

Speaker addresses racism's effect on children

By Daveed Gartenstein-Ross
Old Gold and Black Reporter

Jane Elliott began her speech by waving off the mandatory applause that seems to precede all speakers. "I'm going to offend everybody in this audience in the first five minutes," she explained, "and I don't give a damn."

Elliott, world-renowned in the field of psychology for her "brown eyes/blue eyes" experiment, spoke in Wait Chapel from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 23 as a part of first-

The Year of GLOBALIZATION and Diversity

year orientation. She discussed many different forms of prejudice inherent to the United States before explaining the experiment that made her famous, which she first conducted 30 years ago.

Elliott said she never realized she was a racist until the day after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. "I am a racist," she had explained earlier in the program, "because I was born and raised in a racist society."

At the time of the assassination, Elliott was an elementary school teacher in a small, all-white Iowa town. She had been shocked by the news coverage of the assassination. For example, one white male commentator asked some black leaders whom he was interviewing, "When our leader was killed, our leader's widow held us together. Who's

going to keep your people together?"

The leader to whom the commentator referred was John F. Kennedy, who was being cast as the leader of whites. Prior to that, Elliott said with an air of sarcasm, she had thought that Kennedy had been president over the whole nation — white and black — not just the whites.

At another point in the coverage, Dan Rather asked a black leader, "Don't you think you should feel sympathy for white people because they can't be angry about the assassination like black people can?"

After seeing that news coverage, Elliott decided to attempt to teach her class something about racism. She told the audience in Wait Chapel that if she had known the consequences of her actions, she would never have taken them.

Her four children were spit on and abused in school because they had a "nigger-lover" for a mother. Her parents lost their restaurant because nobody would eat there. Her husband lost all his friends. Her father died six years ago completely isolated from the community for raising the town's only "nigger-lover."

The cause of this controversy was her blue eyes/brown eyes experiment. Elliott, who has blue eyes, told her class that blue-eyed people are not as smart as brown-eyed people, are not as clean as brown-eyed people, are not as civilized as brown-eyed people.

One of the children asked why Elliott was the teacher then, if she had blue eyes.

Another kid answered, "She'd be the

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Jane Elliott
Psychologist

principal or superintendent if she had brown eyes. They both have brown eyes."

Elliott said, "Instantly the kids knew how to be racist. I was shocked by how quickly the kids learned."

She made the blue-eyed kids sit in the back of the classroom, because they "feel better when they're with their own kind." She would not let them on the big playground equipment because blue-eyed people cannot walk and chew gum at the same time, she said.

She continued the experiment for years after that, garnering a large amount of national media attention. Every year, the same incidents would recur.

The children labeled superior by virtue of their eye color would excel in class due to their high confidence levels, but at the same time would become vicious bigots.

The children with the inferior eye color would also internalize their labels, doing worse in school, moping about during lunch when Elliott would not allow them to socialize with kids of a different eye color.

Elliott said this message is vital because of the prevalence of racism in the United States. Indicating the audience, she said, "And if racism isn't prevalent, I want to know why the composition of this room is so overwhelmingly colorless." She said that the issue is not one we as a society want to discuss.

She emphasized this point by asking the white people in the audience who were willing to spend the rest of their lives talked about and treated the way people of color are treated to stand. Nobody stood.

Elliott said that after each of her talks, somebody in the audience would voice the opinion that "Christian love" is the answer to racism. She countered that view as ethnocentric, asking, "Who here thinks Jewish love might be the answer? Who thinks Muslim love might be the answer? Who thinks atheist love might be the answer?"

She said she prefers justice to love. "As long as we have an unjust society, like we do now, we will never have a loving society. If you don't treat people justly, how can you expect them to love you?" she said.

Elliott then showed a made-for-TV film called "The Eye of the Storm," which documented her "blue eyes/brown eyes" exercise in 1970.

After the video she explained that the kids in it had a reunion years later and reflected on its positive impact on their lives.

"They all agreed that the only thing wrong with it," she said, "is that not enough teachers are using it."

Those who had taken her classes said they brought their own children up in a less bigoted manner, Elliott reported.

Elliott said that this abuse of power is not unique to Christianity, but rather majority groups tend to abuse power in the same way.

"If Muslims had the same power, would they use it in the same way? They have. In Saudi Arabia, I am safe, but I am not comfortable and I am not free. I cannot practice my religion. In this country, people of other faiths can practice their religion. Do not let it get to the point where they cannot," Elliott said.

Elliott answered questions, many of which dealt with whether people can cut into society's prejudice and how they can summon the courage to stand up against it, until it was past the scheduled time to end the program.

Harold Holmes, an associate vice president and the dean of student services, said, "My read on it is that Ms. Elliott really offered some broad-based and practice-based perspectives for our young people. I'm hopeful they will feel they are interests for change themselves. I'm not ultimately confident based on the line of questioning, which seems to say they're not comfortable making change."

Freshmen Walter Simmons said of the presentation, "It's always a relief to know that people from the other race see the truth. She hit home to me. I just pray that students, professors, everybody will think about this and use it."

Information system benefits students, faculty and staff

By Travis Langdon
Assistant News Editor

In an attempt to provide students, faculty and staff with an accurate and easily accessible student information system, the university introduced Wake Information Network this fall. The system is a highly protected web interface that allows authorized persons to access information about students, classes and alumni of the university.

Implementation of WIN began last year. The network was designed to help alleviate some of the burden that was placed on the Benson Information Center when people tried to acquire information about students through it.

The new system is also expected to provide more accurate information about students since, unlike printed directories, the system can be easily updated as students move around and change schedules.

