

LETTERS

David Burr

Twenty-six years ago this fall, a group of 57 freshmen arrived on the Norman campus among the thousands of eager, ambitious and unsophisticated entering their first year at the University of Oklahoma. This group was the test case for a program intended to provide the University and the state with a core of leaders for the future. Because the concept of the President's Leadership Class was his, David A. Burr was designated by President George L. Cross as the University official responsible for this unique collection of freshmen.

To those in the '61 PLC, David was the University. He instantly became mentor, surrogate parent, teacher, counselor and friend. He developed a program that presented challenges, encouraged personal growth and expanded individual options for the future. David was readily available at any time for any reason, although the intrusions were potentially inconvenient to both his professional and personal life. He taught the art of listening by example, and David listened without prejudice or making judgment of ideas, actions, problems, solutions and individuals.

Due to the wisdom of his guidance, the first President's Leadership Class evidenced sufficient merit for continuing the program, and David retained an active role with each succeeding year's class in addition to his ever-expanding University responsibilities. As PLC members left the University, David became the permanent touchstone anchor at OU as well as the common bond for PLC members whose selection was made decades apart. He truly fathered the adult lives of the members of 25 President's Leadership Classes.

David was suddenly taken from us in August and yet even in our grief, we know he still is a part of us. The consolation to his family and to the University is David's legacy that is evidenced daily through the lives of the PLC members. What we were fortunate enough to experience and learn through our relationship with David A. Burr, we humbly share with others in our pale imitation of his example.

Linda K. Chandler Verges, '65 B.A.
Phoenix, Arizona

I'm from Oklahoma, and although I don't currently reside there, I think I can speak for "us Okies." Oklahomans *hate* to lose. We lost big the other day. We lost big, and I'll bet a lot of you didn't even know it.

David Burr died. So who was he? Well, anyone at OU during the '60s, '70s and '80s knew of him, or at least benefited from what he did. I did know David. I knew him, respected him, loved what he did and what he stood for, and will miss him. I'll bet each of you had but a handful of teachers you really remember during your education. For me, David was one of mine.

Everyone who knew him will have their anecdote. I have mine. I'll never forget "Vice President" Burr in white make-up and a clown outfit one Halloween, out on the town during a scavenger hunt running onto the porch to "fetch" a carved pumpkin. But David wasn't an anecdote. You see, David helped me grow up. To be sure there were others, but somehow right now I don't seem to remember them. He was fair, honest and a man to be emulated. He was OU.

Right now, I feel anger as well as reflective. I consider David part of my heritage. He was 20 years my elder but he was "one of us." It's too soon for someone in my era to die. But that's the trouble. It's always too soon. He did so much, but had so much more to do. I'm angry because I didn't better keep in touch. Angry because I'm being cheated out of his counsel. I guess there's a lesson to be learned from David again.

Yeah, we Okies *hate* to lose. Then again, maybe we just traded him to another school. I'll bet he's organizing and fund raising, educating and counseling at his new university, "ole U of H" . . . you see, that's the University of Heaven.

Chris Thompson, '74 M.D.
Brentwood, California

Authors Draw Applause

I most certainly wish to extend my thanks and appreciation for helping improve the public's awareness of the plight of mathematics in our society through the article in the new issue of the *Sooner Magazine* by our own

Curtis McKnight titled "America's Math Report Card: Flunking Our Future?"

Also, I wish to commend you for the article by Dr. Vivien W. Ng of History, titled "Knowledge and Responsibility: the Chinese Tradition." I was very moved by it. It certainly speaks about the importance of commitment in our academic careers. It is the type of commitment I believe we mathematicians need in our attempts to renew our discipline in this world.

Stanley B. Eliason
Chairman and Professor
OU Department of Mathematics

An Opposing View

I was shocked to read the article by Edgar L. Frost in the Summer '87 issue characterized as a tribute to Percy Buchanan. I also was a student of Professor Buchanan but one who, apparently, was left with different impressions from those of Prof. Frost.

Frost's article projects the false view that the major problems between the United States and the Soviet Union are those of cultural misunderstanding. He makes numerous comparisons of the free institutions of America and the party-controlled organs of the Soviets, finding them to be similarly operated. In the tradition of "blame America first," Frost asserts that "we have seldom considered the Russian side." He does so by knocking down a series of strawmen of his own creation.

Frost asserts that the Russian people are politically apathetic and find comfort from their strong, atheistic rulers. Safe in the knowledge that he will never be tested, he even asserts that most would not leave if given the opportunity, denying the reality of the Berlin Wall. Sadly, for the Russian people, he leaves the impression that they are to be equated with their Soviet rulers.

