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## PROLOGUE

# History Is Seldom Kind To Those Who Lack Vision

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**T**hat there should be considerable historical content in *Sooner Magazine* probably should not come as any great surprise to anyone. The vast majority of our readers are alumni of the University of Oklahoma; they respond to articles which jog their Sooner memories. After all, the University's history is their history.

At the same time, dwelling in the past, except for entertainment purposes, is said to be unhealthy. The business of the University is preparing today's students for today's world—and hopefully for tomorrow's. *Sooner Magazine* strives, therefore, to strike a balance, using yesterday's events in perspective as they apply to today's people, projects, progress and problems. Even so, this issue may have gone a bit heavy on nostalgia. It was not by design.

As the following articles came together, ranging all the way from the esoteric world of classical civilizations to a football hero, an amazing common thread seemed to run through them all. All those achievements of which we are most proud today occurred because someone had the courage to seize opportunities when they presented themselves, not waiting for a time more convenient or prudent or prosperous.

Oklahoma 1927. Roy Temple House could not have chosen a more inauspicious place or time to begin his little literary journal (see Page 25). He had virtually no money; he couldn't pay his reviewers and even had difficulty getting books to review. *Books Abroad*, now *World Literature Today*, was a crazy idea, but in international literary circles 60 years later, the University of Oklahoma is known *only* through this unique publication.

The curators at Stovall Museum were scarcely better advised in pursuing relics of classical antiquity (see

Page 4). One year they elected to spend their entire acquisitions budget—small by any standards—on a single vase. They called in due bills with colleagues worldwide for a tiny share in the archaeological bounty being unearthed in the post-war years. Their efforts brought no applause, yet they bought for pennies what no university museum could possibly afford today.

Several of our most worthwhile alumni used questionable judgment in electing to attend the University of Oklahoma. Betty Jackson was a woman; Audrey Shultz was old; Prentice Gautt was black. Women of the '40s (see Page 21) did not become architects or engineers, certainly not both; 67-year-olds (see Page 30) did not go to law school, let alone become lawyers; and most of all, blacks did not play football at OU (see Page 10). The decisions of these trailblazers were neither practical nor wise.

And what of our doctors at the Health Sciences Center (see Page 16) venturing into new areas of high-risk medical treatment for Oklahoma in a time of severely strained state support? Perhaps the patients whose lives may be saved will be the ultimate measure of their sagacity.

Opportunities to build a stronger university are always there, good times or bad, and often seizing them is more a question of confidence and courage than of money. The University of Oklahoma might be excused for preferring a more prosperous time in which to plan its Centennial celebration, but we are not given the choice of time. The Centennial will come only once, in 1990, whether we are prepared for our second hundred years or not.

Let us hope that as the state and the University struggle to meet the obligations of the present, we do not break faith with the past by failing to plan for the future. Surely our vision of history is clearer than that. —CJB