

THE ENERGY CENTER

Halfway Home

By DONNA MURPHY

Remember the gigantic hole in the ground that claimed to be the beginning of a high-tech marvel? Well, that hole has been filled with the laboratory base of the Norman campus' most complex and exciting building — and there is more to come.



Founders Chair Brian O'Brien and President Horton tour the center.



A geology class in crystallography and optical mineralogy meets in the Energy Center's new sedimentary rock analysis laboratory.



Light wells and skylights keep the center's lower floors in touch with the outside world.

The first half of the University of Oklahoma Energy Center opened its doors for the fall semester and is now alive with activity as faculty, staff and students settle into the 150,000-square-foot, three-level laboratory base.

As the faculty inside unpacked, set up labs and sorted through materials, huge trucks and dozers began excavation outside for the next phase of the \$45 million teaching and research center.

The recently completed laboratory base—a full half of the 300,000-square-foot total project—encompasses 3.5 acres of space in its two huge floors, which are mostly underground. The base houses 106 offices, 26 teach-

ing laboratories and 76 research laboratories.

Among the highly sophisticated, state-of-the-art laboratories are facilities for computer-aided seismics and image processing, an X-ray diffractometer, X-ray fluorescence, a drilling mud simulator, drilling rig laboratory, a production laboratory, a thermodynamics laboratory and many other labs for both hydrocarbons and renewable energy forms.

Occupying the new Energy Center offices and laboratories are faculties and staffs of the schools of geology and geophysics, petroleum and geological engineering and chemical engineering and materials science, as well as the dean and support staff of the Col-

lege of Geosciences.

The next construction phase of the Energy Center—for which excavation began this summer—will be the underground base for the multi-story academic tower. This phase will house the Laurence S. Youngblood Energy Library, teaching laboratories, classrooms and space for the Oklahoma Geological Survey.

The University embarked on the establishment of a world-class Energy Center five years ago, building on its tradition of excellence in geology, geophysics and petroleum engineering. The scope and complexity of the project made it one of the boldest moves in the history of the institution.

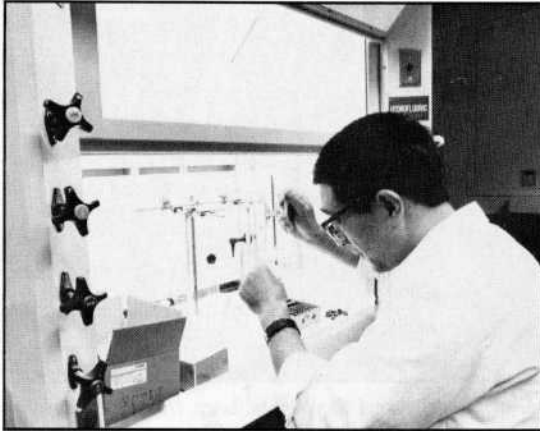
Begun during the height of the oil



Representatives of the Benham Group view a bronze sculpture given to the Energy Center by Reading & Bates of Tulsa.



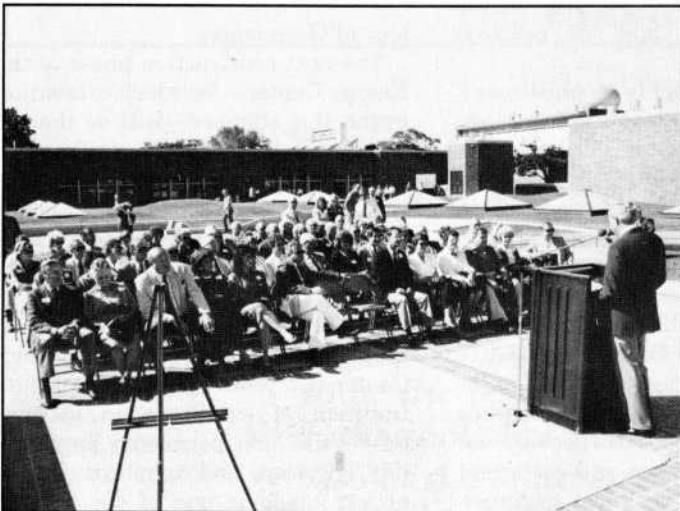
Chemical Engineering's Rex Ellington and graduate student John Boyd work in the thermodynamics properties laboratory.



