

Best of Luck  
to All This Fall  
Semester

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October 24, 2018

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## New Coach: Laquanda Quick

By Mimi Mays, Associate Editor

This July, Meredith hired Laquanda Quick as the new head coach for the Avenging Angels basketball team. Coach Quick, or Coach Q as her players call her, comes straight from an assistant coaching and recruiting coordination position at the University of West Florida. During her two years there, the team broke school records, won a regional championship and went to the Elite Eight—an honor in Division II basketball.

Before that, Coach Q had her first college coaching job at Winston-Salem State University, in the city where she was born and raised. She was initially a high school basketball coach, but once she got a taste of college coaching, she vowed to never go back to high school. Her current position at Meredith is her first time as a head coach of a college basketball team.

The StrongPoints pamphlet tacked to her office door lists “focus, learner, relator, individualization, restorative,” though readers and players alike find her sixth and seventh top strengths are “competition” and “strategic.”

Tell me a little bit about your own experience playing basketball. So, I played four years at UNC-Chapel Hill—go Tar Heels. I was All-American there; basically the top 10 to 15 players in the country are given All-American status, so my jersey hangs up in the gym over there. I was a first-round draft pick in the WNBA, so I played two years in Portland and one year in San Antonio. I also played during the off-season, because WNBA is only four months in the summertime, so I played overseas in China, Israel and Turkey as well.

## Cornhuskin' Changes for the Better

By Abigail Ojeda, News Editor

Sleep-deprived angels are ready to parade, perform and (yes) shuck corn in Meredith's 73rd annual Cornhuskin' event. Deeply rooted in campus tradition, Cornhuskin' has evolved since it began in 1945, transitioning from a brief yearly event into a meticulously planned annual extravaganza. No one on campus knows more and has been more involved in developing Cornhuskin' than the Vice President for College Programs, Dr. Jean Jackson. Since she graduated in 1975, she has maintained an active interest in developing this staple event into a fantastic feature of a Meredith fall semester.

Describing Cornhuskin' is a difficult feat. Attempts to characterize it as “Meredith's version of homecoming” or a “competition between the classes” falls short. The frequently repeated line “You just have to experience it” shows that it is more than just an event. As an interview with Dr. Jackson reveals, student contributions each year make every Cornhuskin' a unique experience. When Dr. Jackson first participated in Cornhuskin', the event was held in Jones Auditorium. Interestingly, this setting created the tone of Cornhuskin' because the performers and audience members were students only—therefore the skits could be a bit more bawdy because no one was concerned about their parents watching them a few yards away.

In those days, Dr. Jackson says, Cornhuskin' was different in two ways: complexity and spirit. She reminisces, “When I was a student, I thought we were doing really well if we got over to Ridgewood and had a posterboard and glitter.” The main focus was on the skit and the word parade because there were no dances. Even the faculty used to perform skits, but that event fell away at some point. In the end, she adds, “the skit has always been the main event in one way or another.”

According to Dr. Jackson, the spirit of Cornhuskin' also used to be far more mean and secretive. For instance, other classes' themes would never be revealed, so “one

person fell through the ceiling of Jones Auditorium trying to overhear another class's theme,” she remembered. In a meaner spirit of competition, students were getting into water fights by dumping water on each other as they walked under breezeways. Most memorably, when Dr. Jackson was the freshman class president, she was kidnapped and held for ransom by the sophomore class. However, when the freshman refused to pay the ransom, she was eventually let go.



2003 Cornhuskin' Parade  
Photo courtesy of Dr. Walton

In the late 1980's, organizers were compelled to move Cornhuskin' out into the amphitheater because Jones Auditorium was so crowded that students were sitting on both the seats and the armrests. In 1995, the 50th anniversary, Dr. Jackson was then vice president for student development and moved Cornhuskin' from Thursday to Friday. “People thought I was going to kill Cornhuskin,” she recalls. However, this move allowed Cornhuskin' to get even bigger—more alumnae began to return to the event and then parents wanted to come. Ultimately, this change created a major shift in the scripts: “They cleaned up the scripts a lot,” Dr. Jackson says, “since the families started coming.”

Another addition Dr. Jackson contributed was the after Cornhuskin' pancake dinner. “When I was the vice president, I wanted to institute something to keep people on campus after the event—or to at least put some food in their stomachs—and that's when the after Cornhuskin' breakfast began, which was unexpectedly popular with guests afterward.”

language. And it was kind of funny because I have this human being with me who obviously can't be with me 24 hours a day, and sometimes I want to leave and go get food, so she would literally have to write on a piece of paper what I would show to the cab driver to take me into the city. And then you don't really know what's on the menu, so you just point and hope there are pictures. An interesting

Current faculty member and former Meredith student Dr. Robin Colby, who participated in Cornhuskin', remembers the excitement of the skits and the word parade, but not dances. Since her years as a student, Cornhuskin' has gotten grander. As she puts it, “The scale is the major difference.” Now, she and other faculty members love to bring their kids to “just experience it.” This newer, bigger, production-style Cornhuskin' seems to be here to stay.

Many people are curious to discover how Cornhuskin' got its name. Dr. Jackson points to *A History of Meredith College 1972-1989* by Mary Lynch Johnson, which says that the name came in deference to a midwestern faculty member, Ms. Peterson, who was then teaching in the PE department. She said, “corn shucks are called 'husks,’” and the name Cornhuskin' stuck. In her book, Johnson noted that “The [Cornhuskin'] contests bring out unexpected talents,” something that still holds true to this day. Initially, a chicken calling contest was replaced by a cow milking contest, and generations of students have added or switched out the contests. Now, in the words of Dr.

Jackson, Cornhuskin' is “like a mini Broadway show,” which is impressive but causes concerns for students' ability to afford Cornhuskin'. She says, “One of the challenges with modern day Cornhuskin' is making it fun, which means making it accessible to the class.” It is Dr. Jackson's goal to see that everyone who wants to participate can be able to do so—the experience shouldn't be about what one can afford.

Also, the question of the expansion of Cornhuskin' persists. How much “bigger and better” can Cornhuskin' get? “There seems to be an expectation that each class one-ups the last year's class,” Dr. Jackson reflects, “Instead, the challenge should be ‘What can I remove or maintain in a different way?’” While the rivalry between classes does exist, she acknowledged, it would be helpful to focus more on getting to know one's own talents and the talents of others. Dr. Jackson says, “Maybe the first step is going back to something simpler, returning to the days of the pie-eating contest or chicken calling.”

experience for sure.  
What's your favorite memory from playing basketball?  
I was able to build some really genuine relationships with people. My college teammates are my best friends; these are people that were in my wedding, or people I go to for advice. So just the relationships I built were my most memorable things from playing.  
**COACH Continued on page 2**