

## **Dallas, 10-26-06, Summary by Margaret Shiels '56**

Attended by Ginger Worden, June (trustee), Skip Kughn.

I thought everyone conducted themselves well. I heard no one agreeing with the board. No one sobbed or got out of control. Someone said Ginger broke down. I did not see it. Moist eyes is not breaking down. I don't know how she can do this in all the cities. I heard they took certain alums out for lunch in Houston to soften them up. It must have worked because some alumnae think everything is hunky dory. Younger alums said it all and well and I passed out my sheet [a summary of events and information for alumnae]. June, the trustee, was very nervous. I spoke to her alone for a long time. She said that I was killing the college. I told her that I disagreed with that and that I disagreed with the path that the board has chosen to take. She was visibly upset but no wonder since there were about 40 women and husbands who disagreed strongly for all the reasons we have already heard. The president and board of trustees are unmoved. One husband stated that he had spent his corporate life in strategic planning and their so called strategic plan was unlike any he had seen. Very flawed. My husband addressed admissions tactics stating that in all our 50 years of married life, when my college called I sprang into action interviewing prospective students from west Texas to NY and Fort Worth. How I set up meetings at the schools for their rep and how I encouraged young women to consider my school. Then it all stopped, my husband said. All the women of different classes yes, "Yes. That is true. The college no longer asked for our help." EVERY alumna attending said she had gone to the college because of the influence of an alumna. That is true for me as well. Skip was asked financial questions and I asked was he not concerned that the alumnae who had given to scholarships, endowment, had the college in their wills, etc. would feel that their gift was for Randolph-Macon Woman's College and would withdraw support. He said it was a concern. Over and over the alums said they felt disenfranchised and left out of the decisions. How Pres Bowman had sent glowing letters to the alumnae about the school's endowment, enrollment, etc., and all of sudden out of the blue was in panic mode. How can they ask for our support now? One alum said they give to 4 colleges and R-M is the only single sex college. She felt she could find another place for her money. One concern that I have is that they will blame the alumnae for whatever failure they experience. Even though we are angry because we were not informed. Some alums stated that they felt the trustees had acted in secret. A former trustee, Gene Mason, spoke very well. He felt they were in haste and did not consider all options. Many alums felt this way. Suggestions came pouring forth with suggestions for academics, using the art museum for art program and the fact that Sweet Briar, Hollins, etc. are doing well. Ginger said that it was not true, that the other colleges were in dire straits too (All evidence to the contrary.) The question was asked, "If the college is paying such a high price for each student now, will they not have to pay the same thing to get men to come? What is the saving there? Won't there be expense converting the campus to accommodate men?" Also the point was made that the large number of foreign students do not pay; they return to their countries and are not loyal alums who financially support the college. They do nothing for the college.

They will not be moved. But, they want your money or else. I hope I remembered everything.

Margaret Shiels '56