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Robin Smith Young

A windblown Bill Banowsky samples spring in Oklahoma at the Medieval Fair during his first year as OU president.

Bill Banowsky Visits

The title of his TV show proved prophetic — his whirlwind four years on campus went by too quickly. The photographers who dogged his footsteps had to move fast, but they managed to amass a fascinating record of his “visit.”

To be a photographer at the University of Oklahoma for any length of time is to be faced with a constant challenge to creativity. This campus and its inhabitants have been photographed from every conceivable angle—not once but a number of times. To photographers, Bill Banowsky was a godsend.

Banowsky had to be America's most photogenic university president. In fact, there ought to be a law about people who photograph as well as Banowsky. Even a poor picture of the OU president was above average for anyone else. Campus visitors loved to be photographed with him and then to receive a print as a memento of the occasion. Seldom were they disappointed.

His photographs didn't lack variety. He would allow himself to be pictured in almost any setting, in

any mode of dress. He would agree to the obligatory presidential pose at the desk in his historic Evans Hall office, the visiting dignitary handshake, the black tie dinner receiving line. But he also would appear on campus, windblown and tie askew, or at athletic events in sports attire, jogging in sweat clothes, on horseback or doing the “Cotton-Eyed Joe.” He could clown for the camera or be suitably serious.

The candid shots of Banowsky were the best. He hated to pose for more than a few seconds. Photographers had to get it right the first time.

Of the thousands of photographs that were taken of Bill Banowsky over the past four years, *Sooner Magazine* presents just a few for the record, just to remember Bill Banowsky's visit.

Photos on Following Pages

Karim E. Karim



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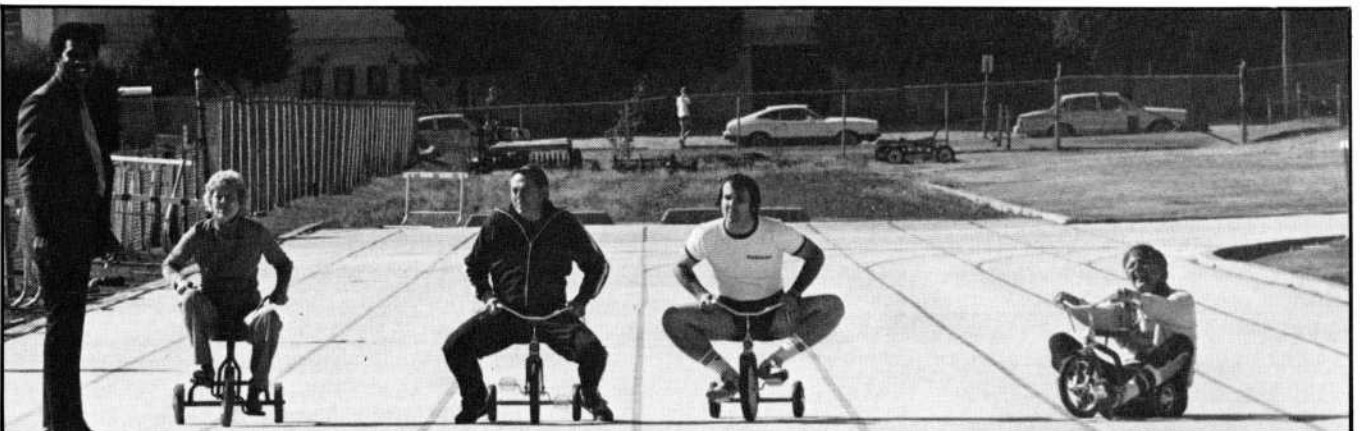
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The Daily Oklahoman

The criteria for appearance on Banowsky's TV interview show was to be prominent and, above all, interesting. Some of his best shows featured guests who disagreed the most with his own personal conservatism. At top, Bill Banowsky visits with ERA activist Marlo Thomas, below at the airport with Richard Nixon.

Although startled at first, Norman residents soon became accustomed to seeing the OU president in jogging togs on his early morning runs.



Now it can be told: Banowsky, right, falls flat in hotly contested tricycle race at OU benefit for the Christmas Store.



