
PROLOGUE

Good Fortune Thrives on Prior Planning



In this issue of *Sooner Magazine*, you can learn everything you've ever wanted to know about the University's plans for its new Energy Center and the remarkable gift that is making the whole project so much easier. If you happen to be a confirmed OU-watcher, you probably will hear the story many times in the next few months as the private funding is completed and the magnificent structure takes shape on the east edge of the campus. You may wonder along with many OU folks just how the University got so lucky.

It's never wise to take luck too lightly, but it's also a mistake to overlook the amount of hard work and prior planning that goes into good fortune. Bill Banowsky's grand idea for the Energy Center never would have sold to the Saxons, the governor, the chancellor or anyone else if they had not been convinced that the University is capable of accomplishing its lofty ambitions.

The University has been laying the groundwork for success for 91 years. Ten presidents have dreamed big for OU. Hundreds of distinguished scholar/teachers have cast their lots with an institution that couldn't always reward their devotion. Scores of state leaders cared enough about the University to protect, nurture and provide for it. The hearts of generations of students continued to beat to "Boomer Sooner" as they made their marks in the world and enhanced OU's reputation in the process. And, yes, many Bill and Wylodean Saxons gave what they could to build a great university.

Some of their names are on buildings, plaques, scholarships, street signs or lectureships. Others live only in the memories of the students they helped, the researcher whose project they saved, the author whose

book they published, the librarian whose shelves they filled.

The value of such gifts can't be measured in dollars. The right gift at the right time is priceless. The IRS may not agree, but when you absolutely have to have it, \$3 thousand can be as much as \$3 million.

The University expects to have \$65 million in public and private Energy Center commitments in less than a year. In the mid-'70s, determined alumni boosters worked four years to raise \$750,000 for a single professorial chair in geology. Yet that sometimes frustrating campaign had the classic snowball effect on the future of energy education at OU. An enthusiasm was kindled among those donors that provided other endowed professorships and seed money for the Energy Resources Institute and eventually fostered the kind of planning that became the Energy Center.

The University couldn't start from scratch to build the Energy Center, any more than it could start with a single book to build the library. Not at today's prices. Gould, Felgar, Carson, Monnett, Kulp and their colleagues in the basic sciences laid the foundation for the Energy Center years ago when the University first set out to be a number one in energy education.

When the artist's sketch of the proposed building was unveiled at an October Energy Center Founders meeting, one oldtimer commented that he wished Victor Monnett, the long-time geology director, could have lived to see it. Monnett built his own building, Gould Hall, in the early '50s and had to visit more than 200 alumni and industry representatives to raise \$70,000 to furnish it. He sure could have used a Saxon.

—CAROL J. BURR