

The Celebration Committee

By BEN FENWICK

Katie Davis was out to dinner not long ago with one of her daughters who was home on a break from a college in California. The younger Davis indicated a family having dinner together at the next table. There sat a grandmother and grandfather dining with their children and grandchildren.

"Mom, you just don't see families having dinner together out in California," she said.

That's not meant to slight the Golden State, Davis says, but Oklahomans always have been a little stronger in some categories.

"Our values are different here," she insists. "We are the Midwest. Here, families go out together, have dinner together and go to church together. People here are warm and caring."

She counts friendship and caring as two qualities that bind OU's alumni to their institution. Such bonds were forged when OU was founded in the wilds of a new land, where the strength to persevere through hardship was sought through the ties one had with family and friends.

One hundred years ago, this strength founded a university.

Katie Davis is the chairman of the OU Centennial Celebration Committee. She describes herself as a "wife, mother and full-time University volunteer."

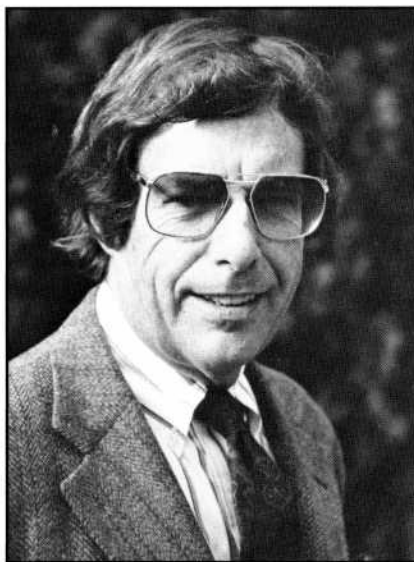
Her committee's task is to set the schedule for the celebration by creating a timetable of events for OU's 100th year, coordinating the work of all the other Centennial committees. The Celebration Committee also will plan the Centennial's opening event on December 19, 1989, and closing ceremonies, December 19, 1990.

"It is a giant undertaking, a year-long celebration," Davis says. "Preparations started two years ago and won't be finished until two years from now."

The timetable for 1990, OU's Centennial year, will be divided into three sections. The first part of the year will focus on the past, on appreciating OU's rich history and accomplishments. The second section will focus on the present at OU. In the late fall, the



Chairman Katie Davis
Alumni/Civic Leader
Oklahoma City



Ed Turner
Co-Chairman
Cable News Network
Atlanta, Georgia

celebration will look toward the second century, to what OU hopes to accomplish down the road.

The Commission's various committees are planning an OU documentary film, an OU Centennial book, events

involving the student population, Centennial enhancements of graduation ceremonies and other regular events, academic symposiums and several special projects.

"We are trying to do all of this without spending a great deal of money. We are using people resources — time, energy and resources other than funds," Davis says. "We have to do it on a shoestring budget."

Davis graduated from OU with a 1958 bachelor's in home economics and a 1961 master's in education. Her husband Jim has OU degrees in business and law. One of the couple's three daughters also graduated from the University.

It is Davis' philosophy that alumni must try to pay back some of what they have gained from the knowledge they acquired. If it weren't for OU, she maintains, she and those in her family would be different people indeed. That conviction was a determining factor in her decision to accept the presidency of the OU Alumni Association in 1983 and then to serve a second term.

"We feel indebted," Davis says of herself and Jim. "If it were not for OU, we would not be doing the things we are doing today or have the things we have. We are happy to try to give something back to the University in time, financial support or whatever we can give."

The good feelings of alumni camaraderie do not mean the coming year will be without trials. Oklahoma is struggling to free itself from the financial collapse of the farm and oil states. Times have been tight and pockets empty; OU has suffered.

But Davis contends that now is the time for Oklahomans to start believing in themselves again — and in generating such belief, the Centennial Celebration can be a torch to light the way. In fact, Davis feels that the strong bonds between OU and its alumni can be a model for the recovering state and its citizens.

"I think we have unusually strong support from our alumni," she says. "Even with the economy the way it is right now, in spite of the adversity, we have done quite well."

