



Rev. Long reflects on the young man from the 1905 yearbook.

For OU's Oldest Graduate It's Not So Long Ago

By JACK COPELAND

At first the university had only one building, costing \$35,000, on a 40-acre tract of land on which President Boyd, at his own expense, had planted quite a grove of elm trees, watering them until they got a start, to prove that trees would grow on the prairie.

—The Rev. Charles A. Long,
"Memoirs"

David Ross Boyd had already proven his point when Charles Alexander Long arrived at the University of Oklahoma in 1899 to enroll for classes.

Today, some of the trees still stand as a monument to the persistent nature of OU's first president. And Long, who at age 99 enjoys the distinction of being OU's oldest living graduate, still remembers respect-

fully the efforts of the man who managed to convince "an unwilling legislature and hesitant taxpayers" that a university also could grow on the prairie.

In fact, Long can recall an anecdote or two about many professors from those early days who are remembered by present-day OU students only as namesakes of streets or buildings.

None of those buildings had even been built when Long received his bachelor of science degree from the University in 1905.

Long was born Aug. 22, 1881, in Alto, Texas, the third of six children. Two older brothers died at different times within a year of his birth. His father, Pastor Martin Daugherty Long, and his mother, Callie Hamilton Long, moved the family to Oklahoma City in 1891 so Martin could serve the Methodist Church's

Indian Mission Conference. Later, the Long family made the run of 1892 into newly opened Cheyenne-Arapaho lands, and settled northwest of Union City.

Charles attended fifth through eighth grades at a school built near the Long home, then took his father's advice and sought out a church school to continue his education.

Long already had made what he called a "definite commitment to the Lord" when he enrolled at Hargrove College in Ardmore during 1897. "From infancy, I wanted to be God's child," he said. But the decision on a career in the ministry was not so easily reached. "My father, because there were a number of physicians in my family, spoke of making a physician of me." It wasn't until spring 1898 at Hargrove that the choice was made.

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"I read a little book by Marsden, 'How to Succeed,' which counseled the youth to consider all his likes, dislikes, capabilities and weaknesses, survey the surroundings and conditions of life, then lay it all before the Lord for a final decision," Long writes of that time in his memoirs.

"In something like a week's time after finishing the book, during which time I asked to know God's will, I seemed to see myself standing in the pulpit, preaching in a language not my own. It was my call to the ministry and foreign missionary service. From that day on I can say with Paul, 'I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision . . .'"

Years later, in 1952, Long would retire after 43 years of missionary service among Portuguese-speaking natives of Brazil. But in 1899, the year he moved with his family to Norman to enter OU's preparatory school, Long's future still was far from being charted.

He enrolled in the preparatory school in 1899 to take high school courses required for students seeking admission to OU's college classes. In those days, he explained, few communities in Oklahoma had organized their own high schools.

Professors at the University doubled as instructors in the preparatory school, and students who enrolled there found little time for anything but studies. There were no extracurricular activities such as football, Long said. "The school did in three years what few schools today can do in four."

In 1901, Long enrolled in college classes at OU.

The ministry was to be his career, but Long chose to learn about God by exploring rocks and rivers during his undergraduate days. He was drawn to geology by the arrival on campus of Professor Charles A. Gould, the oil geologist whose name is borne today by the building that houses OU's School of Geology and Geophysics.

"This majoring in science may seem odd for one destined for the ministry, but I have never regretted taking that course," Long writes in his memoirs. "It gave me a different angle on God's greatness and wonder, and it gave means to pay my expenses."

Long attended classes daily from

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 in the afternoon, as well as mandatory chapel services conducted by President Boyd. "I heard no complaints about religion being out of place," he said.

At night, he worked to support himself by doing odd jobs. He cut wood, cared for trees on campus, tried to sell stereoscopic views "with poor success," and worked in the harvest fields. Later, he set up shop in Gould's geological office as a record keeper, and he also was the first custodian to tend the lab set up by Lawrence Upjohn, the University's first dean of medicine.

"With all my work, do you know how much money I was making when I turned in my final papers? Ten cents an hour!"

Working after classes "didn't hurt," Long recalls, but weekends brought him and fellow students time for more enjoyable activities. Long belonged to a literary society known as the

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Forum, which met on Saturday evenings to hear essays and readings. The gatherings were conducted as formal meetings, and occasionally "we'd put a student on the spot with Robert's Rules of Order," he said. "We were a bunch of greenhorns, but we plugged ahead."

Geology students of that day were a close-knit group. On a tour of the Arbuckle Mountains near Davis in April 1903, while camping at Vines Creek, Gould engaged 10 of his students in a conversation that resulted in the founding of the "Rock Club." The club later became known as the Pick and Hammer Club, and was the predecessor of today's Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the honor society of geology and geophysics students at OU.

Long was serious enough about his geology studies to join a hydrological study team formed by Gould for the purpose of exploring the headwaters of the Cimarron and Canadian rivers

for possible irrigation dam sites.

During the summer of 1903, the survey team left Woodward with a two-mule team and wagon, a two-horse spring wagon and a saddle horse to travel west into Beaver County, then on to Johnson Mesa near Cimarron, N.M. Then the party found the head of the South Canadian River and followed it through the Texas Panhandle to the Oklahoma line before disbanding.