Elaborate safety devices are incorporated in the design of more than 100 center laboratories.



Energy Center donors attending a September open house exit the new building by the main entrance at the corner of Jenkins and Felgar.



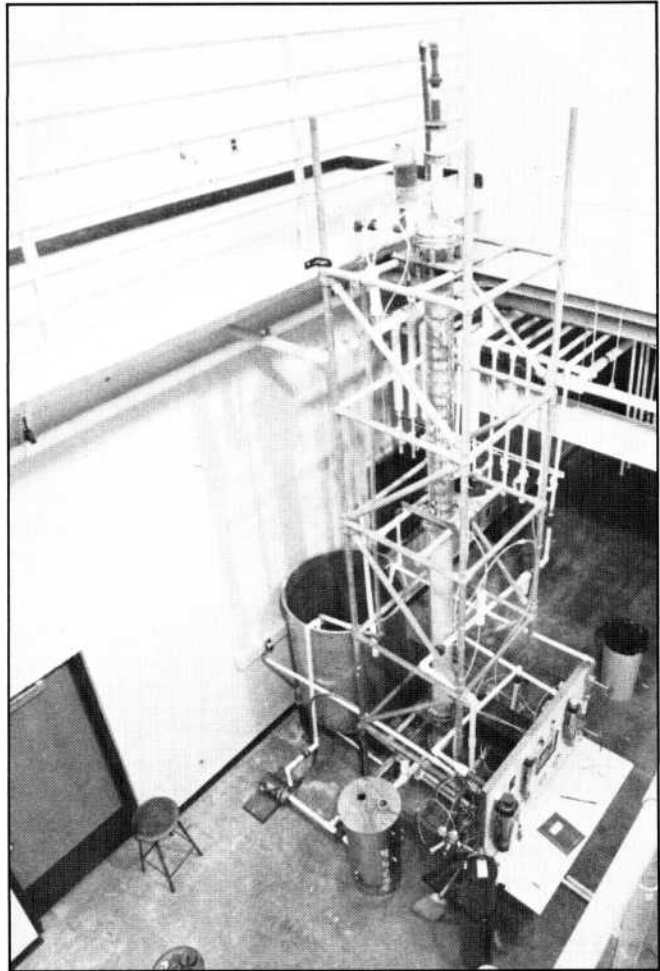
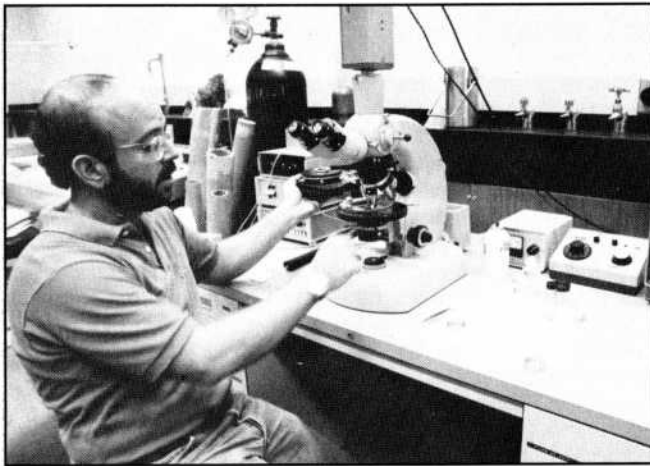
Founders and charter members of the Energy Center gather on the Plaza Level to hear a progress report from President Horton.



Geology/geophysics director James Forgotson meets in his new office with computer lab manager Wes Roberts.



In the fluid inclusion lab, graduate assistant George Morgan, above, and assistant professor David London, below, study the history of rocks by determining the kinds of fluids from which the rocks crystalized.



The chemical engineering undergraduate unit operations laboratory awaits new generations of students following its transfer from the engineering building to the Energy Center.

industry and being completed during one of the industry's most challenging economic times, the Energy Center is fulfilling all the expectations of its proponents. The Energy Center is like a magnet, attracting top-notch faculty, students and research that will benefit not only the University but also Oklahoma and the nation as well.

