

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

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BRYN MAWR INAUGURATES NEW PRESIDENT, MARY PATTERSON McPHERSON

Mary Patterson McPherson, speaking this morning at her inauguration as the sixth president of Bryn Mawr College, questioned how well this college or any college is preparing for the complicated period ahead.

She said, "We all know that we face a time in which the numbers of traditional students are diminishing and the slings and arrows of outrageous inflation are shooting holes in every budget. The necessary efforts at retrenchment already occupy increasingly the valuable time of too many faculty and all administrative members of the academic community. The challenge is to use that time wisely, re-examining and setting institutional priorities, and finding a way to meet new disciplinary demands within the context of a clearly articulated educational philosophy and plan. It will be more difficult in this period to come to agreement about that curricular plan, for the tradition is not so clear as it once was and the areas of knowledge are more complex. But we must not excuse confusion in the name of complexity. This is the comfortable route too often taken in our time by academic institutions -- their educational philosophy now best compared to an antipasto."

HONORED GUESTS - On the campus in front of Canaday Library before an assembly of several thousand students, faculty, alumnae and neighbors, Miss McPherson especially honored guests, Bryn Mawr graduates who are now college or university presidents, and who in themselves represent the diversity of Bryn Mawr's undergraduate college and two graduate

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schools. They are Hanna Holborn Gray (AB 1950) of the University of Chicago, Matina Souretis Horner (AB 1961) of Radcliffe College, Walter L. Walker (MSS 1962) of LeMoyne-Owen College, Alice Faye Emerson (PhD 1964) of Wheaton College, and Alberta Arthurs (PhD 1972) of Chatham College. The President Emeritus of Barnard College, Millicent Carey McIntosh (AB 1920), also was an honored guest.

Bryn Mawr's new president is an honors graduate of Smith College and holds an MA degree from the University of Delaware and PhD degree from Bryn Mawr College. She came to Bryn Mawr in 1961 as Assistant in the Philosophy Department; in subsequent years she became Assistant and then Associate Dean of the College, as well as Fellow and Lecturer in Philosophy. In 1970 Miss McPherson was named Dean of the Undergraduate College, Deputy to the President, and Associate Professor of Philosophy.

PROBLEMS OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS - In discussing the graduate offerings in Arts and Sciences and Social Work and Social Research, she said,

"Bryn Mawr has always conducted graduate work tailored to the strengths of its faculty and its libraries and laboratories and to the needs of its students. Our small size has permitted us to offer graduate instruction different in kind from that of the large university so that some of the questions we ask and the problems we pose for ourselves and the solutions we find for them are bound to be unique to this College. But we, like other larger institutions, will need to be clearer about the possibilities and

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the best strategies for continuing to serve students well during the next decades when what they need and what we can offer will undoubtedly change."

WOMEN'S EDUCATION - Also present at the ceremonies were the seven presidents of the Seven-Sister Colleges, all women for the first time in the history of these institutions, all concerned with the education of women, who listened with interest as Miss McPherson said,

"We will need to be clear about what Bryn Mawr can provide that will be of the greatest benefit to her women students as they face the personal and professional choices that will rightly be theirs. I am no proponent of women's studies as a separate discipline, because such segregation can only defeat its advocates' objective. But, we most certainly need opportunities as scholars to raise questions and seek answers to problems posed by the minimal participation of over half the population in the doings of the world, whether viewed historically, cross culturally, or through the arts and sciences. How to find the best opportunities poses for us a challenge which we have not as yet fully met."

....."And it is important for women students to realize in the course of their education (here) that no academic program will substitute for a woman's own decision to live an adult and self-directed life. This student body, as the world goes, is greatly privileged. We are not doing our job if we fail to teach the responsibilities that accompany such privileges."

GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENT COLLEGES - She foresees in the period ahead

"more blurring between the public and the private sectors as the government intrudes further upon the affairs of educational institutions, an intrusion which for lack of earlier action in the areas of admissions, appointments and fair employment practices, we who are responsible for higher education brought upon ourselves. Independent institutions will have to be clearer about the extent and meaning of their independence, and Bryn Mawr must be firm as to where and when she will draw lines."

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT DEMANDS ON FACULTY - Cautioning against the crisis management which has become the administrative style since the mid-sixties she said, "too much faculty energy here and elsewhere has been dissipated in the frustrating demands occasioned by this crisis management. It has taken its toll upon the research productivity of this faculty as it has upon so many others. We will need to concern ourselves -- perhaps as never before -- with the support given faculty in their teaching and research without ever suggesting that the quality of teaching is unrelated to research or that either is a less worthy enterprise than the other."

94TH YEAR - The Inauguration supplanted the usual opening day of classes marking the beginning of the 94th academic year of the College. 280 freshmen brings the undergraduate college's enrollment to 950, and 181 new graduate students brings that total to 600. Included in these numbers are 144 international students coming from 48 countries.

All the guests joined in a picnic lunch before proceeding to Haverford College for the inauguration of their new president, Robert Bocking Stevens, at 3:30 p.m. on the Haverford campus.

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