The Development Committee

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of education is working as an individual to build for the future, for others as well as for oneself. Giving is the work of the future, and few have had a greater hand in giving than Stanton L. Young, chairman of the Centennial Development Committee.

A 1950 graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Young is president of the Young Companies in Oklahoma City. His Centennial job is to organize volunteers in raising \$100 million to fulfill the Centennial Campaign goals.

Young's philanthropic background already has benefited the people of Oklahoma in many ways. He serves on the National Corporations Committee of the United Negro College Fund. He and his wife Barbara are board members of the Barbara and Stanton Young Foundation, which provides grants to support research in health care. He has been instrumental in the development of the Oklahoma Health Center and civic projects in downtown Oklahoma City.

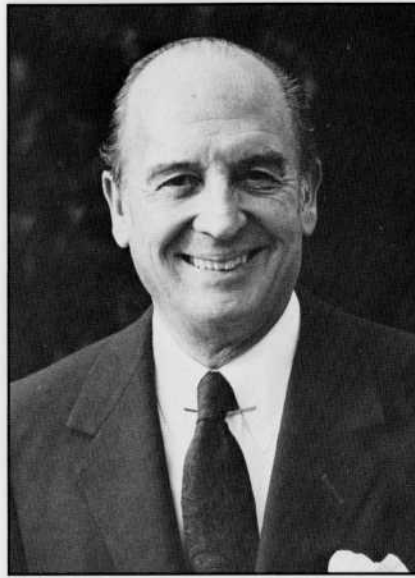
Since the Centennial fund-raising activities began, Young's committee has helped the University obtain gifts and pledges of approximately \$51 million—more than halfway to its \$100 million objective.

The contributions have ranged from a few thousand to several million dollars. The gift list is too long to mention in its entirety, but a few examples illustrate the scope of donor interest.

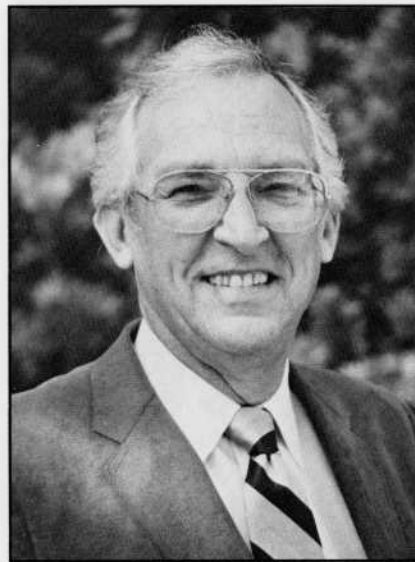
—Corporate gifts include a \$1 million award from the Kerr-McGee Corporation to endow two professorships, one in geology and the other in engineering, and six perpetual \$4,000 scholarships for academically gifted students.

—A collage of gifts totaling \$150,000 will fund development of a building plan for the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History and for support of the Western History Collection. Six different foundations and organizations, including a number of anonymous donors, participated.

—Gifts of property and materials include the Alkire Collection, 208 glass plate negatives of photographs taken in Oklahoma in the early 1900s, de-



Chairman Stanton L. Young
The Young Companies
Oklahoma City



Douglas R. Cummings
Co-Chairman
Cummings Oil Company
Oklahoma City

—picting farming, railroad construction, camp meetings and other events.

—Deferred giving has included a \$1 million paid-up life insurance policy from Mrs. Doris Bratton of Norman for the Second Century Fund and a similar \$750,000 policy from Walter Neustadt Jr. of Ardmore, both gifts to the OU Foundation. The Neustadt

fund will augment the endowment of the University's prestigious Neustadt International Prize for Literature and assist publication of *World Literature Today*, OU's acclaimed international literary quarterly.

—Contributions from faculty and staff have included a donation of \$15,000 from Sooner Football Coach Barry Switzer to help match the challenge grant from the Robert S. and Grayce B. Kerr Foundation for scholarships to academically promising minority students. Professor Emeritus and Mrs. Ralph Olson have created a \$25,000 endowment for scholarships in geography.

