

**Alumnae Achievement Awards  
September 2009**

**Mary Martin Davis Bowen '57**

**Meg Green Maguire '65**



*(L to R): Mary Martin Davis Bowen '57, President John E. Klein, and Meg Green Maguire '65, paused after opening and admiring their awards.*

*President John E. Klein's opening remarks*

It is my privilege tonight to welcome you all—alumnae, special guests, students, faculty, and faculty emeriti—to the 29<sup>th</sup> presentation of the Alumnae Achievement Awards.

Each year since 1981, the College has recognized remarkable alumnae, nominated by their peers, to receive this award. The Alumnae Achievement Award is conferred upon selected alumnae who personify the value of a liberal arts education and have brought distinction to themselves and to the College. Nominations for the awards come from alumnae, and the recipients are selected by an awards committee that includes administration, faculty, a trustee, and alumnae members.

A plaque listing all past Alumnae Achievement Award recipients hangs in the Anne Jeter Ribble Alumnae Lounge in Smith Hall. If you have not had a chance to see the plaque, let me attest that it lists an incredible array of accomplished alumnae, including judges, senators, pilots, medical professionals, educators, ministers, TV journalists, and civil and human rights advocates and more.

Tonight's honorees are no exception. I know you'll gain much from the remarks by Mary Martin Davis Bowen, class of 1957, and by Meg Green Maguire, class of 1965, the two recipients of the Alumnae Achievement Awards this year.

Mary Martin's motto is "embrace the opportunity to do something that needs to be done!" And she has – from land preservation to natural science education, to service on the Georgia State Ethics commission, to helping reconstitute the Duke University School of Nursing.

Mary Martin grew up on a farm. Her mother was a biology teacher, and her father was in Congress. This gave her the dual appreciation for wildlife and conservation and for community leadership.

A member of Phi Beta Kappa, a former high school and college English teacher, and a newspaper feature-story writer, Mary Martin can write, and she is persuasive. She earned a masters degree in American literature from Duke University in 1959.

When the Democratic Party needed a Georgia woman to go to the 1968 Convention to serve on the Platform Committee, Mary Martin had the credentials and was not intimidated by politicians.

When the Governor of Georgia needed a woman to serve on the ethics commission, Mary Martin went to work – not just for one term, but for two and a half terms – and found satisfaction investigating citizen-brought complaints about politicians and their financial dealings. For several decades she has been a precinct election worker, and has the unofficial title of "election computer expert."

Her most unusual job was seeking the donation of cadavers for medical training and research at the University of Florida. By the end of her tenure, she not only had enough cadavers for the students, she even had a surplus!

Mary Martin is both a product and a proponent of the adage “Ask someone, and they’ll help you.” She has been the President of our Alumnae Association, an Association representative to the Board of Trustees, an Alumnae Admissions Representative, Association District Director, the Atlanta-area capital campaign chair, and numerous other jobs for our College and the Association.

Mary Martin’s conservation work in Georgia has a sense of legacy, assuring continued physical growth. She helped establish the Big Trees Forest Preserve, reclaiming farm land, restoring the native plants and creating a system of nature trails. Her work on the board of the Natural Science Center for Youth Foundation brought programs to encourage young people to study natural science outdoors. Through the Southeast Land Preservation Trust, she worked with landowners to establish conservation easements for wildlife and plants.

Mary Martin has a varied and admirable list of talents which were revealed, she claims, because she took chances, did things that needed to be done, and learned along the way.

Mary Martin, thank you for inspiring us with your story.

*Remarks by Mary Martin Davis Bowen '57*

When Beth Knabel called to get my rap sheet, she asked me, “What are you going to talk about?” and I said, “The title of my speech will be ‘It’s okay to say okay!’” I’m very good at making up titles; I’m often not so good at making up the words to go with them. But when I come back to this beloved school it’s my heart that makes up the words, it really is.

I want to tell you about the first time I said “okay” and I’ll take you back to a time when most of you were not born. I was a senior in high school and it was January of 1953 and Eisenhower is going to be inaugurated that day in Washington D.C. I’m in the House Office Building cafeteria wearing a ridiculous costume and getting ready to ride the Georgia float in the Inaugural Parade. Desperately trying to get some coffee since 6’o’clock in the morning; I wanted to get something hot. Another high school senior, whom I had known, comes up to me. Her father represented the first district of Virginia, Newport News, Norfolk, all of that region. We bumped our trays and she said, “Where are you going to college?” We were Depression babies and getting into college was not the kind of industry that it is now. This was January of my senior year and I said, “I don’t know, where are you going?” and she said, “Well I don’t know, I was thinking about Agnes Scott in Decatur, Georgia,” which was my hometown. I wasn’t totally thrilled about that but she said, “Why don’t we go together, get an application, and we’ll go!” So I said “Okay,” that was the first time I said okay. I went home and I didn’t do anything about it. In a week she calls and she says, “I have fallen in love with someone at the Naval Academy and I don’t want to be at Agnes Scott because it is in Georgia. I want to be closer [to the Academy] than Agnes Scott. So why don’t we go to Randolph-Macon Women’s College in Lynchburg, Virginia?” And I said, “Well tell me about it,” and she said, “Oh, well it is very academic, it’s beautiful, I’ve

been over there and I think we should go there and room together.” And I said “Okay,” and she said, “I’m glad you said okay because I had them send you an application.”

