

# campus notes

## Tall Story

The University Theatre opened the 1966-67 season in October with a new treatment of an old classic. The School of Drama's production of the Greek tragedy *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus was dominated by six 9-foot-tall puppets, which represented the half-dozen major roles. Each puppet was manipulated by two students, one of whom also spoke the character's lines. The critics were generally unimpressed with the novel presentation, however. One wrote that the puppets were distracting and that the lines spoken by the puppets' handlers were often inaudible, muffled by the hoods which each wore to make himself less obtrusive.

The puppets were created by a professional named George Latshaw, who at 6-foot-4 combines the reach of a basketball player and the dexterity of a magician in plying his trade. He works with puppets of every kind from the 9-foot characters in *Agamemnon* to his own ten fingers dressed for the stage.

With headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, Latshaw has toured the country with his puppets doing one-man shows for children and adults alike. He was at OU for two months as a guest, doing the puppet work for both *Agamemnon* and *Carnival*, the second University Theatre production, which ran Nov. 14-19.

Mr. Latshaw is one of the leading American experimenters in the field of puppetry. He first worked with over-sized puppets in

1958 when he was commissioned by the Detroit Institute of Arts to design and direct a production of Aaron Copeland's *Billy the Kid* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

"Puppetry is believed to be one of the oldest forms of theatre," says Mr. Latshaw. "High priests discovered the power of an animated figure in ancient rites. The puppet today has the same power to move and mystify an audience. One tries to create a special world of illusion in which the puppeteer does not exist. When the puppets come alive and seem to be doing the show themselves, then you have achieved success. To make the audience believe is to create real theatre."

The puppeteer is a tall, slender man with an 8-foot-3 reach that enables him to perform in a conventional show with one puppet on the stage while another may appear above, beneath or at the side of the stage. "People seem surprised that I can be in so many places at once," he says with a grin, "but the trick is not to let your right hand know what your left hand is doing."

He has a vivid imagination that he puts to work creating all manner of puppets for his fantasy world. In one of his shows called "This Hammer for Hire," which is a spoof of the Mickey Spillane stories, the private-eye hero is a claw hammer who meets with violence from other forms of hardware. "You haven't seen anything," says Dr. Nat Eek, director of the School of Drama, "until you see him create a woman out of a tennis racket."

## Soapbox

"Soapbox" is the name of a new program designed to be a forum of free speech, a sort of Hyde Park for OU students. The idea was borrowed from other universities, where it has enjoyed unqualified success, by some students on the Union Activities Board. In Soapbox students and faculty members are invited to give their opinions on any subject at the weekly Thursday afternoon sessions on the terrace at the rear of the Union. "This is not just a gripe session," said the student director of Soapbox before its debut. "It's an opportunity for students to stand up and be counted on any issue. We feel there is a need for such an outlet. Prior to Soapbox, the only way to voice one's opinion has been through writing a letter to the editor of the *Daily*. We hope students will express their opinions and sign up for Soapbox."

They did, and one of the first attacks was—oops—on Soapbox. "I question the sincerity of this 'forum of free speech,'" said one speaker, "when a student is required to show his ID card and sign his name before speaking." No Big Brotherism intended, said the sponsoring committee. Our motives were pure; we only wanted to make sure every speaker was in school. Okay. The rule was altered. A student no longer has to sign his name, although he must still present his ID card.

There are also objections to a rule which limits each speaker to five minutes, followed by a maximum of five minutes for questions—no comments, just questions—from the audience. Opponents of the rule complain that the five-minute limit is too brief and that a more open dialogue with members of the audience should be allowed. They argue that relevant and promising discussions are often abruptly halted by the time limit while interest is still high.

The Union Activities Board responded by appointing 51 students to a Skits and Entertainment Committee, a Public Relations Committee, and a Continuity Committee to promote the Soapbox program. The dissidents howled with contempt. They charged that most of the 51 were freshman and sophomore fraternity and sorority members who were merely searching for some "activity" to join, as their Greek houses require. Most of Soapbox the first Thursday in November was taken up with debates about Soapbox itself. One speaker, a graduate student who had attended another university as an undergraduate, said his former school had managed to put on a free discussion program similar to Soapbox simply by having a janitor plug in a microphone. No 51 students on three committees were necessary, he said, and there were a minimum of rules and no interference. However, he said, the debate about the three committees seemed to be irrelevant, because some people receive satisfaction in forming and joining committees and they don't bother anyone. The important thing, he said, was to see that the idea of a forum of free speech continued if the students really wanted such a program.

Soapbox will probably survive. The UAB's intentions are good, and 51 committee members, despite continuous sniping from their critics—the persons who apparently want Soapbox most—have probably helped the program through their efforts at publicizing it. The first indoor session (in Meacham Auditorium) was well attended and well conducted. OU's forum of free speech may continue to have its growing pains, but it seems hardy enough to make it through its first season.

## Phillips Petroleum Aids Law

Phillips Petroleum Co. has established an award in the College of Law. The company will provide \$500 annually to be divided proportionately between the editor-in-chief of the *Oklahoma Law Review* for each academic year and the summer session editor-in-chief. The *Oklahoma Law Review*, a quarterly periodical, is edited and managed by law students. It contains practical discussions of current legal problems with particular emphasis on legal developments in Oklahoma and the Southwest. "The establishment of the Phillips Petroleum Co. Award will make it possible for students who are having difficulty financing their legal education to be considered for the position of editor-in-chief," says Dean Eugene Kuntz. "A student who must work to pay his way through college just doesn't have enough time to do the editorial work."



