
PROLOGUE

OU's Centennial Celebration More Than Just a Birthday Party

The word is *Centennial*. As alumni and friends of the University of Oklahoma, you will be hearing it often and with feeling in the three years leading up to 1990. The University does not intend that the 100th anniversary of its founding shall pass without observances suitable to the occasion.

To ensure that this does not happen, a 100-member Centennial Commission has been enlisted to spend the coming months planning a year-long celebration, beginning on January 1 and culminating on December 19, 1990. Members of the blue-ribbon panel, selected from hundreds of nominations, represent many different geographic areas of the country, diverse career fields and age groups. They are as fascinating a group of people as has ever been assembled at the University, and you will be reading about them in future issues of *Sooner Magazine*.

This publication also will feature the programs and projects created by the various committees working under the direction of commission chairman W. R. Howell, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the J.C. Penney Co. in New York City, and vice chairman Stanton L. Young, Oklahoma City business and civic leader. The Celebration Committee will be chaired by former OU Alumni Association president Katie Davis of Oklahoma City. Presently being formed are committees for Promotion and Special Events, Public Affairs, Academic Affairs, Health Sciences Center Affairs and Student Affairs. Thousands of Sooners eventually will be involved in these activities.

Already at work is the Development Committee, chaired by Young with Oklahoma Cityan Douglas R. Cum-

mings, owner of Cummings Oil Co., as vice chairman. They have announced a \$100 million Centennial Campaign, a Universitywide private funding effort that will top anything ever attempted in Oklahoma higher education. The campaign goals were determined after months of study of the institution's academic needs for the remainder of this century and on into the next.

As with all such undertakings, this Centennial Celebration has a theme, "Time for Greatness." Some people undoubtedly will think Oklahoma's present economic situation a strange atmosphere in which to strive for greatness. They surely would admit, however, that "Time for Survival" lacks the same inspirational quality. A willingness over the years to settle for mere survival also might have something to do with our present financial dilemma.

A guest speaker recently told a campus student group that we need not expect a rescue mission; only Oklahomans can save Oklahoma. Perhaps a good place to start is a revival of the spirit which caused the first Sooners to try the frontier territories: optimism. We cannot expect others to take a chance on Oklahoma if we do not believe in ourselves.

For the University of Oklahoma, the months spent preparing for the Centennial Celebration could be a turning point. In the process of planning and carrying out the various phases of this observance, we all may be reminded what this institution means to us; we may rediscover what higher education is all about. We even may find that we are much more willing to invest in Oklahoma than we thought we were. And by 1990 we might begin collecting on the investment. — CJB



Time for Greatness