So the application came to my high school. I filled it out in the Post Office, wrote the essay with a Post Office pen and mailed it off with \$5 application fee. It was the only place I applied. And I got in, and I came here, and we did indeed room together. It was that simple “okay” that changed my life, because it was here that I learned to learn and I learned to love learning and that made all the difference.

I want to especially thank Dr. Laura Bliss, who taught me freshmen chemistry, for being here tonight, for her patience and her wonderful teaching and her generosity to me, when on the first day of class I poured acid down her legs and melted her stockings. I hope she doesn’t remember that, but I remember it still to this day.

Now I want to take you back a little earlier and explain why I am standing here tonight, to a point in the summer of 1958 when I was on a tour in Europe with other young women. I had been out of college a year. I had taught students in Richmond, but this was in a time when young women did not go to Europe un-chaperoned; it had not been invented. I’m not totally sure that I took a pair of white gloves to Europe, but I might have done that, because we were proper young ladies.

It was one of those tours that, ‘If it’s Tuesday than it must be Belgium’ like that. We were in Innsbruck, Austria, a wonderful town, the river going by, the alpine cold water, the house with the golden roof. We’d had our dinner and one of my tour mates sat down and says, “Girls, the famous organist, Jedermann, is going to play in the cathedral square tonight. We should go!” So we said, “Okay.” And we went down and had our schillings—this was before the Euro, way before. We went to the Square in front of the cathedral and it was just like you hoped it would be. There were the little folding chairs, the light from the ancient lamps gleaming on the cobblestones that were just damp from a little mist, there was a stage there, and I thought, “This is European culture! This is it; this is what I came for! Here I am with real Europeans and they’re doing real European things!”

Then I noticed, there was no organ on that stage and there was no organist. We were too polite just to get up and leave and you couldn’t get us out of those chairs with a forklift. We didn’t want to be ugly Americans anyway. Then a play began on the stage. There are actors; there was a pilgrim and his staff and his knapsack and his hood over his head. He has two mentors, one has some sort of tool and the other has the Bible. Other characters begin to come in and at the end of the stage there is a shining city sitting on a hill. (It wasn’t Lynchburg either, it was something else.)

Then it dawned on me, as the play went on in German which none of us spoke, or Austrian either as the President would say, that this is one of those medieval miracle plays that Ms. Cornelius had taught us about and all those sleepy afternoons in Comprehensive class. It began to come back. Every now and then a bell would ring and a solemn voice would intone “Jedermann,” and it dawned on me about ten minutes into the play that this is Everyman, the morality play I had studied about in Ms. Cornelius’ class.

Here were all the characters of the seven deadly sins. There was lust and she has on a tight red dress with sequins and stiletto heels. There was apathy, he can hardly put one foot in front of the other. There was gluttony with a turkey leg and a loaf of bread. There was Greed with money bags and drunkenness and whatever the other seven deadly sins are escape me right now—computer fraud for all I know. But I got interested in the play, I watched every minute of it. I realized that Everyman, Jedermann, was going to make his way to the shining city with the help of his mentors, Faith and Good Works. We watched and indeed he did. So, I don't come to you tonight as Everyman, Jedermann, but as Everywoman.

The other recipients of this award have been judges, and lawyers, and doctors, and pilots, and ecologists, and people who've had great careers in business and the arts, like many members of my class. There is Phyllis Kellar Bass, (right out there) with a long career of community service and teaching. There is Nancy Baumes Kane from the class of 1957, with a career in county government. There is Dotsie Nelms '57, (not here) with a career in college teaching. Or Betsy Fritzie '57 who has had three great careers, teaching, counseling, and technical writing. I'm not one of those women. I just sort of said 'okay' to what came along.