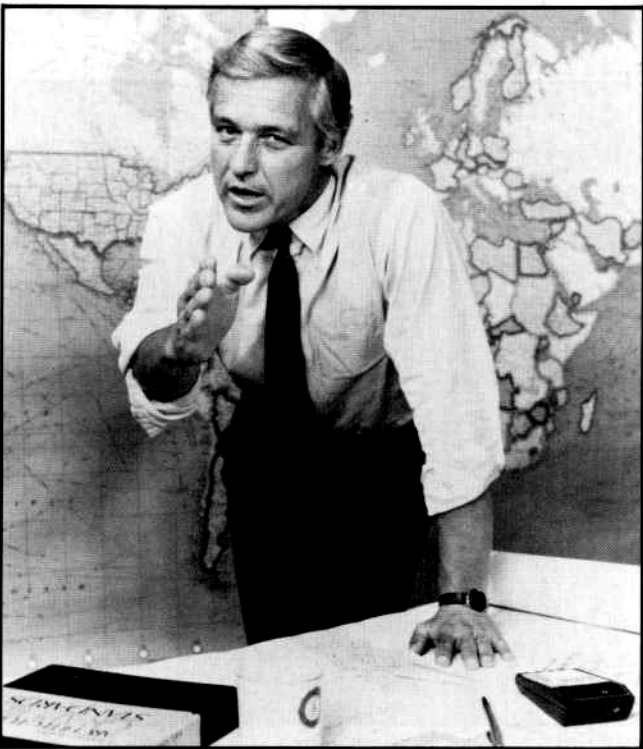
The Daily Oklahoman

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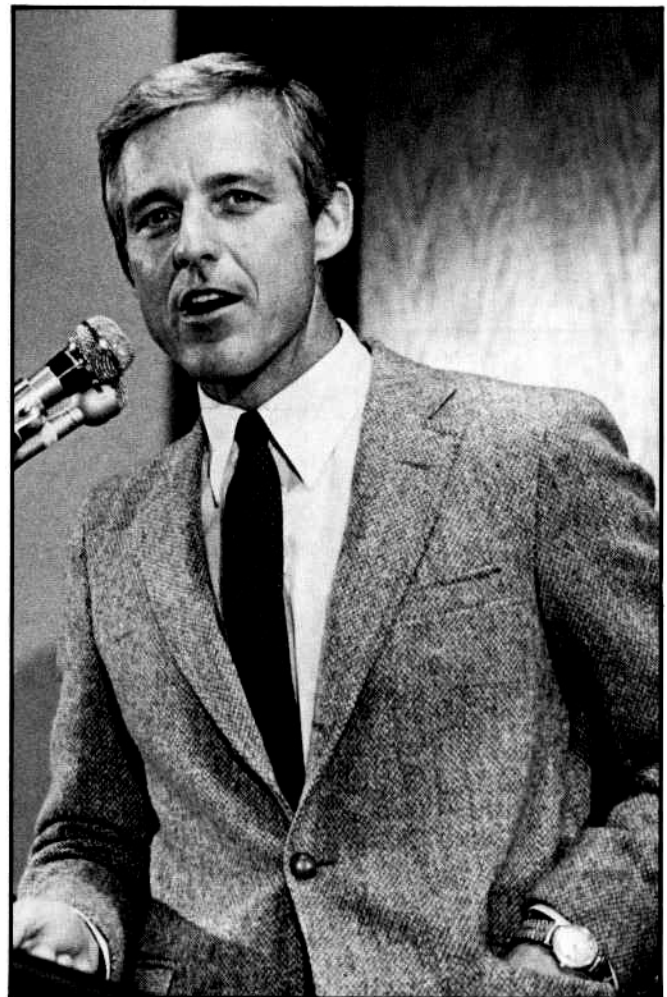
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Three of their four sons, David, left, Bill Jr. and Britton, pose with Bill and his artist wife, Gay, shortly after their arrival. Youngest son, Baxter, escaped the camera session.

Banowsky would try anything once – even a crash course in tennis for a charity match with sports hustler Bobby Riggs, left, to the amusement of Dr. Howard Hagglund.

