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## PROLOGUE

# Yes, Virginia, There Was a Holmberg



Periodically a student reporter for OU's *Oklahoma Daily* will hit upon the idea of writing a feature story on the people behind the names of campus landmarks. The reporter will delve into old catalogs, peruse an OU history or two, call on some old-timers — and, perhaps, think to look in the *Daily* files for the story some student reporter wrote last year.

Fortunately, the *Daily's* reading public turns over completely every four years. There is always a new crop of Sooners amazed to learn that, in addition to being an auditorium, Holmberg was also a man who brought music to the one-building university on the prairie. And besides being a hall and a tower, Dale was an eminent historian and a charming gentleman who nearly succeeded in proving that age is only a state of mind. Likewise DeBarr, Evans, Monnet, Buchanan, Meacham, Gittinger, Jacobson, Adams, etc. As one campus wit put it, "If a faculty member wanted a building named for him, he had to get here early."

After running the gamut of classroom buildings, the young reporter often will turn to the dormitories, particularly Cross Center, where the individual houses are named for OU students who lost their lives in World War II, or Cate Center with its houses bearing the names of women from the history of state and University.

But if the early buildings pay tribute to history and heroism, many recent additions to campus development recognize the private donors who made them possible. "Lloyd Noble," in campus jargon, no longer means the late oilman, philanthropist and long-time OU regent, but the multi-purpose arena which is the focal point of campus entertainment.

When Lloyd Noble Center was dedicated in 1975, Ed Noble, recalling his father's preference for anonymity, looked at the huge facility and quipped that he and his brother and sister "are really going to have to answer for this."

Of course the name game is not restricted to brick and mortar. Many honorees live on in Sooner memories firmly attached to people and programs rather than buildings. We have, for instance, Wentz Loans and Gunning Scholars, a Merrick Chair and a Perkinson Professor, the DeGolyer Collection, Karcher Lecturers and a Puterbaugh Conference — the list goes on and on.

The most recent addition to the lexicon of campus place-names is featured in this issue of *Sooner Magazine*. For those of us who knew him, the name of the late Huston Huffman always will conjure up the image of a kind, courageous man whose interest in students as an OU regent kept alive their dream for a physical fitness center — at a time when there was no money and very little prospect for success. We will remember, also, that his quiet adherence to his principles kept the university free from political intervention during the darkest days of the late '60s and early '70s. But to the generations of OU students who will use the center named in his honor, "Huston Huffman" has become a place where academic pressures are put aside in favor of the physical well-being which he valued so highly.

There is nothing sad about having the memory of the man himself fade with the passing of those who knew him personally when his name lives on in such a pleasant way.

—CAROL J. BURR