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# Richmond Times-Dispatch

Sunday, July 15, 1984

Richmond, Virginia 23219

134th Year, No. 197

★—★ 75 cents

## W&L to enroll women beginning in 1985

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LEXINGTON — The number of all-male colleges in the United States was reduced by one yesterday, as the board of trustees of Washington and Lee University voted to admit women undergraduates in the fall of 1985.

"We are convinced that a stronger Washington and Lee and a stronger society will be the happy result of the decision we have made," said James M. Ballengee, rector of the board.

The board voted 17-7 in favor of coeducation at the end of a special meeting that began Friday morning. The law school at W&L has admitted women since 1972.

Ballengee, W&L President John D. Wilson and two other trustees appeared at a news conference after the board meeting ended about noon yesterday.

About 100 students and faculty members, watching the announcement on television monitors in a nearby room, greeted it with a burst of applause.

W&L, founded 235 years ago, was one of five remaining all-male undergraduate colleges in the nation. The others are Virginia Military Institute, which adjoins the W&L campus; Hampden-Sydney College, also in Virginia; Washash College in Crawfordsville, Ind.; and the Citadel in Charleston, S.C.

Dr. Wilson, who did not announce his position on coeducation before this weekend's special session of the board, said yesterday that he finally recommended the adoption of coeducation to his fellow trustees.

He spoke of "the notions of honor and character" and "superior teaching and learning" at W&L. "We believe that these values . . . can and will be enjoyed by women equally," he said.

The debate was "entirely civil, as Washington and Lee gentlemen should be, one to another," Ballengee said.

A. Christian Compton, a W&L trustee and Virginia Supreme Court justice, demurred slightly. He characterized the discussion as "vigorous."

Compton said he voted against the resolution because there is "in place at the university a fine-tuned educational machine which is providing a fine education in an all-male environment."

"We are hopeful that we'll have a packet of sound applications" from enough women students to allow the

admission of 100 women undergraduates in the fall of 1985, Dr. Wilson said.

He said women students would be enrolled in "an evolutionary process over the next decade" and by 1995 the undergraduate student body will increase from 1,350 to 1,500, including 550 women.

Dr. Wilson said construction of a residence hall will be expedited. It is expected to cost from \$4 million to \$5 million and about \$150,000 will be spent on initial renovations of athletic facilities to accommodate women students.

Possible negative effects on W&L's athletic programs and fraternity system were frequently cited by anti-coeducation forces.

Earlier this year, students draped a campus statue of Continued on page 17, col. 1.

# W&L will enroll women

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George Washington, an early benefactor of the school, with a banner reading "No Marthas." In May, about 30 students staged a brief sit-in in Dr. Wilson's office.

William D. McHenry, W&L athletic director and an opponent of coeducation, said yesterday that he would work "to have the best athletic program for men and women that we possibly can, and I'm not going to look back and say it was a mistake."

But McHenry said that reducing male enrollment by approximately one-third, "has to have a serious effect upon our athletic program."

Dr. Wilson, who in the 18 months since he became president of W&L has worked to modify what some see as excesses in fraternity social life, said some of the school's 17 fraternities "could go under."

"We do have a commitment to our fraternities," he said. "Even now, they are undergoing some self-reformation, and we're going to encourage that in every way possible."

Polls taken last spring showed students and alumni opposed to coeducation and faculty members overwhelmingly in favor of admitting women undergraduates.

Dr. Wilson was criticized by some alumni and students for asking the trustees to reopen the coeducation question, which they had formally considered in 1969 and in 1975. "As late as last night I had sleepless nights" over the issue, he said.

During the coeducation debate, proponents cited studies predicting a sharp decline in the numbers of college-age people in the next 10 years and argued that W&L could not sustain its stiff entry requirements while accepting only men.

"I think we'll see better male and female students," said

Pete Whitehead of Alexandria, a May graduate who led the pro-coeducation forces in the student body last year.

Cole Dawson of Houston, incoming president of the student body and a former opponent of coeducation, argued in favor of coeducation at the board meeting this weekend.

Robert C. Jenevein of Dallas, Dawson's predecessor, softened his anti-coeducation stand before he graduated in May. He said yesterday he hoped students would make coeducation work.

"They have to open their arms to a new Washington and Lee," he said. "That won't be impossible by any stretch of the imagination."

Scott Tilley of Richmond, a rising senior and the most visible student opponent of coeducation, said he is disappointed by the trustees' decision.

"I think Washington and Lee as an institution will thrive and will continue, but I have the feeling that as of today, the Washington and Lee I've come to know and love no longer exists," he said.

Betty Jean Munger, who for 16 years was manager of the W&L bookstore and favored admitting women, said she was amused by the media attention the debate commanded.

"It is interesting that a small college in the back hills of Virginia should be debating whether to educate women," she said.

In a parting jest to reporters yesterday, Dr. Wilson said he was taking no chances of being accused of favoring coeducation for personal reasons.

His daughter, Sara, who will be a high-school junior this fall, "won't be coming here," he said, smiling.

"I don't want to be accused of being self-serving."