The issue, however, is not Russian culture, history or tradition. The issue is Communism. The issue is the gulag. The issue is slave labor. The issue is the legion of Soviet Jews who pray daily for the freedom to join their people in Israel. The issue is the continued agony of thousands in Indo-China who pour across the Mekong

Letters continued on Page 32

Grayce Kerr's at-home dress is a very fine, 100 percent cotton eyelet, based on a picture of a dress she wore entertaining one afternoon at the mansion with her daughter, Kay Kerr Adair. Kay gave us the material from her mother's collection of 100 percent cotton fabrics, and it's almost identical to the fabric in the dress she wears in the picture."

When Uptegraft does not have access to an original to work from, she must rely on photographs and the written and oral descriptions of the first lady's friends and family. The dress of Willie Emerson (Mrs. Johnston) Murray was such an undertaking.

"We made the Murray dress from a newspaper description and photograph and got her measurements from family members," Uptegraft recalls. "The newspaper article called it a 'squaw dress,' which would get lots of negative response today, of course. The writer describes the dress as being made of charcoal gray pima cotton with five flounces put together with tiny red piping. It's a one-piece garment, and the needlecraft is exquisite. The bodice and bottom flounce are trimmed in row after row of rickrack in reds, yellow, orange and green. Mrs. Murray wore green sandals with it and finished off the costume with a striking Indian bead medallion."

Like Mrs. Kerr's dress, Mrs. Murray's is relatively simple and inexpensive. Some of the formal gowns, however, were extremely expensive as originals and are equally so as replicas.

"Probably the most expensive original," Uptegraft says, "is Mrs. Henry S. Johnston's gown. It was custom-made in France and all hand-beaded with the beautiful, many-shaded gold beads placed so they're almost touching. The actual dress is in the Stovall, and it's very, very delicate. The design of the dress is quite simple; it's just a little chemise. But right now we can't afford the beading work. It's interesting that when we compared the original to the photograph of Mrs. Johnston wearing it, we found that she had it on backward."

Also expensive—and so at the bottom of the list to replicate—is the gown of Lillian Haskell. It, too, is in storage at the Stovall and is extremely

fragile. Expensive beading is not the problem in this case. The dress is covered with all sorts of hand-embroidered French knots, cutouts and inlays, open cutwork and a large number of little silk bows. Fay Taylor, a well-known Oklahoma City fashion illustrator, has produced a lovely rendering of the gown for the display case until the Fashion Group can come up with a better solution.

The most expensive of the completed replicas is the gown of the first Mrs. Boren, the former Jana Lou Little. Again, little beads are the big cost factor. Uptegraft says the Fashion Group spent more than \$500 on beadwork on the Boren gown, a figure that does not include any of the cost of the materials. Although Uptegraft and her students do simple beading, she explains that "I don't consider beadwork a design problem—and it's certainly not a future for my students—so we hire professionals to take care of that."

Of the project now, Mathews says, "We're down to the point where it's going a little slower. It seems there aren't any really easy ones to do, what with letters and interviews and approvals from this one and that one. So far, though, no one has refused to cooperate. We had trouble getting in touch with the Turner family, and the Cruise family told us they'd had an auction sale. We've found a Cruise relative, though, who says she has some things in her attic. She doesn't have any garments, but there are pictures. I've just decided that no matter what it takes, we're going to do this. Period."

Uptegraft displays the same kind of determination. She has had to work this project into her already full teaching and research schedule, but she thinks it important enough to merit her attention.

"We don't really have a time frame for completion," she says. "We consider it an ongoing commitment. We continue to work steadily on it so that those who have contributed or want to contribute know it's a living project, but we don't want to push so hard that it looks as if we're trying to finish the project and be done with it."

"After all, there will always be another governor whose wife wears another important dress." □

LETTERS

Continued from Page 4

and through the jungles of Cambodia to escape Soviet-financed "seminar camps," the Laotian and Vietnamese gulags.

One claim of Frost's with which there can be no argument is: "I do not remember much about Asian history." He assuredly does not. The Soviets are now moving toward the Persian Gulf through Afghanistan. They have captured Cam Rahn Bay. Actively engaged in the murderous civil war in Sri Lanka, they are quickly consolidating their hold on the strategically essential Trincomalee naval facility. With the Straits of Malacca bracketed, Soviet support for Communist guerrillas in the Philippines will be intensified.

I find nothing in Frost's presentation which reminds me of the Percy Buchanan I knew. That Percy Buchanan sought truth in his knowledge of other cultures. He could easily separate the splendor of ancient cultures from the barbarousness of temporary conquerors. It is preposterous to imply that his love of culture and learning would lead him to blindness of the dangers faced by his own culture, tradition and liberty. He did remember Asian history, and a lot more.

Joe O. Rogers, '71 B.A.
Washington, D. C.

Editor's Note: Alumnus Rogers, who majored in economics and philosophy at OU, is president of Rogers International Inc., a Washington, D. C., firm specializing in Asian-Pacific investments, and founder and president of the Institute for Free Enterprise Development, an organization dedicated to the promotion of democratic capitalism in less developed nations. Before entering private business, he served as U.S. Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in economics from Duke University.