—Grants from foundations have included \$2.85 million for the College of Business Administration and a \$2 million challenge grant to establish the David A. Burr Scholarship endowment, both from the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation of Ardmore. The Sarkeys Foundation of Norman gave more than \$1 million to endow a chair in letters and for the libraries endowment. Major gifts also have come from the Kerr Foundation, Oklahoma City, and McMahon Foundation, Lawton.

With \$49 million to go before the \$100 million Centennial target is reached, the efforts of the Development Committee continue unabated. The stated campaign goals represent an all-important "wish list," items needed to maintain the University as the flagship institution in Oklahoma's educational future. But Young's committee also is alert to other opportunities to fund projects not on the list but representative of the special concerns of donors.

Oklahoma has a tradition of meeting challenges, its strength always coming from the spirit of its people. In November, Young was named to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, recognizing his contributions to the state. In an interview with *The Daily Oklahoman*, he said, "The measure of the real person is what he does to help others—anyone can help."

Supporters of the Centennial Campaign are the "real people" who will carry the University of Oklahoma into its Second Century of achievement.

Academic Affairs

In the heart of the OU campus, the statue of Ralph G. Thompson's grandfather, William Bennett Bizzell, gazes serenely across the newly dedicated Elaine Bizzell Thompson Garden.

Bizzell's peaceful visage contemplates Bizzell Memorial Library as if to say to the passerby: This is the University of Oklahoma. Knowledge renewed by tradition.

Thompson credits the knowledge and skills he acquired at OU with leading him to the opportunity to serve as chief United States district judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

"The institution educated me," Thompson says. "I have felt prepared for everything I have done since I have been out of college. It was a beautiful and pleasant, as well as beneficial, place to go to college."

OU has long been a family affair for Thompson. It can be said that few others know the University as intimately as he does. His grandfather, one of the most honored of OU's presidents, held office from 1925 to 1941. Thompson's father, Lee B. Thompson, president of the student body at one point, graduated from OU in 1927. Thompson's brother Lee Jr. and sister Carolyn are also graduates, as are his wife Barbara and daughter Lisa. Daughters Elaine and Maria are OU sophomores. Thompson himself graduated from OU with a bachelor's in business administration in 1956 and a law degree in 1961.

OU's tradition of excellence led Thompson to accept the chairmanship of the Centennial Commission's Academic Affairs Committee. The committee has the task of imparting a Centennial character to regular academic events and activities at the University, as well as suggesting new events.

Thompson says the committee's planning is drawing on what is one of OU's greatest assets: the strength of its history.

"I want everyone to see, hear and be aware of the achievements and contributions of the University—historically, currently and projected into the future. We want to highlight the University's strengths and the excellence



Chairman Ralph G. Thompson
*Federal District Judge
Oklahoma City*



Jane M. Patten
*Co-Chairman
Civic Leader
Norman*

of its faculty and students. If we can convey those things during these years of celebration, I think we will have come close to succeeding. The Centennial can't help but succeed."

The committee plans to gather the faculty together for a Centennial convocation steeped in academic pageantry and Sooner traditions. The ceremony will feature a major interna-

tional speaker and a unique dramatic presentation of the history of the University as seen through the eyes of its presidents.

Actors will portray each president in the University's history, beginning with founding OU president David Ross Boyd and continuing to the current president. In period dress, each president will speak on significant events or memories of his administration. Choreography and scripting for the 20-minute presentation already are under way.

"I think that OU's strength goes back to the fact that Oklahoma is a very young state, and thus we are a very young university," Thompson says. "Our origins were modest. The state and the University literally started from nothing. We always have had to make what we have from very little."

Ralph Thompson's earliest memories of the University of Oklahoma are the Thanksgiving and Christmas mornings he spent in his grandfather's house across the street from Par-rington Oval. Boyd House, then the OU president's home, still stands as OU's visitors center.

From Boyd House, one can look across the street to the older part of the campus, make out the parapets of the administration building, Monnet Hall and the Chemistry Building, and remark at the craftsmanship and care put into the design of those buildings.

