

# OPINION

This column represents the views of the Old Gold and Black Editorial Board.

## Campus loses icon with chaplain's retirement

Sadly, the man who felt a call to serve the university for 49 years is now called to retire and begin a new phase of his life. Through his decades of service, Chaplain Ed Christman became an institution as he guided thousands of students throughout their college careers. Christman, 72, has lived to see several generations of change at the university and is one of the last remaining ties to the Old Campus. He has been involved in almost every major event at the university in recent history.

In a sense, the chaplain embodies all the university was and all it has become.

In times of crisis, Christman has acted as the university's conscience. He has been instrumental in promoting the university's progressive policies and was a key supporter of the sit-ins, getting personally involved in the enrollment of the school's first black student.

He has proved to be a vibrant part of

the campus community throughout his tenure.

As chaplain, Christman takes an active role in the lives of students, serving as advisor to the Baptist Student Union and Chi Rho and mentor to countless others.

As the university has evolved, he has helped guide students spiritually. He transcends religious affiliations and goes beyond the duties of his job, letting students know he is open to their needs and questions.

When the university has faced tough times and scandal, such as with the 2000 same-sex union ceremony in Wait Chapel, Christman stood by his post and showed his dedication to the university and his ministry.

As this spiritual man of integrity moves on to a new phase of life, we must remember his lessons and strive to follow the example he leaves behind.

Christman has truly become as much an icon of this university as the Demon Deacon.

## Unity needed among feminists

Greek and non-Greek women alike are facing equality issues together.

Many of feminism's strongest supporters and detractors see the issue of feminism in a very narrow way. The so-called feminazi feminists are supposed to reject traditional gender roles and assume a masculine role in order to

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that feminists fight for while speaking and acting against their benefactors.

These splits do no good for anybody. Separating the world into women's issues and men's issues and insisting that one must choose a team only perpetuates the myth that society is a zero-sum game that women must fight hard to win. Yes, there is a special place for women's groups in some arenas. However, we are all in it together.

Recent changes in the discourse of the fight against breast cancer reflect the fact of societal unity. Breast cancer, while mainly a female disease, does not affect only its women sufferers. It also hurts their husbands, sons, brothers, fathers and friends. The same is true for all so-called women's issues. Societies such as Afghanistan, where women are not allowed to participate economically, politically or culturally, lag far behind those where women are allowed and expected to contribute.

The point of feminism should not be to advance women over men. Instead, feminism should continue to focus on equality and providing women with choices and opportunity. Furthermore, outspoken feminists must stop deriding certain choices that women make. Such derision is counter-productive and often misinformed.

Recently, sororities have come under fire both at Wake and nationally for being anti-feminist. This is a perfect example of misplaced anger on the part of feminists.

Most sororities were formed at a time when being a collegiate woman was daring in and of itself. To come together with other women and form a society for the express purpose of advancing women was radical. Many questioned whether or not women were capable of running large national organizations.

The spread and success of sororities as vast, corporate-like entities proved them absolutely wrong early in the twentieth century. Sorority women were the first feminists, and contemporary women's groups owe much to their organizations.

Some would argue that sororities have become outdated and corrupted. We all see the stereotype of a sorority girl in the movies. What we don't see in the movies is that same girl running a meeting, or managing organizational funds, or planning and executing philanthropy projects.

Sororities provide an outlet for women to grow personally and professionally. Sorority women are still strong feminists, whether or not they embrace the label. Feminists must lower the tone of their rhetoric and embrace all women. We do not all have to agree on the proper role for a woman. Doing so is self-defeating and actually anti-feminist. Instead, we should come together to affirm a woman's right to choose her life and her path, whatever it may be.

Jamie Kidd is a senior political science major and a member of Phi Mu Sorority.



Jamie Kidd

OLD GOLD AND BLACK COLUMNIST

duke it out with men for position and power. The earth-mother feminist is a peace loving hippie chick who sees the feminazi politicians as selling out. If she ran the world, neither our boys nor our girls would play with toy guns and swords. Both models reject makeup, sororities, and Victoria's Secret.

In the real world, a lot of women fall into a different category: the moderate, everyday feminist. A good number of these women are as uncomfortable with the strictures of militant feminism as they would be in a corset, and so deny that they are feminists. Many avowed feminists characterize these women as freeloaders because they freely partake of expanded opportunities

## 'Colored Girls' project example to students

For the second time in two years a high-profile theatre work emphasizing diversity is coming to campus. First, *Vagina Monologues*, a series of feminist monologues by Eve Ensler, took audiences into the female psyche and challenged them to breach societal norms regarding sexuality. Now, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuff*, by Ntozake Shange, is promising to again challenge audiences, this time by offering a new perspective of the black female experience.

