

The Newcomen Society Dinner

A TESTIMONIAL TO 100 YEARS OF PROGRESS



The Newcomen event owed its success to the efforts of volunteers assembled by Chairman Karen Luke to assist OU Centennial staff. Front row, from left, Polly Nichols, Ann Schaffer, Luke, Chris Houk, Sarah Hogan, Donna Murphy, Mary Lyle Weeks; back row, Jan Robinson, Kim Knox, Mary Kay Harrison, Katie Davis, Ann Powell, Marilee Foor, Ellen Williams and Doris Cagle. Not pictured are Linda Rodgers, Patty Ramsey, Anne Workman, Marilyn Balyeat and Helen Sanger.

The Newcomen Society of the United States chose to honor the University of Oklahoma with a testimonial dinner meeting on the institution's 99th birthday, December 19, 1989. This first official event of the Centennial year proved to be a fitting blend of academic purpose, historical tribute and vision for the future.

The nearly 300 special guests—alumni, educators and friends of the University—were greeted upon arrival at the candlelighted Oklahoma Memorial Union Ballroom by trumpeters and carolers. Retired Oklahoma City banking executive J. W. McLean, now an adjunct professor at OU, was master of ceremonies for the evening, which featured a keynote address by President Richard L. Van Horn. Banquet arrangements were under the direction of a special committee of alumnae, chaired by Karen Luke of Oklahoma City.

The program followed the traditional Newcomen format, which originated in Great Britain. Included were the presentation of the Newcomen Scroll to the University by the vice president of the society's board of trustees, C. Daniel Hayes Jr., and toasts to both the queen of England and the president of the United States. This respected society was formed to honor achievement in American business and bears the name of Thomas Newcomen, the Briton who invented the steam engine.

While recounting the colorful 100-year history of the University, Van Horn reminded the Newcomen audience that the end of the first century was also the beginning of the second. Alluding to the pride Oklahomans felt in their past, he charged them to build for the future at the University.

"May our successors meet on December 19 in the year 2089," he said, "and announce with equal pride that during their 100 years, the University of Oklahoma has survived, has excelled and has become a great international university."