I'm that other alumni. I'm Everywoman who said yes when they needed someone to dig azaleas in front of a bulldozer and they said, "Do you have a shovel?" and I said "Yeah I have a shovel." "Can you dig azaleas and wild plants over the weekend and take them to the nature center?" "Yeah okay I can do that." And, I did it. The governor's office called and said, "We need a woman from Atlanta to be on the State Ethics Commission. We'd like for you to serve." I said, "Okay," then they shot me down because they said, "The State doesn't have any budget. We can't pay you and we actually don't have enough money to pay for you to spend the night in town. But we have to have a woman from Atlanta, she'll be fair. We can give you a parking place at the State Capital." And I said "Well I'll do better than that, for a dollar and a half I'll ride the MARTA train downtown so you won't have to give me a parking place." So I said 'okay' to that.

Then they said, "We need a woman to go on the Platform at the Democratic Convention," that was the one in Chicago, the really bad one. And I said, "Okay if I can get the childcare, I'll do that. I'll be glad to do it."

So if you just say 'okay' to a lot of things, you'll have a lot of different adventures. And you may be able to do some good somewhere, where maybe other people see the need, you don't see it, but they do.

They called and said, "Mary Martin, we know you can't dance and we've heard you sing and we know you can't sing either." (I was kind of shot down really bad), "But we are putting on a show to save a historic building for the Medical Society, and since you have no talent for show business, we thought maybe you could write the words for the songs." I said "Okay," and we had the show and we saved the building. So if you just go along saying okay to a lot of things, things will work out and you will have adventures and do some good in your community maybe you hadn't planned.

Now I have a lot of inspirational things that I was going to say about what I learned here, but I'm going to change that. This morning we took a vote for the Alumnae Association. We said a big 'okay' to moving forward. We merged the associations, we are going to move forward and help this College. We said the 'okay' and from now on, the Alumnae Association and Randolph College are going to be 'okay.'

*Introduction of Meg Green Maguire by President Klein:*

Meg Green Maguire earned her bachelor's in sociology from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1965 and her master's in sociology at Rutgers University in 1967. She was selected for *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities*. Fresh out of graduate school, she returned to R-MWC for one year as an instructor in sociology. As part of a 100-level sociology course, she challenged her students with an assignment to study attitudes and conditions in the College's kitchen and laundry. Their findings were summarized in a 20-page report to Dr. Quillian, the President of the College. Out of college for just two years, Meg was already a trusted consultant and in a position to call the faculty by their first names!

Meg's professional work has focused on preservation and conservation of the natural and built environments. During the Carter Administration, she was appointed to the Senior Executive Service at the U.S. Department of the Interior, achieving new federal legislation and funding for urban parks, recreation and historic preservation. Later, she co-founded Maguire/Reeder, Ltd., an international award-winning communications production company. From 1996-2004 she served as President of Scenic America, a national non-profit organization. Currently, as a volunteer, she chairs the redevelopment of First Congregational United Church of Christ, a complex \$81 million multi-use project at Metro Center in Washington, DC.

Meg's passion is citizen advocacy through what she terms **Community Conservation**—helping communities to develop a vision for their future based on their historic, scenic, environmental and economic assets. (In two weeks, on October 3, Meg will be on a panel at Alumnae Days discussing sustainability.)

For perspective and relaxation, Meg and her husband Dale enjoy both international travel and tent camping in America's forests and parks.

Please join me in welcoming and congratulating Meg Green Maguire on her Alumnae Achievement Award.

*Remarks by Meg Green Maguire '65*

### ***Community in Place***

Thank you, President Klein and the Alumnae/Alumni Association for this great honor and for the extravagant welcome you have extended to me and to my husband, Dale Ostrander.

In turn, I honor you—faculty, administrators, alumnae and students of Randolph College—for your unwavering commitment to this exciting and vigorous institution. I am especially pleased that Dr. Quillian, the guiding light of Randolph-Macon Woman's College for many years; and Elaine St. Vincent, whose music appreciation course has been so valuable in my love of classical music, have joined us for this celebration.

Tonight I want to reflect on the *power of place* in shaping my professional interests, and on the role of this particular place in shaping student values and intellectual skills for a complicated world.

By intention and design, Randolph College is a stunning place. From the street, one sees the panorama of front campus. The spacious lawn helps the observer to grasp the whole before discerning the separate parts. The message is clear: You are entering a *community of values and a community of beauty*.

I arrived at the Red Brick Wall in 1961, having lived for six years in Pakistan and Zimbabwe. Some of the College's folkways and traditions were strange to me, and I can't say that they were ever what most bonded me to this place.

I lived with a close group of friends in the outlier dorms on back campus—Webb and Bell—afraid that Main, East and West were too noisy or too clubby and would distract from my studies. Freshman and sophomore years I ate too much deep-dish peach cobbler, floundered in several classes, and confronted the rigors of a demanding academic setting. In many ways, I felt “out of it.”