The *Vagina Monologues* and *Colored Girls* are prime examples of a student initiative promoting social consciousness and diversity. *Monologues* director Lily Massa, '02, and *Colored Girls* director junior Monica Somerville have backed a cause about which they feel strongly and should serve as models to the rest of the student body. Somerville's passion about the play led her to propose it to the department of theatre and has resulted in a unique opportunity for students to unite theatre with social activism. Apart from using a public venue to artistically express concerns about diversity, *Colored Girls*, like the *Vagina Monologues*, will donate all proceeds to charity, an important step in furthering its social cause.

An interesting point about *Colored Girls* is that though it deals primarily with black women, there are currently few black students regularly involved with the theatre department, which is most unfortunate.

Traditionally, the stage has provided a perfect venue for exploring issues of diversity and race, gender or sexual preference. Perhaps this play will not only enlighten the student body but will also encourage other black students to get involved with theatre on a more regular basis. Their absence will only weaken the department and limit its outreach.

Furthermore, since student-initiated, socially conscious plays are becoming a tradition at the university, perhaps the theatre department should consider leaving a spot open annually for projects such as these.

All students, regardless of race or gender, are encouraged to support Somerville and producer sophomore Rebecca Lowry in their endeavor. We all can relate to the play's universal themes of love, friendship and loss. And the issues such of rape, race and abortion are societal conflicts that certainly hold lessons for all.

If we spend a night with *Colored Girls* and go with an open mind, we just might learn something.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Billings' bias promotes sorority misconceptions

After reading Jenny Billings' personal views about the contradictions between feminist ideals and sororities ("What role do our sororities play in the advancement of females," Oct. 10), I was left feeling a bit confused. Here is a young lady who has lived on the Wake Forest campus for less than half of a semester, is not a member of a sorority, and for that matter, probably knows few Greek women at Wake; yet she feels she has aptly summarized the relationship between sororities and the advancement of females in 1,000 words or less. Before turning a blind eye to the benefits of associating with proactive, Greek women, I hope Billings would take time to listen to a slightly different point of view.

Yes, I am a member of a sorority, and yes, I consider myself to be a feminist. I am proud of the fact that I am a woman attending one of the top universities in the nation. I also recognize that if it weren't for the efforts of previous generations of women dedicated to the cause of equality, I would not be here. The last thing I want to do at this point is to throw all of that away for an organization that could care less about the advancement of females.

In my experience, I have found sororities to be an excellent opportunity for young women to find a voice and learn ways to express their opinions. Leadership positions are abundant, and having the chance to direct others in an amicable environment allows girls to practice the leadership and communication skills necessary to survive in the "real world." Before women can advance in a world full of men, we must be confident of our abilities and ourselves. I would also like to point out that joining a sorority is not the only way one can go about this at Wake Forest. There are other opportunities on campus to get involved; Student Union, Student Government, and Women's Initiative

for Support and Empowerment are among the plethora of student organizations that have been successful in effecting change on this campus through the direction and input of female students.

Being in a sorority is not just about "sisterhoods and life-long friends." They allow young women to gain a sense of direction by learning from other sisters and leadership roles within their chapter. Furthermore, Billings' final comments about not wanting to be "just an object" and wanting to be a "respectable woman" are expectations that all women should have; I would be very disappointed to meet a woman who did not hold those ideals to be her own. My hope is that Billings was not insinuating Greek women are in contradiction of these beliefs by being affiliated with a sorority.

Meredith Jolly  
Sophomore

### Tradition proves feminism and sorority life can coexist

After three run-throughs of Jenny Billing's poorly written and researched article ("What role do our sororities play in the advancement of females," Oct. 10), I fished out a vague thesis that questioned whether or not a self-respecting, modern woman could be a part of a sorority and avoid objectification. My answer to that question is a resounding yes.

If Billings had taken her own advice and "done some research," she would have discovered Wake's unique history of sororities. Until 1992, the women of Wake Forest belonged to societies such as Fideles, Strings, Sophs, etc. These societies only existed here and functioned almost exactly as fraternities. They were able to throw independent parties on campus as well as run themselves, free of campus government influence. If that is not the pioneer spirit of feminism, I don't

know what is. Billings, however, never questions if fraternities objectify their members, and rather assumes that the stereotype of the flighty sorority girl applies to this campus as well. It was the administration that forced the conversion to national sororities because independent societies were an insurance liability. So perhaps the author should ask who imposed the title "weaker sex" and took away the originality and strength of the former societies; the big bad sororities of our administration.

The aimless style and constant conjecture of the article is what really angered me. Although she hints at several beliefs with statements such as, "I am not going to bash any particular sorority . . ." she tiptoes around what she really wants to say. You've already practically described sorority members as victims of media standards and traitors to the feminist cause; why not tell us your whole opinion - specifics and all!

My definition of feminism is that of a well-educated, independent, active and vocal generation. The sororities on this campus are made up of women who possess all of these qualities. So to answer the author's question, yes, feminism and Greek life can coexist; it does everyday through sorority volunteerism and active, positive participation in campus life. Objectification is 50 percent imposed and 50 percent accepted; sororities on this campus have managed to escape both.

Amanda C. Jones  
Sophomore

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