

The Sarkeys Energy Center. Fifty million dollars and 340,000 square feet of high technology research and instructional space composing the largest building project in the history of higher education in Oklahoma.

Dedication of this massive, world-class facility was an ideal Centennial Celebration event. Here was the contemporary illustration of the spirit of those early Oklahomans who established the University of Oklahoma. This was a project that couldn't be done.

Launched in the euphoric days of the energy boom, the Energy Center campaign quickly encountered the virtual collapse of the petroleum industry, bringing severe economic hardships to many who traditionally had formed the University's private support base. Disregarding the temptation to abandon, curtail or at least postpone the project, the University and its backers spent the next nine years doggedly assembling a partnership of institutional resources, private individuals, industry and foundations and elected representatives on both the state and national levels. Slowly the Energy Center rose on the northwest corner of the campus, phase by phase as each package of financing was completed.

Mutual congratulations and a feeling of accomplishment were evident on November 18, 1990, when more than 500 donors, public officials, faculty, administrators and students gathered for the formal dedication. Keynoting the ceremonies was U.S. Secretary of Energy James D. Watkins, who shared the platform with Energy Center Founders Chairman Brian O'Brien, Governor Henry Bellmon, U.S. Senator Don Nickles, Congressmen Wes Watkins and Mike Synar, State Chancellor for Higher Education Hans Brisch, OU Regents' Chairman Ronald White and President Richard L. Van Horn.

Secretary Watkins, the retired chief of U.S. Naval Operations, also was the featured speaker at a dinner following the dedication. He was introduced by the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William J. Crowe, currently an OU professor of geopolitics.

The center is named to honor pioneer Oklahoma oilman S. J. Sarkeys and to

THE SARKEYS ENERGY CENTER



LEFT: Shirley Crowe, wife of Admiral William J. Crowe and now an OU faculty wife, presents a commemorative picture to the Sarkeys Energy Center dedication speaker, U.S. Secretary of Energy James D. Watkins.



The Energy Center was the project that refused to die. Launched as the oil boom turned to bust, the nine-year construction effort was a tribute to the determination of its backers.

commemorate a \$3.3 million gift from the Sarkeys Foundation of Norman. Private contributions to the center from more than 170 individuals, foundations and companies were in excess of \$20 million.

The Sarkeys Energy Center encompasses more than 20 academic disciplines and individual research programs focusing on such energy-related topics as oil and gas exploration and production, energy and the environment, remote sensing and production engineering. In

addition, active research is under way in the areas of methane conversion, surfactants, ultrathin polymer films and meteorology. Programs under development include national and state energy priorities, energy policy, technology transfer and the future role of natural gas.

At the time of the dedication, OU had approximately \$14 million in multiyear research funding for energy-related studies. Of that amount, \$9 million is involved directly in Sarkeys Energy Center programs.