In his memoirs, Long recalls proudly his discovery of an 18-foot ledge of oyster shell rock on Tucumcari Mountain in New Mexico, and his verification of the fact that an oyster shell bed extends north from that area to Denver, Colorado. That, and Long's discovery of a fossil bed near San Jon, New Mexico, prompted Gould to say "that I had a very keen eye for landscape survey," Long writes.

Gould is the professor who is remembered most fondly by Long from those turn-of-the-century days at OU, simply because of the close working relationship between the professor and his student. "He was a devout Christian man, and that meant much," Long writes in his memoirs. "Every line of research led out to a stopping place where the only answer was God. He began this course (in geology) with 'In the beginning, God . . .'" and on through it was God working through the laws of nature to build this marvelous universe.

"Evolution, the much berated subject, reduced itself to a mere 'effort of man to discover, if possible, how God worked in the great plan of creation.' God was vastly greater to me through those studies."

Long also admired chemistry and physics professor Edwin DeBarr, one of the first four faculty members hired by President Boyd, as a "marvelous man" with character and principles who said what he had to say only once, and "didn't repeat."

Other professors made their mark as well. Long remembers contributions to OU's early history by James Shannon Buchanan, a professor of history and physics who would become OU's fourth president in 1923; Frederick S. Elder, an honors graduate in French from Princeton who came to Norman to teach

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The Carl Albert Center

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Among the more notable research efforts produced through the use of the archive is Ann Hodges Morgan's recent biography of Senator Robert S. Kerr (*Robert S. Kerr: The Senate Years*, University of Oklahoma Press). A scholar from the west coast currently is researching a major biography of Helen Gahagan Douglas.

To realize all of its objectives, the Carl Albert Center is kicking off a national endowment campaign. The drive will be inaugurated this spring with a dinner in honor of Speaker Albert in Oklahoma City. The dinner will feature many of Speaker Albert's former colleagues in the House and Senate, including the present Speaker of the House, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr., of Massachusetts.

The Center is seeking private contributions to the endowment to supplement support being sought from the federal government. Legislation for a special appropriation, sponsored by the entire Oklahoma delegation to the Congress, was submitted in the 96th Congress and is being resubmit-

ted in the 97th Congress. Enactment of this legislation would provide up to \$3 million in federal matching funds for all private and public contributions to the Center's endowment.

The State Legislature has already passed two special appropriations — \$100,000 in 1977 to process the Albert papers and \$200,000 in 1979 to establish the Carl Albert Center. The state regents have designated the Center an OU "special program" to receive state funding as a regular part of the University budget. The Center's endowment drive forms an important part of the University's \$103 million Campaign for Academic Excellence.

The Carl Albert Center is a unique forum for scholarship and instruction. In addition to the recognition it brings to the University and the state of Oklahoma, the Center serves as a model of academic innovation. But most importantly, the Center provides an environment in which students and faculty alike are encouraged to engage in critical reflection



Eleanor Roosevelt, left, Melvyn and Helen Gahagan Douglas visit a Farm Security Administration Camp in '41.

on basic questions of American democracy. In fulfilling this aspect of its mission, the Carl Albert Center has impact not only on this generation of students, but upon generations to come.

Photos courtesy of the Congressional Archive, OU Western History Collections.

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mathematics; Joseph F. Paxton, the Greek and Latin professor; and Vernon L. Parrington, the Harvard-educated founder of the University's department of English.

Perhaps the man who made the greatest impression of all on young Long was President Boyd himself, who is remembered with a list of adjectives: "a fine, Christian man, far-sighted, resourceful, friendly, fair, cultured."

The trees that Boyd planted and nursed on the north oval through a drought in 1893 were thriving by the time Long arrived at OU. "He started the planting and carried the water himself to keep the trees growing," an awed Long said.

When Long received his geology degree in 1905, he was one of eight students awarded bachelor's degrees that year. Two others received master's degrees, and another 15

earned pharmaceutical chemist degrees.

During that year — two years before Oklahoma became a state — about 450 students were enrolled, and more than half of that number were students in the preparatory school. Today, in its 90th year, OU enrolls nearly 22,000 students at its Norman campus.

When Long enrolled at OU, only one brick structure stood on the otherwise barren campus; that was the "first administration building" which burned to the ground in 1903. By 1904, two buildings that still stand on the north oval — the Carnegie Building and the Old Science Hall — had been constructed. Today, some 320 buildings stand on OU campuses in Norman, Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Long's career took him far from Norman, to numerous missions and

schools in Brazil. With his wife, Lucy Mae, who died in 1970, Long served in the South American country from 1911 to 1952. He retired in 1956, but only officially. He continued to teach and lecture occasional classes, and became active in the OU Alumni Association as well.

Long has lived at the Methodist Manor Home in Tulsa since 1974, but he has traveled to Norman as recently as May 1980, where, as he recounts proudly, OU President William S. Banowsky led a gathering of alumni in a standing ovation for the retired minister. He was honored again in December when he was named the 1,500th member of the OU Associates thanks to an anonymous contribution made by a donor in Long's name.

Just as alumni at OU have taken great pride in Long's dedication to the University through the years, so Long has maintained his deep pride in OU. "I love my alma mater and the state to which it belongs," he said.