

## Editor's Note

Robemakers in the UK and US could not keep up with demand for their goods this year as ceremonies grew to include graduates from the early pandemic years. The thirst for academic dress knowledge was slaked by Burgon Society activity in 2021 so extensive that the list runs two pages. Demand for *Transactions* articles from New Prairie Press surpassed previous years; aficionados of academic dress and the curious alike downloaded articles from the journal 17,208 times in the year ending 31 July 2022, an 11 per cent increase over the previous year. And you are reading the largest volume of *Transactions* yet, with almost 250 pages of research from around the world.

It's been easier for us to meet demand this year than it was for robemakers. With universities holding double and even triple ceremonies, Herff Jones, one of the largest robemakers in the US, cited a record number of orders.\* And where graduates had no gowns, universities often stepped in to source backup gear.

Herff Jones found a different alternative for North Carolina Central University. Having plenty of gowns in stock for students 6 feet tall, Herff sent a shipment of its most flowing gowns to the campus in Durham. Graduates of sufficient stature were pleased, but those without towering dimensions found themselves swimming in burgundy. They needed help.

So it was that around 11:30 one May morning, a retired lecturer who had founded



North Carolina Central University Office of Communications and Marketing  
**Wadeeah Beyah shortens bachelors' gowns for graduates at North Carolina Central University in May.**

the University's Apparel Alteration Lab got the message that her sewing skills were suddenly in high demand. Wadeeah Beyah was on campus by noon to shorten about fifty gowns. She had five hours to complete the job, one especially important to the female graduates, she told me: 'They wanted their shoes to be seen.' But the gown is symbolic, too.

'You go to classes for four years, you wait to wear this special outfit, you're in it a very short amount of time, and you're tak-

ing pictures', she said. Some graduates had decided that since their gown did not fit they would stay away from the ceremony—and had told their relatives not to attend.

That's when students found out they could have their gowns adjusted. Luckily for the graduates, one of the skills that Beyah continues to teach as an Adjunct Instructor is alterations, and her mastery got her through them at a rate of ten an hour. She had more than one student tell her, 'you have saved graduation, because I was not going to participate.'

Thanks to the participation of our authors and editors, we have a wonderful collection of articles for you to read. Wearing your gown is optional. —*Stephen Wolgast*

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\* Melissa Korn, Lindsay Ellis, 'Graduation Is Here, but the Caps and Gowns Are Not', *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 May 2022, pp. A1, A10.