

Flippin should resign

By Karla K. Bruno

ARLINGTON

During the William & Mary Board of Visitors quarterly meeting in September, newly appointed member Laura Flippin spent most of that Thursday night in jail for allegedly being drunk in public.

Sure, many folks have had too much to drink at one of the delis and staggered down Scotland Street at midnight on a Thursday night in autumn. It could have been a student or a local "character" like Otis from the Andy Griffith Show, in which case we would shrug and say "tsk-tsk" or laugh and move on.

Yes, it could have been anyone. But Laura Flippin isn't just anyone. She's not a kid, she's not a fictional town sot, and we're not laughing at what the college calls an "unfortunate situation."

She's a brand spankin' new member of the Board of Visitors, the ink barely dry on her July appointment from Gov.

McDonnell.

She was "on duty" in Williamsburg for the express purpose of being a rational, alert steward of the college at the first BOV meeting, which usually runs from late Wednesdays through noon on Fridays.

She's a lawyer, specializing in litigation. She's a grown woman of 40-something, supposedly with experience and wisdom on her side. Enough to have won a nomination to W&M's Board of Visitors, a post that may be unpaid but is not without perks.

By definition of her achievements, her profession, her age, and her nomination to the board, she is supposed to be the very model of a modern major general.

And yet she missed all of Friday's board meeting because she was detoxing in the local jail? What was she thinking?

Since she has been charged with a misdemeanor, we probably won't know until Oct. 17, the day of her hearing.

No one faults board members for having a drink together, but golly, Andy. According to the police report, she was bleeding and alone, with an alcohol level three times the legal limit for DUI.

How did she come to be alone on the street at 12:45 a.m. in such a condition? Did she have any drinking companions? Were they hammered too?

If Flippin has any respect for herself and for the college, she'll resign. If she has a shred of dignity left, she will formally and publicly apologize in writing to the board, alumni, administration, students, faculty and W&M staff for disgracing and embarrassing the college, the board and herself.

If the college (and thus the taxpayers) picked up any of her expenses for the three-day Board of Visitors meeting, she should repay every dime.

Infamy will follow Flippin throughout her tenure, not because she is charged with being drunk in public, but because she is charged with being drunk in public while acting as a representative of our most esteemed governing body at William & Mary.

She's supposed to be one of the grown-ups around here. A profound lack of judgment seems evident, and the college would be better off without her reckless nature at the helm of our beloved alma mater.

Surely there are other highly qualified candidates McDonnell can tap who will not feel the need to get plastered while tending to the college's business. I can think of 10 names off the top of my unmuddled head.

The academic year is young, and repairs to the board can be made directly and swiftly.

Flippin may retreat to Northern Virginia in search of her self-respect and integrity, with our gratitude that the extent of damage done to the college will be minimal if she resigns.

Karla Kraynak Bruno is a former longtime resident and a 1981 graduate of William & Mary.



Flippin

ESSAY

THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE PRESS
Virginia Gazette Companies LLC

Bill O'Donovan Publisher	Melissa Orendorff Classified Manager
Rusty Carter Editor	Darrell Herlinger Circulation Director
Robbie Steele Copy Editor	LouAnna Sexton Art Director
Dietra Baytop Copy Manager	Kathy Sturgeon Graphic Design Mgr.
John Harvey Sports Editor	Steve Schweltzer Packaging Manager
Olivia Hartman Marketing Director	Trey Warwick Home Delivery Manager
Donna Amory Comptroller	

Oct 5, 2011