Pictures taken at the time of their construction show a campus almost bare of trees, buildings standing alone on open ground. Thompson notes that OU's earliest edifice was wrested from the dust of the prairie and raised to the open sky by men and women scarcely within a year of coming to Oklahoma.

"The pioneering spirit of Oklahoma is the same spirit of the University. You cannot separate them," Thompson insists. "People who have come here have been willing to strive very hard for excellence under difficult circumstances. We have a youthful spirit. In spite of shortages, we still strive for excellence. I think that is the tradition."

Student Affairs

Ask anyone who knows him. To describe OU engineering alumnus and rising-star professional Robert Purgason as energetic is an understatement.

But he wasn't his usual busy self when *Sooner Magazine* caught up with him for this interview. He had caught a cold from his children while reading bedtime stories. He had only enough energy left to renovate his house.

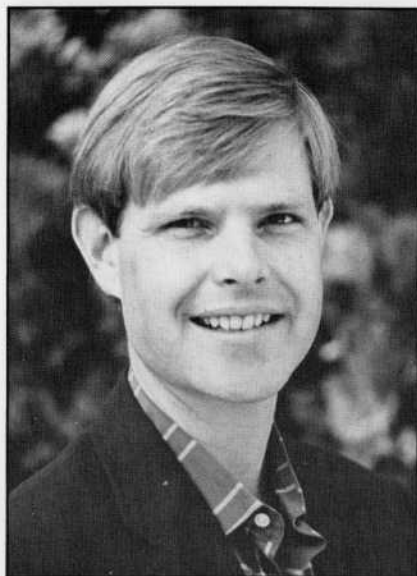
"Wallpapering," Purgason explains, sniffing from his cold. "Going to change the color schemes a bit. Then I think I'll go out and do some work in the yard. The last thing I want to do is lie around and do nothing; the weather is just too beautiful."

It is easy to see why Purgason was selected to head one of the most challenging committees on the Centennial Commission, the Student Affairs Committee. Purgason's job is to motivate OU's current students into joining the Centennial Celebration. He wants not only to make them aware of OU's 100th year but also to instill in them its excitement and energy.

"Our committee is trying to make sure the Centennial Celebration has something in it for the student body," Purgason says. "A lot of the things (the commission) has talked about . . . though they are all to benefit the students . . . don't appear to be as directly for the students as we might like. What we hope to do is provide involvement and awareness so they will get a good feeling, enough that they will come back to the University year after year and give it their support."

The committee plans to alter normally scheduled student activities by giving each a Centennial "twist." Old favorites among the students, such as Howdy Week, University Sing, Dad's Day and Sooner Scandals, will take on a new meaning related to the University's Centennial.

Also planned will be class reunions by decade. Each reunion will take place during regular OU home football game weekends. The first game will be the reunion for OU students who graduated in the 1980s, the next game for '70s graduates, the third for the '60s. Homecoming will unite grad-



Chairman Robert S. Purgason
The Williams Companies
Tulsa



Harold L. Andrews
Co-Chairman
AT&T en Philips
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

uates from the '50s and earlier. All the reunions will require student volunteers.

"We hope the act of volunteering will bring out an enthusiasm in the students about being on campus and

being part of the University."

Purgason believes the students who work on the Centennial will develop a particular place in their hearts for OU. He hopes they will remember the staff and alumni on their committees with the same fondness as the friends they made and the professors and classes they encountered at OU.

Purgason knows what can be gained from student involvement. A 1978 engineering graduate, he was involved in student activities from his first year on campus to the last. The image of the serious, bookish engineering student all-consumed in study fades in light of Purgason's campus career. While active in the engineering college, he was also a member of Alpha Tau Omega social fraternity, student government and Omicron Delta Kappa, a leadership honorary.

Although his grades were very respectable, he confesses that he decided early "that I wasn't going for a 4.0. There's more to college than just books. I made a decision to trade off the grades I could receive and not spend all my time studying. I believe a major portion of the university experience is getting out, meeting people, learning about others and how to interact."