But by junior and senior years, this community had become my community. Professors saw leadership potential and encouraged me to reach for more. They challenged my thinking and encouraged critical analysis. I chaired FOCUS, a campus symposium on contemporary topics; and discovered the smart but sometimes-too-sophisticated guys at the UVA Law School.

In graduate school I studied the relationship of sociology to urban planning and architecture, and learned of the newly emerging field of environmental psychology. Ever since that time, I have been hooked on the subject of place.

Returning to Randolph-Macon to teach sociology while Shirley Strickland was on sabbatical was quite a challenge! Since I believe that writing well is imperative, I assigned lots of papers—and then had to read them and make constructive comments—the revenge of my good intentions!

So, what can we learn in this *community of values*? Located in a relatively small Southern city, this small college is like the bar in the T.V. series, *Cheers*: Everybody Knows Your Name. The

College is also an excellent laboratory in which to be a participant observer of what makes a community work—or not work.

A community in transformation—and this institution has experienced a significant one—offers special opportunities to study all points of view and all styles of response. The crisis of transformation demands

- That we listen carefully to understand our own and others' fears;
- That we promote a compelling vision for the future; and
- That we inspire people to invest their energies in that vision.

The Randolph community invites us to care for each other over a lifetime and to create new opportunities for those who come after us. With its racial and cultural diversity packed in an idea-rich environment, Randolph is a lively incubator of values and skills that can benefit the many communities to which we will belong during our lives.

**And what can we learn in this *community of beauty*?** Look around. This campus embodies timeless principles of community design:

- Coherence and readable scale
- Context-sensitive buildings
- Sweeping, scenic open spaces
- Small gardens
- Curvaceous walkways and
- Connectivity

The new Master Plan shows how the back campus can become more beautiful and functional as well. And the superb Sustainability Plan will make this campus a model of contemporary living.

Throughout the world, community conservation requires people who understand both the physical and social dynamics of place. If you want an interesting, challenging way to apply your rambling liberal arts interests, let me encourage you to explore a career or volunteer opportunities in community building.

- Go to graduate school in urban planning and design, architecture, landscape architecture, historic preservation or environmental psychology.
- Become an environmental engineer who masters the technical aspects of sustainable design and can apply new mitigation technologies to clean up toxic waste.
- Study land conservation, zoning, environmental law, public finance or public administration.
- Open a local produce restaurant in a redeveloping neighborhood and nourish the local economy.

Whatever you do, engage the public in your work and pay attention to the small details that can make or break community confidence in your work.

In *The Living City: Thinking Small in a Big Way*, journalist Roberta Gratz writes:

*“Preserving the urban fabric, weaving together the treasured old and the needed new, not being afraid to think small—that is what genuine revitalization is all about.”*

Heather [Ayers Garnett'86, Alumnae Director], I am offering to work with you to create a network of alums in conservation, preservation and environmental sustainability—people who know how to think small in a big way—to serve as a resource for students and faculty.

In closing, let me say a word about the importance of this particular community—Randolph College. We live in a noisy world of instant news and 24/7 hype. Rational public discourse is too often side tracked by those who seek to manipulate through fear and distortion...

- Denying scientific findings in general, and the terrifying realities of climate change in particular;
- Trivializing the fine arts and the humanities as snobbish pursuits; and
- Asserting that only their religious beliefs are valid and true.

*Never has the world needed this College more than it does today...*

- To defend the rigorous intellectual inquiry so essential to our democracy;
- To challenge bigotry and intolerance, and embrace the multi-cultural multi-racial world around us;
- To help close the widening gap between those who have and those who have not; and
- To sustain a vibrant community of scholars, students, administrators and alumnae engaged in intellectual pursuit and life-long friendship as we live *Vita Abundantior*, the Life More Abundant.

Thank you, Randolph College, my *alma mater*

- For your influence in my life,
- For your many contributions in the past, and
- For your abundant contributions yet to come.

*Closing Remarks by President Klein:*

The College has adopted a theme of Sustainable Living this year to raise environmental awareness among the campus community. Through our campus activities, we are sharing and spreading our knowledge, value, and techniques into the surrounding community. We hope to inspire and influence decisions made not only by the College, but also those of students, faculty, staff, and community members in their lifestyle choices, consumption decisions, and their commitment to the improvement of their communities.

When I read the biographies of these two women you've heard from tonight, I was struck by the parallels in their pursuits and accomplishments with our current theme. Both have inspired and influenced their communities, through civil service, policy making, grassroots efforts, and face-to-face involvement.

It is a pleasure to honor and recognize both of you, Mary Martin and Meg. Congratulations and thank you again for the distinction you have brought to our College.

This is the conclusion of our program this evening. Thank you for participating.

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