The *Agamemnon* Puppets

The leading characters were nine feet tall

## Engineering Experiment

An experiment in engineering education is off the launching pad this fall with the cooperation of eight industrial concerns and one government agency. Engineers who work full time for the nine organizations will spend half a day each week teaching an engineering design course for seniors in the School of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering. The class of 30 to 40 students meets on Friday afternoons and is divided into nine groups. Each group is assigned to an engineer from industry for the semester. He presents a problem from his industry to the students and organizes them into a design team. Each Friday the teams report on the work accomplished on the projects during the week, receive guidance from the visiting engineers, and make plans for the following week's work. The faculty of the school will serve as "outside" consultants to the students on special problems that arise. At the end of the semester each team will make written and oral presentations of its design and recommendations to the sponsoring company and the entire class.

The participating organizations will donate the time of creative design engineers, who will be appointed adjunct assistant professors of aerospace and mechanical engineering although they will not receive pay from the University.

Sponsoring organizations are Aero Commander, Norman; Oklahoma Gas & Electric Co. and Western Electric Co., both of Oklahoma City; Oklahoma City Air Material Area, Tinker AFB; Corning Glass Works, Muskogee; Halliburton Co., Duncan, and Phillips Petroleum Co., Bartlesville. Two Texas firms also have engineers commuting to OU to assist in the program. They are General Dynamics, Fort Worth, and Celanese Corp., Bay City.

The students are working on such problems as the design of an improved empennage for an aircraft, automatic glass fabricating equipment, a jet engine in-flight thrust indicator, high pressure steam systems, and automatic machines for manufacture of small electric parts as well as development of a method for recovery of precious metal catalysts from a chemical reactor.

The course, which has been taught by full-time faculty members in the past, will be one of the first of its type in the country.

## The Barton Lecture

The school term's first Rosetta Briegel Barton Lecture was presented Oct. 7 by Dr. Harold T. Gordon, a California entomologist whose topic was "Factors Influencing the Food Intake and Growth of Insects." In addition to his major lecture, Dr. Gordon spoke in the chemistry department colloquium series and met with students and professors during his visit to the campus.

The Barton lectures are named for the first woman member of the chemistry department and are made possible through an endowment presented to the department by the family, friends, and colleagues of the late Rosetta Briegel Barton.

## Humble Oil Provides Grant

A \$12,250 grant has been given to OU by the Humble Oil Education Foundation. The money will be divided among the College of Business Administration, the Schools of Petroleum and Geological Engineering, Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, and Geology and Geophysics and the department of engineering.

Use of the funds is left to the discretion of each college, school, or department receiving a share. The only stipulation is that the money be used to improve the quality of teaching and research or to enable outstanding students to continue their educations. The business administration college plans to devote its share of the money to faculty support and to bring in guest speakers, with the bulk of the funds being reserved for a fellowship to be granted next year. In petroleum and geological engineering the money will aid in supporting the Honors Scholarship program and a faculty improvement grant. The share of money going to aerospace and mechanical engineering will be used to purchase equipment for student and faculty use. Officials in chemical engineering and materials science are still making plans for use of funds in that area. The grant money will be used to establish a graduate fellowship in geology and geophysics, with the remainder of the funds set aside for research expenses and faculty travel to meetings and conferences. In the engineering department the money will be used for scholarships and equipment.

## New New Math Book

Two mathematics teachers have collaborated to produce a textbook on the "new mathematics" for elementary school teachers. Dr. Dora McFarland, professor emerita of mathematics, and Miss Eunice Lewis, associate professor of education, are co-authors of *Introduction to Modern Mathematics for Elementary Teachers*, published by D. C. Heath and Co.

Both women have been active in the development of the "new math" programs introduced into the public schools in recent years.

Dr. McFarland joined the OU faculty in 1920. In 1953 she was one of ten OU faculty members who received \$500 awards for "extraordinary excellence in student counseling and teaching of freshmen and sophomores." She also has received the National Achievement Award from Delta Kappa Gamma, national honorary organization for women teachers.

Miss Lewis joined the OU faculty in 1948. She is coordinator of mathematics for grades kindergarten through 12 at the University School and also teaches mathematics and mathematical methods in the OU department of mathematics and astronomy and the College of Education.

She has given a television series for elementary teachers of mathematics and has appeared as a consultant and speaker at many national meetings. In 1962-63 she was vice president of the National Council of

Teachers of Mathematics. Her professional recognition includes the OU Regents' Award for Superior Teaching in 1965, a state citation for Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 1964, and the Theta Sigma Phi citation for the outstanding woman teacher at OU in 1963.

## A First

At the summer term commencement exercises, for the first time in University history, graduate degrees outnumbered undergraduate degrees, 417-410.

## Homecoming

The largest crowd to witness a state sporting event (or a 38-0 shutout, for that matter) was packed into Oklahoma Memorial Stadium for the Homecoming game against Notre Dame. (It was rumored that some of the more than 60,000 spectators paid something above the official \$6 rate for each ticket.) OU never looked better all day than when the five Homecoming queen candidates stepped out on the field at halftime. The ultimate winner was lovely Gigi Gant, a junior from Ardmore (*see photo*). (The queen is never announced, for some reason, until 10 p.m. Saturday night at a dance, which leaves her a couple of hours to reign over Homecoming day.) Old grads, in addition to seeing each other and the football game, also had an opportunity to feast their eyes on decorations that Greek houses constructed in their yards for the occasion. One alumnus estimated that the cost limit for the uniformly unimpressive efforts must have been in the neighborhood of four dollars. Pretty close, probably.



Homecoming Queen Gigi Gant

*The best we looked all day*