Engineering school was so often difficult and demanding, Purgason recalls, that outside activities not only saved his sanity but gave him the strength to stare down his engineering math book when the time came.

Although he may have "traded off" the 4.0 he might have earned, he didn't trade off his career prospects. Purgason is currently director of operations planning for The Williams Companies in Tulsa, overseeing three nationwide pipeline companies.

Being chair of a Centennial committee has given Purgason the chance to return to his old element—student activities.

"The reason I have such a soft spot for the University is because of the wonderful academic experience I had at OU," Purgason says. "The University is the students. Our committee's focus is to make sure the students are part of the Centennial Celebration."

Public Affairs

Dick Reynolds has no doubt about the importance of a university to the people it serves. He sees its influence every day in his capacity as the mayor of Norman, Oklahoma's most international city, and as a businessman, from his loft-like office in Reynolds Ford.

Reynolds is the chairman of the OU Centennial Commission's Public Affairs Committee. The position is particularly appropriate for him, since he works every day within the happy affiliation which OU has with the people of its mother city. He knows that his city and the University are intertwined parts of each other. The University gives Norman its soul.

"OU gives the city of Norman a certain ambiance," Reynolds says. "If OU were not here, this city wouldn't be what it is today. There are so many things the University lends to the city culturally, economically and socially that we normally wouldn't have in a city of this size."

Where else in the world, Reynolds says, would a city of 75,000 people have a theater, a museum and a symphony?

Reynolds acknowledges other boons given to Norman by the presence of the University. The postal training center, for instance, with a construction budget of \$22 million, provides money to the city's economy through its payroll. The center came to Norman because University housing and facilities were made available to the postal service.

Of course, the town's prominence also is enhanced by OU's strong image among sports fans. Reynolds credits the national recognition of the OU Sooners and OU's select sporting facilities with the city's being chosen as one of the sites for the 1989 Olympic Festival during the centennial of the Land Run of 1889. He calls the festival "a jewel in the crown" of that celebration and compares it to "a football game every day for two weeks."

Using OU facilities, Norman will be able to provide an Olympic village, which has not been available to athletes at previous Olympic Festivals. Spectators, businessmen and the press also will live in Norman for



Chairman Richard L. Reynolds
Reynolds Ford Inc.
Norman



Clyde C. Cole
Co-Chairman
Tulsa Chamber of Commerce
Tulsa

about two weeks. Volunteers from OU and the city will provide the manpower.

"The games are big pluses for our community," Reynolds says. "Those people will come here, and they will spend money."

Reynolds cites the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education as another enticement for people to come to Norman.

"OCCE has one of the most outstanding economic development institutes in the United States," he contends. "It attracts people to Norman for all sorts of things, from weekend conferences to all-week seminars."

Reynolds calls the OU Centennial the most exciting time in Norman's hundred-year history. "It's a monumental thing. You don't have a Centennial Celebration every time you turn around. It's important for the University and important for the city, a project both can work on together."

Reynolds' committee plans to take the Centennial Celebration to as many places in Oklahoma as possible. Municipal governments in other cities will be urged to conduct an observance of OU's Centennial in their communities.

The committee also hopes to organize a symposium in which the relationship of state government and higher education will be discussed. The symposium will be called "The University of Oklahoma/The State of Oklahoma: A Shared Destiny."

Reynolds took the job as chairman of the Public Affairs Committee because of his ties with the University. In 1955, Reynolds graduated from OU with a B.B.A.

Reynolds feels that the pride Oklahomans have in their colleges and universities is vital. Oklahomans know the value of OU and higher education in general to the development of the state, both culturally and economically.

"The Centennial will bring alumni and the people of Oklahoma together to recognize how important higher education is to the state," Reynolds says. "If we can do that through this series of events, we will gain the primary goal of the celebration, to raise \$100 million."

Reynolds is not daunted by the enormity of the task. "It is a big goal, but frankly, an attainable one. I really think that this kind of celebration causes things to happen."