WIN consists of two directories. The first of these is the public directory, which can be accessed by anyone on the web and contains basic student information such as a student's year and telephone number. The second directory available on WIN is the private directory, which can be accessed only by students, faculty and staff. In order to use this part of the system the user must provide a log-in code, which the system uses to determine what degree of authorization the user can be given.

"WIN allows different people within the university access to different information based on what their function at the university requires. For instance, as a student you are allowed access to anything about yourself, such as your schedule or your transcript. You can also see other student's photos, addresses and basic information. If the system recognizes your log-in code as faculty, you can view class rosters and grades within your class. Another useful tool available to faculty members enables them to access the students' photos

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Jay Dominick

An assistant vice president and chief information officer

on the system. Members of the administration would, in turn, be given more broad access like rosters for an entire department," said Jay Dominick, an assistant vice president and the chief information officer.

Because the nature of some of the information on the system is so personal, extreme measures were taken to secure the data provided by WIN.

Dominick says that, in addition to the log-in code system, there is also a firewall between the user and private data as well as an encryption system for the information sent across the web.

In spite of the benefits of WIN, its implementation has brought a few problems.

The university decided to eliminate the temporary student directory that is usually printed and distributed to students at the beginning of the year. Because of this, seniors without computers and students who have not yet figured out WIN have faced difficulties trying to reach other students. This has led to increased workloads for the Information Desk, but the university is already taking steps to remedy this.

"We realized that students want a printed temporary directory so we have already sent a list to Telecom Tuesday night, and expect the printed copy to be ready for distribution by early next week. We will continue to print a temporary directory in future years, which, when combined with WIN, will ultimately be very helpful in decreasing the amount of calls to the Information Center," Dominick said.



Laura O'Connor/Old Gold and Black

"What do you mean it's already full?"

Sophomores and juniors registered for classes for the fall semester Aug. 24 in the Green Room of Reynolda Hall. Freshman and seniors registered the day before.

BRIEFLY

Campus organizations may have their announcements listed by sending e-mail to news@ogb.wfu.edu, faxing to Ext. 4561 or writing to P.O. Box 7569. The deadline for inclusion in each week's paper is 5 p.m. Monday.

Junior attends Mortar Board conference

Junior Brad Gilmore attended the 1998 National Conference of Mortar Board Inc. July 23-26 in Columbus, Ohio.

Gilmore, a Spanish and politics double major, participated in the senior national honor society's 80th anniversary conference. The theme was "Building on 80 years of Leadership" and the delegates discussed the organizations focus, future projects, programming and membership needs.

Dance and cheer teams to hold training

The dance and cheer teams will hold a training session at 6 p.m. Aug. 31 in Reynolds Gym Room 401. The coed cheer team needs two couples, and the dance team needs one female.

Harbinger Corps to host open house

Students interested in sharing information about the university with prospective students should attend the Harbinger Corps open house 5-6 p.m. Sept. 8 in the admissions office/welcome center.

Refreshments will be served. All undergraduate students are welcome to attend.

The Harbinger Corps is a student volunteer group that helps recruit students through campus tours, on-line chat rooms, telethons and high school visits.

University Police make RAD's fall schedule

Rape Aggressions Defense will hold fall classes for women. The course is offered through university police and taught by certified RAD instructors.

9 p.m. on the following dates: Sept. 8, 10, 15 and 17; Sept. 22, 24, 29 & Oct. 1; Oct. 20, 22, 27 and 29; Nov. 3, 5, 10 and 12 and Nov. 16, 17, 18 and 19.

The fee is \$10, which covers the cost of the materials.

Call Ext. 5591 to register or for more information.

Triad Triathlon planned for next month

The Women's Health Center of Excellence at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center will sponsor the "Excellence Triathlon" Sept. 26 at the university.

Proceeds from the event will benefit domestic violence programs in Forsyth County.

The triathlon is the first USA Triathlon Federation-sanctioned event in the Triad.

The course will include a 300-yard swim, a 12-mile bike race and a 3.1-mile run.

The event, which begins at 8:30 a.m., is open to male and female

individual or team competitors. A 1.5-mile fun run will begin at 10 a.m.

Registration is \$35 for individuals, \$75 for teams and \$12 for the fun run. All participants will receive a free T-shirt.

For information, see www.wfubmc.edu/women, or call Kristin Kidd at 777-3946.

To volunteer, call Jan Lawlor at 716-4327.

Study-abroad grants now available

Applications are available for the Fulbright grants for graduate study abroad in the 1999-2000 academic year. The deadline is Oct. 1.

Proposals may be in any field including the creative and performing arts.

For applications and information, contact Peter Siavelis, an assistant professor of politics, at Ext. 5451 or Timothy Sellner, a professor and the chairman of German and Russian, at Ext. 5363.

Upperclass Carswell Scholarships available

The committee on scholarship and student aid is accepting applications from sophomores, juniors and seniors with outstanding records to compete to become Thomas E. and Ruth Mullen Scholars of the Upperclass Carswell Scholarships.

The scholarships are worth an annual \$1,500 and may be renewed for the remainder of the undergraduate education, pending continued academic and extracurricular achievement.

Applicants should submit to the scholarship committee a letter about the student's major area of interest, extracurricular activities and desires for future study or work before and after graduation.

Receipt of the letter gives the committee the right to review the transcript and dean's record of the student.

Each applicant must also have two faculty letters of recommendation to be sent by the faculty member to the scholarship committee, admissions office/welcome center by Oct. 15.

will be interviewed, and awards will be announced Dec. 15.

Lost items available in Chaplain's office

Items lost at Preschool may be picked up in Chaplain Ed Christman's office, Wingate 104. Lost items include linens, pillows, duffel bags and sleeping bags.

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