one attack. It's important for people to find what works best for them and create even a small arsenal of techniques and information that they can and will use.

Women of MC: Johnashia Robertson

Mimi Mays, Staff Writer

"Sometimes I need to stop and think, you know, Johnashia you're only twenty years old, you know, you're not gonna become a millionaire at twenty-one. I still have years, I still have school, it's okay if I'm not successful right now, it's okay I'm making mistakes at work, you know, it's okay if I don't wake up tomorrow with a million dollars in my bank account.

"My greatest struggle right now would be the fact that I currently don't have a lot of patience with my career goals. Most would say that I'm trying to rush things because I've been doing retail jobs ever since my freshman year, and I've been just trying to be successful too early, instead of waiting. In school, teachers are constantly telling me that

everything's not gonna be perfect, my managers are helping me train and whatnot and telling me where I can go in the company. I've definitely learned to slow down... but speed of success has been one of my biggest struggles right now. But I've realized that I'm not alone in this world, there are other people who are similar. I used to always think, no one's like me, no

one understands me, so meeting people at Meredith and realizing, oh wow, you went through that too, wow, we can relate, that was so good for me socially and mindfully—I'm way more optimistic and outgoing, and it has definitely paid off cause I've made some really, really good friendships here that I can definitely see going on forever."