Health Sciences Center

It is the second largest employer in Oklahoma City. Roughly the same size as the University of Oklahoma's Norman campus, it covers many miles of the downtown area and is the hub, in this state, of what many regard as humanity's most noble endeavor. Discoveries made here enter the stream of current thought worldwide and change its course.

Yet many at OU/Norman are apt to forget the OU Health Sciences Center exists. Martha Williams plans to change that lack of awareness in the next two years.

Williams is the chair of the Health Sciences Center Committee on the OU Centennial Commission. Her husband, G. Rainey Williams, a renowned surgeon, is chief of surgery and interim executive dean of the College of Medicine at HSC. They share a unique view of OU as neither of them is a graduate.

Although a native Oklahoman, Williams is a graduate of Smith College in Massachusetts. Her husband is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. OUHSC became the center of their lives 30 years ago when Rainey joined the faculty.

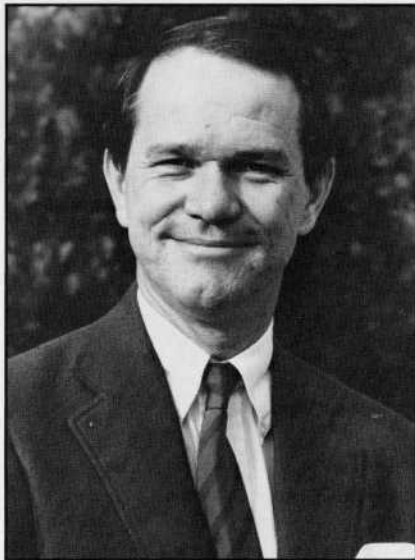
"We're very devoted to HSC," she says. "I think OU is headed in the right direction. It is a quality institution."

Williams firmly believes that the Health Sciences Center is a secret that OU no longer needs to keep to itself. "I don't think people realize what we have here. The physicians here come from all over the world. We have experts in just about every field. Research is ongoing. The staff and the facilities are up-to-date and modernized, and it's a teaching institution."

OU acquired its Oklahoma City medical campus shortly after statehood, and it remained a small part of the University for many years. In the 1970s, the state realized a renewed need for the University's medical school and related fields. Growth was phenomenal. Most of the HSC's facilities sprang up in the course of a decade. Presently, Williams says, the College of Medicine alone has more than 12,000 graduates.



Chairman Martha Williams
Civic Leader
Oklahoma City



Dr. John Bozalis
Co-Chairman
Physician
Oklahoma City

"It's an astounding number," she insists, "and that is only one college." The others are the colleges of allied health, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, public health, the Graduate College and the Tulsa Medical College.

Williams considers the OU Centennial Celebration an opportunity to create for the Health Sciences Center its own special place in the hearts and minds of OU alumni. It also would be an ideal time to strengthen communications between the Norman and Oklahoma City campuses.

"We are zeroing in on two main events for the Health Sciences Center," Williams says. "The first one, in January 1990, will be the annual College of Medicine Research Dinner. It has been a very successful fundraiser, but this time it will have a Centennial focus. The second will be during the emphasis period."

Emphasis Week, October 18 to 27, 1990, will be a time of Universitywide Centennial activity. Three days of the period will focus on the HSC. Thursday, October 25, the OU Tulsa Medical College will have a full day of activities with all alumni. The University president will preside, cementing ties between the Tulsa, Norman and Oklahoma City campuses.

Friday, October 26, a symposium at the Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City will feature a Nobel Prize winner as the speaker. Although Williams says the symposium is still in the planning stages, the subject probably will be cancer-related. Plans call for all HSC disciplines to participate.

Alumni events in each HSC college will occur on Saturday, October 27. Most of the colleges are planning a banquet and an instructional program. Later that evening, the three days of celebrating will conclude with a party at the Myriad Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City.

Williams modestly insists that she is not doing the work of her committee. "I'm just a figurehead. What I do is try to get the right people, get them organized and let them do the work."

Yet, people do not work without vision. The land-run settlers took time from the arduous task of earning their living, wiped the sweat from their brows and saw that the new state would need a place for its future generations to learn the art of healing. Williams wants that vision to shine as a part of OU's 100th year.