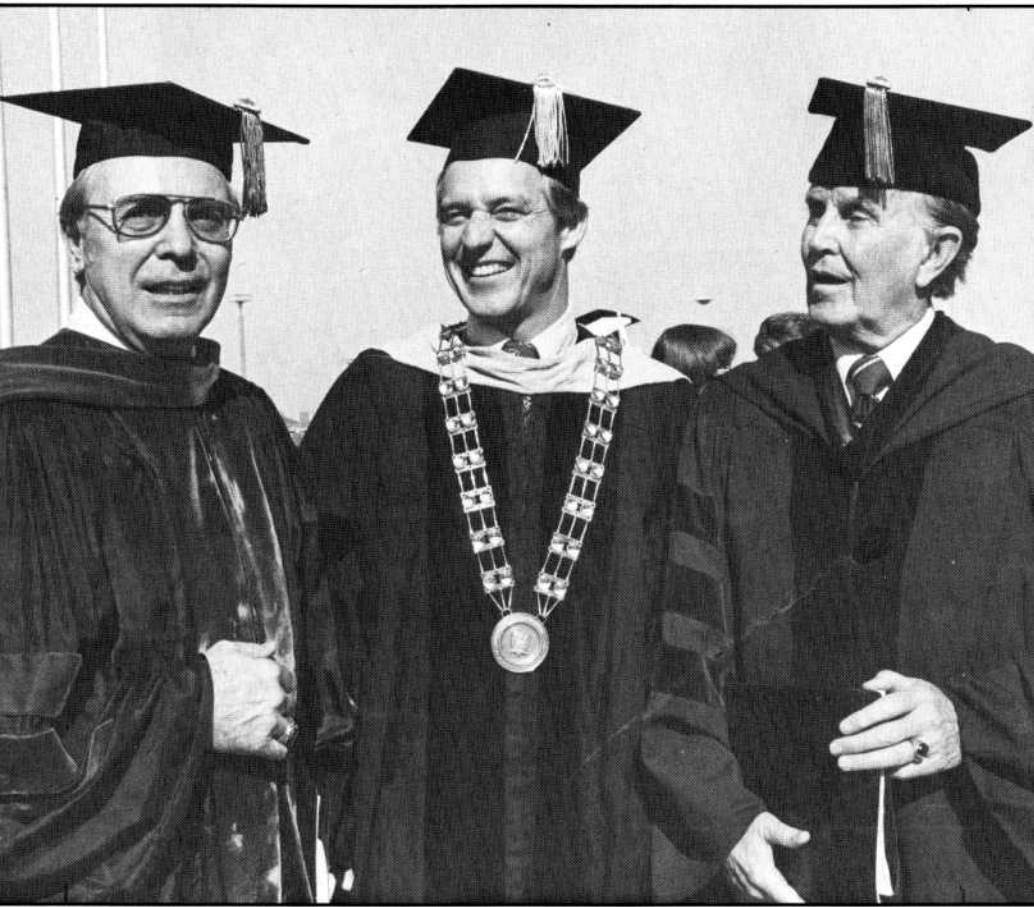


Convincing Banowsky to pose for this promotional picture for the Energy Center brochure wasn't easy – it took too long – nevertheless, he was pleased with the end result.

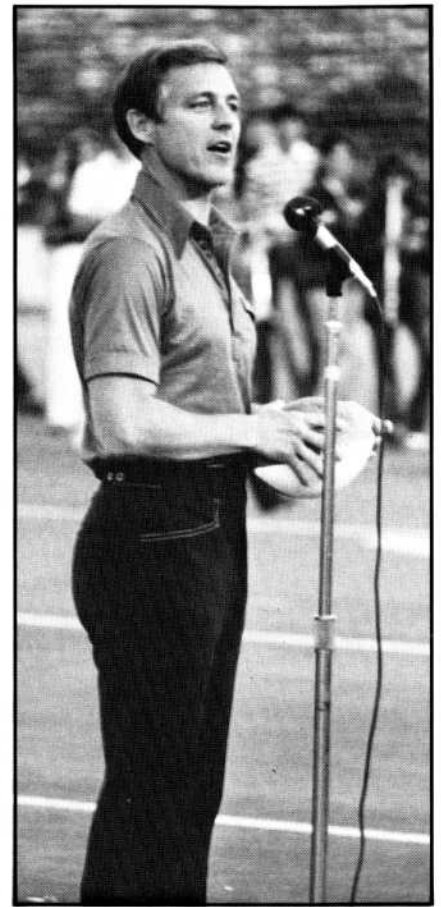


And where was Bill Banowsky most at home and most impressive? You guessed it – at the microphone, where he had few equals.

