
PROLOGUE

When Opportunity Knocks, Someone Should Answer the Door

A long-time Oklahoma Congressman retires as Speaker of the House, and his alma mater—the University of Oklahoma—gains custody of his papers and the benefit of his personal expertise in the classroom. Suddenly a respected but little-known Congressional Studies Center becomes a national treasure.

An assassin's bullet catapults the former leader of the U.S. Senate into the presidency, and when he leaves that office, the University of Texas builds a world-class library for his papers. Later our brethren to the south have the good sense to entice to their faculty one of the Congress' most charismatic members, who comes to UT to work in a program spawned by those papers.

National and international reputations are built by institutions possessing the vision and courage to seize opportunities which present themselves in the form of a Carl Albert, a Lyndon Johnson, a Barbara Jordan. Such an opportunity occurred for the University most recently with the willingness of the retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William J. Crowe Jr., to join the OU faculty.

Crowe could have had his pick of academic or corporate appointments. For two terms he was the most powerful military figure in the world—and many contend the most influential peacetime military leader in the his-

tory of his country. And yet, among flag officers, he was unique. Considered an "intellectual" by his colleagues, an "unconventional thinker" with a disarming, self-effacing wit, his academic credentials are exceptional. After a freshman year at OU, he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, earned a master's from Stanford and a Ph.D. from Princeton.

As the students who already are lining up for his course in geopolitics will discover, the admiral is a masterful speaker, his presentations carrying the added authority of a man who was a major player in international affairs. The rest of the University community and the public at large will share the students' good fortune in the months to come as Crowe supplements his part-time campus teaching duties with promotional appearances on behalf of the institution as well as working with OU student interns in Washington, D.C.

For these duties, and for the instant visibility which his presence brings to the University, the admiral will be paid handsomely by faculty standards. He is worth every penny. Eventually the professorial chair which he will occupy at OU will be permanently endowed through a \$5 million private funding campaign, largely from national and international sources that would be interested in supporting the University for no other reason but to honor Crowe. This endowment will

continue to strengthen the University's academic mission long after the admiral's tour of duty here is over.

Enhancing the credibility of a university by acquiring the services and/or papers of prominent public figures is not a new tactic. In a few establishment institutions, such coups are routine almost to the point of commonplace. And this is not the first time opportunity has knocked on OU's gates.

There was the time, for instance, that OU-trained operatic tenor Joseph Benton persuaded an old friend, the British diva Eva Turner, to spend nine months on the OU music faculty, a "visit" that lasted a decade. Earlier a Dallas oilman/alumnus named E. DeGolyer became convinced that his extensive collection of rare books in the history of science should be an academic resource, his gift to the University establishing the pre-eminent program in that field. When world-renowned Oklahoma-born ballerina, Yvonne Chouteau, and her husband Miguel Terekhov tired of trying to raise two children on tour, a ballet program was created where there was none. And more recently, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Edwin Corr chose his alma mater for a State Department-sponsored year-in-residence.

The alma mater element is often present when fortune smiles on the University. It's always nice to open the door to opportunity and find someone you know on the other side. —CJB