Promotion and Special Events

Alumnus David Johnson says the career his OU education made possible has given him a cosmopolitan perspective; it has taken him all over the world. Since his OU law school days, Johnson has traveled from Oklahoma to Thailand to Brazil.

But Oklahoma always draws him home again.

"OU is a worldly place," Johnson says. "There are students and faculty here from all over the world. If a student who goes here does anything besides stay in his room, that student is bound to be broadened by the experience. I have left the state several times, and I have come back each time."

A Tulsa attorney, Johnson is the chairman of the Promotion and Special Projects Committee on the Centennial Commission. His responsibility centers on two aspects of the Centennial Celebration: arranging for the production, sale and distribution of promotional items and mementos relating to OU's Centennial, and recording various Centennial functions to be used to promote the University at later times. Much of Johnson's inspiration is drawn from his student days.

"It was interesting and fun; we had some good times," Johnson says. "I made lifetime friends, not limited to University housing or my fraternity but in a stimulating university environment. I found the faculty and staff to be of excellent quality. I keep in touch with many of them to this day."

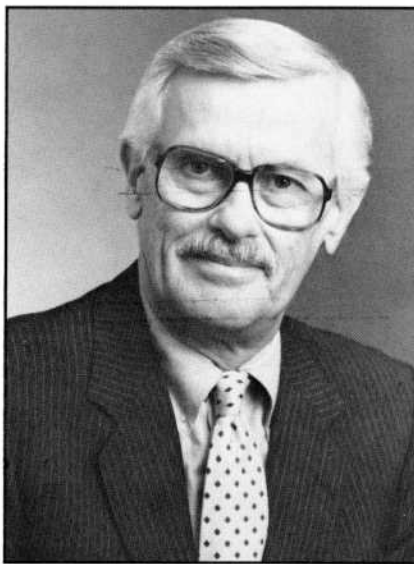
Johnson was very involved in student activities. There he learned how to interact with people, skills which he found useful when he went to Thailand with the U.S. Air Force and then to Brazil to manage a company.

Although a large responsibility for Johnson, promoting the Centennial hasn't been too difficult. The basic work already has been done by OU's traditions.

"The people of those decades have left a legacy," Johnson maintains.



Chairman David A. Johnson
*Attorney
Tulsa*



Warren K. Jordan
Co-Chairman
*Jordan Associates Inc.
Oklahoma City*

"The obvious growth of the campus has been in the buildings, going from raw earth to a very large complex of interesting architecture."

But it is more than buildings that make the University, he continues. The founders of OU left quality academic programs, significant educational concepts and a tradition of hard

work and achievement that were built upon, now a legacy to the current generation. Johnson hopes his committee can leave something too.

The committee is responsible for producing a book and a video. The video will be used by the Development Committee and the various academic divisions to tell the story of OU. JCPenney, through the offices of Centennial Commission Chairman W. R. Howell, helped produce the video, which touches on the history of OU but focuses on current events and activities. The video also can be used by individual colleges to recruit students.

The OU "coffee table" book will highlight the University's story photographically. Flags, jewelry and other promotional items will be designed and produced with a Centennial theme.

"We're trying to pick items that are dignified yet fun," Johnson says, "interesting to both the students and the alumni who will purchase them."

Johnson says the Centennial will live up to his expectations as well as those of others. Members of the commission, including those on his committee, are intensely loyal to the University and ready to get involved in their projects. These people exemplify the same spirit as the founders of OU. Experience tells him that, in almost every instance, when people need to rise to the occasion, they do. He believes the wealth of enthusiasm for the Centennial will make it an exciting and thrilling year.

Johnson claims that support for the University is statewide, even coming from people who never attended the institution.

"We are pulling together," he says. "The Centennial will be done in an exemplary fashion. People who are connected to OU will be proud. It will be excellent."

"We want to demonstrate that the University is not just 100 years old, but it is also a leader in Oklahoma and the Southwest. The Centennial is a tribute to Oklahoma." 