

EDITOR'S NOTE: Randy Splaingard, editor and part-owner of the Oklahoma Gazette, devoted his January 24, 1990, column "Currents" to his alma mater. A 1974 graduate, Splaingard was drawn to the University of Oklahoma by "a good journalism school" just the right distance from his Collinsville, Illinois, home, and he reports, the tuition was right. "I was a 'Sunbelter' before the oilies fell in love with the place." The state's largest weekly newspaper with 102,000 readers—35,000 subscribers and those who pick up free copies in metropolitan shopping areas—the Gazette is described by the editor as "the premier weekly journal of news commentary and the arts in Oklahoma City." Splaingard married Carla Chenoweth, '73 B.S., '75 M.S., now director of student affairs at the OSU Technical Branch in Oklahoma City. Their son Andrew is 4½.

The Centennial Arches

Class memorials on the OU campus are treasured reminders of the 100 years of students who have written the history of the University. However, many graduating classes did not have the opportunity to participate in a class memorial at the time. Therefore we invite any Sooner alumnus or friend to be a part of the Centennial student body's campaign to construct Centennial arches at the Lindsey Street entrance to the main campus similar to those at the other entrances.

Those wishing to help us reach our goal of \$50,000 may mail checks payable to OU Foundation-Arch Campaign to Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Avenue, Room 225, Norman, OK 73019-0401.

Todd Cunningham, '90 B.A.

Joy Kelly, '91 B.A.

Centennial Arch Campaign Co-Chairs

"The Voice of New England"

I am thankful to you for the generous amount of space devoted to me in the Fall 1989 *Sooner Magazine*.

I am especially thankful to the University of Oklahoma for providing the wonderful professors and administrators who made possible such a major portion of my training enabling me to live a rich and exciting life right at the edge of the newest events and developments in society.

OU's Special Magic

Generally speaking, I'm not the sort of person inclined toward intense periods of reflection. I typically try to do the best I can in any given situation, and I'm certain I've learned some good lessons along the way, perhaps even the hard way. But I don't dwell on the past a lot. It is, after all, past and untouchable. It's the future, usually, that dominates my mind when I find the time to sit down and really think.

But I've had several occasions in the past couple of weeks to dabble a little in the past and, yes, even engage in some warm reflection. What caused it all were some trips to Norman and my alma mater, the University of Oklahoma. Something mystifying always happens to me when I make that drive to the institution I considered my home so many years ago. A warm glow swells in my heart, and yes, sometimes a tear even wells up in my eye. Enduring memories fill my mind. It's as if I'm going home.

And in a sense, I am. The lure of OU is what initially attracted me to this state 20 years ago, and for four fleeting years I considered that campus the boundaries of my world. And although I ultimately graduated and left OU, upon reflection I can honestly say OU never really left me.

How can I feel this way after so many years? Probably because so much of what I am and so much of what I have is firmly rooted in my days at OU. There I was, a gawky 17-year-old who didn't know a soul, 500 miles away from home and out on my own for the first time in my life. Four years later, I'm grateful to say, the transformation was, well, considerable, if I say so myself.

Along the way I encountered some wonderful people — professors, co-workers and friends—who gave me a chance, stood by me, taught me a lot and forgave me my trespasses. Many of them remain treasured parts of my world to this day.

I believe that Dr. Bizzell, Mr. Kraetli, Dean Holmberg, Dr. House, Kenneth Kaufman, Patricio Gimeno, Dr. Scatori, Mr. Wehrend, Professor Richards and the many others who

by Randy Splaingard

I met the woman who would become my lifelong partner and trusted soulmate. I found direction, matured, developed a purpose in life and learned how to make my way in the world. That's a tough challenge to impose upon any one place. But for me, it all happened within one square mile of remarkable ground in the heart of Norman.

Today when I trod the paths of the campus, it all comes back to me. Certainly, the physical surroundings have changed—the cedars under which we often frolicked are gone, old Greek houses sport contemporary facades, new construction speckles the skyline, and you can't drive the ovals anymore. Presidents have come and gone. Venerable scholars have retired or died or moved. Sports fortunes have ebbed and flowed. And issues have certainly changed with the times.

But for me, these are but the temporal trappings. And change as they may, I sense that they haven't—and probably can't—transform the special magic that I feel whenever I set foot there. Innocent, untested youth and educated adulthood. Mistakes made and lessons learned. Values gained, principles mastered, character molded. Selves found and maturity achieved. The creation of whole people, all within the loving embrace of alma mater.

It's been happening for 100 years now. It happened 20 years ago for me, and today it's happening for the children of my friends. It's no easy job, if my own case is typical, but through times of prosperity and adversity, boom and bust, thick and thin, OU's special magic has always pulled through, enriching lives, creating opportunities and building fond memories that last a lifetime.

And as it stands poised on the beginning of its second century, I'm confident it always will.

Live on, University.

helped shape my life, would rejoice to see the article, and my greatest regret is that they cannot.

Streeter Stuart, '32 B.A., '36 M.A.
Belmont, Massachusetts