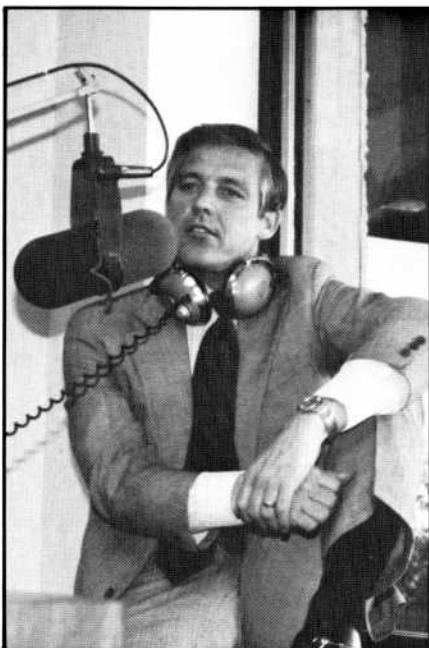
Photos Continue



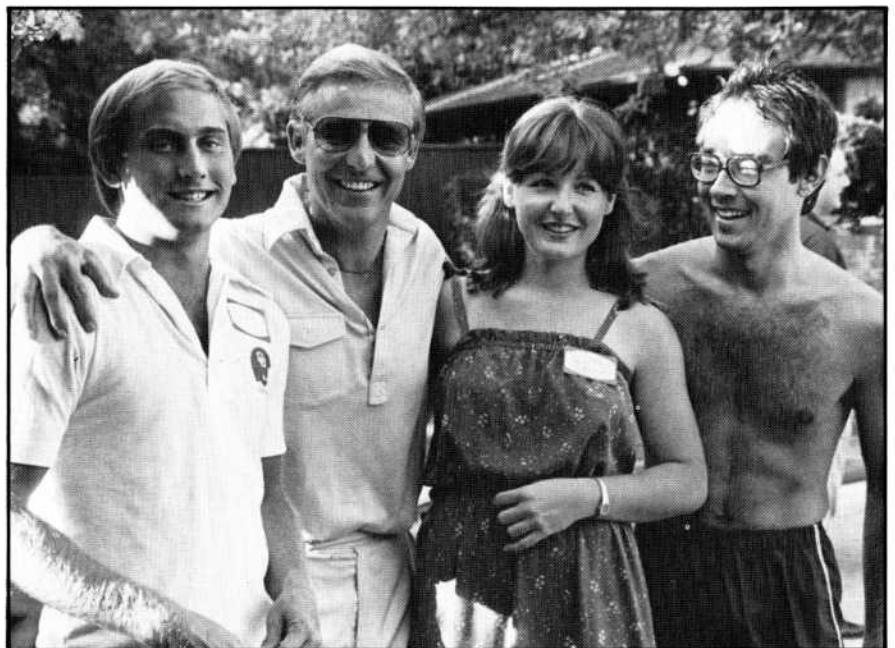
This historic University photograph was taken at the inauguration of William Slater Banowsky, center, as OU's tenth president. With Banowsky are the ninth and seventh presidents, Dr. Paul F. Sharp, left, and Dr. G. L. Cross.



Banowsky uses his public speaking magic to stir up the Big Red's student fans at a pre-game rally.



Always perfectly at home in the studio, Banowsky relaxes after taping an interview with Oklahoma City radio personality, Danny Williams.



Does the man second from the left look natural in shades at poolside? Even as he entertained OU student leaders at his annual backyard swim party, he had that California look about him. We should have known. Too soon, as we say in show-biz, it would be "Thanks for the Memories" and "Happy Trails to You." 