"The Energy Center is a product of the University's vision to build on its strengths and to be on the cutting edge of research vital to this nation," notes OU President Frank E. Horton. "Because the Energy Center programs are designed to focus on the challenges that face the energy industry, the University is well positioned to tackle the tough problems facing this nation's energy future and to help educate the

men and women who will develop and use new energy technologies."

A direct spinoff of the Energy Center is the recent establishment of the Cooperative Institute for Applied Remote Sensing, which is being created at OU as a joint project with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. A major focus of the OU and NOAA researchers will be in applying geologic data gathered by satellites to the energy industry.

Base funding for CIARS is expected to approach a quarter of a million dollars a year, with additional income expected from research contracts.

The establishment of CIARS is believed to make OU the only university in the country with two cooperative NOAA institutes, which itself is a

"strong endorsement of the quality of this university," Horton contends.

The other joint effort with NOAA is the Cooperative Institute for Mesoscale Meteorological Studies. Both cooperative institutes are Energy Center programs.

The Energy Center also is credited with helping to attract the \$10 million Landsat receiving station project to Oklahoma. Data from the receiving station can be applied to the agricultural and energy industries, help protect natural resources and assist in urban planning and transportation management.

A key component of the Energy Center is the College of Geosciences, a college created in 1981 to bring together OU's nationally strong pro-

grams in geology, geophysics, geography and meteorology. Thus, another indirect spinoff of the Energy Center has been a Weather Center, a consortium of University, federal, state and private meteorological agencies that are developing a nationally distinguished program in atmospheric research and forecasting on OU's north campus.

Closer ties with alumni and friends of the University have resulted from the Energy Center project, which is rekindling alumni interest in its energy-related programs—programs that have a tradition of excellence dating back to the nation's first school of petroleum geology, which was founded at OU in 1900.

"Building the Energy Center is one of the most ambitious fund-raising efforts in the history of Oklahoma," Horton says.

The state of Oklahoma appropriated \$15 million—one-third of the construction cost—and the University committed itself to raise \$30 million. Private citizens and major corporations alike have endorsed the project, with approximately 150 providing \$100,000 or more as Founders. Three of the Founders made individual gifts of \$1 million to the Energy Center, Brian O'Brien of Houston, the group's chairman, and Edward L. Gaylord and Mrs. Loyce Youngblood, both of Oklahoma City. In addition, 14 others are Charter Members through their commitments of \$50,000 or more.

Several companies have provided substantial gifts to help equip state-of-the-art laboratories in the Energy Center. More than \$21 million in private funds has been pledged toward construction of the Energy Center, and another \$4.5 million has been committed to fund laboratories and professorships in support of the academic and research programs housed there.

"Opening the first half of the OU Energy Center should give all these generous people a feeling of accomplishment, for it demonstrates their willingness to help OU as it confronts and prepares for the future," Horton says. "Already, rewards are being realized from this bold venture. Each accomplishment strengthens the project and strengthens the promise."

A New Book by
George Lynn Cross

THE SEEDS OF EXCELLENCE

*The Story of
the University of Oklahoma
Foundation*



Created to facilitate private giving to Oklahoma's flagship institution of higher education, the University of Oklahoma Foundation was born in December 1944, during the first of George Lynn Cross's 25 years as the university's president. The foundation's first home was the bottom drawer of the president's desk; its total assets, \$160.

Forty years later, with foundation assets topping \$60 million, its operations housed in its own building, and a separate division of the university engaged in private fund raising, President Emeritus Cross has chosen private giving as the theme of his sixth book on the development of the institution.

The Seeds of Excellence goes all the way back to those pioneer Oklahomans who were willing to dig deep into their meager resources to build a university on the barren prairie. Cross pays tribute to the generosity of spirit and vision for the future which caused Sooners past and present to furnish the university with a margin for quality which state funds could not supply.

Many of the names in this book — individuals, families, companies, charitable foundations — are familiar to most Oklahomans; others will be remembered primarily for the gifts they made, while some preferred anonymity. Cross has researched all the stories, the successes and the failures, and punctuated them with the personal anecdotes that set his Sooner chronicles apart.

This book is available in hard cover through the University of Oklahoma Foundation at \$19.95 postpaid.

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