

The Students

CENTENNIAL ARCH CAMPAIGN

For parts of two academic years, every student activity bore the tag "Centennial." Students served on the Centennial Commission; they planned and rehearsed special events; they spruced up their houses and played tour guide. Deluged with University history and tradition, they took very seriously the responsibility of being the Centennial student body of the University of Oklahoma. Finally they wanted to leave something tangible behind to attest to their presence, their participation and their institutional loyalty.

In surveying the memorials of past classes, a committee of current students came to a startling realization. Nearly every campus symbol had originated as a class gift—the Bizzell Statue, the fountains, the '06 Rock. A few had fallen victim to time and expansion—the Spoonholder, the stadium clock tower, the reflecting pool. But standing sentinel throughout the century at three of the four entrances to the main campus were the Memorial Arches, once called the Gateways, gifts of the classes of 1915, 1917, 1919, 1920, 1932 and 1934.

The fourth main campus entrance at the Van Vleet (south) Oval on Lindsey stood archless. The students had found their Centennial project.

Architectural plans were drawn for two arches, eventually to be connected by a landscaped plaza—total cost \$100,000. The students agreed to raise half in cash with the balance to come in the form of donated services and materials. Somewhat awed by the undertaking, the committee went to work with Locust Grove senior Todd Cunningham and juniors Joy Kelly, Bristow, and David Wise, Oklahoma City, as co-chairs, with assistance from former OU Alumni Association president Jim Morrison of Tulsa. "Leave Your Mark" became the campaign's slogan.

There was some vocal opposition to the project from fellow students who were unimpressed by such collegiate



symbolism, who preferred that the money be spent on student aid, laboratory equipment or other pressing needs. Somewhat daunted but undeterred, the committee organized special fund-raising events, appealed to campus organizations, assigned quotas, solicited faculty, alumni and businesses.

Donors of \$1,000 or more were promised their names on a plaque on the arches. A number of individuals and eight student groups responded, two of the groups giving additional \$1,000 gifts in the name of the retiring vice president for student affairs, Anona Adair. Donors of \$300 or more received a plaque, \$50 or more an embossed certificate.

Harold's, the Campus Corner apparel landmark, gave \$5,000 and a percentage of sales. When an alumnus won the California lottery, he sent a check for \$5,000. A 1967 graduate from Georgia dropped a \$3,000 check by the alumni office for herself and two family members. By groundbreaking time, December 19, 1990, there was \$64,000 in the bank, and efforts were continuing to secure in kind gifts to complete the project.

For those students involved, the arches will remain the most memorable aspect of a historic year. As one of the organizers commented early in the campaign, the Centennial Arches will stand in mute testimony that "We were here, and we cared."

Regents' chairman Ronald White, at right above, assists the student campaign chairmen in proclaiming success for the Centennial Arches.

DON'T RAIN ON MY BIRTHDAY PARTY

Miraculously only two Centennial events fell victim to the weather, the Homecoming Parade, canceled on account of rain, and the students' "Birthday Party of the Century," an April 27 showers casualty that quickly regrouped, moved indoors and made do.

With the Centennial year spanning two school years, many students were destined to miss the actual birthday on December 19, 1990. Hence the student party was scheduled as a prelude to finals. The downpour cut attendance, perhaps, but failed to dampen spirits.

Running before, between and after classes to accommodate the greatest number of students, the party featured a mammoth birthday cake, ice cream and party favors. The highlight of the day, however, was the opportunity to be photographed while stuck to Pepsi Cola's Wall of Velcro, popularized on TV's "David Letterman Show."