

## R. Boyd Gunning

I thoroughly enjoyed your recent "Prologue" article about Boyd Gunning. You truly expressed the feelings that you felt for this great man; in turn, it made me think what Boyd Gunning was to Billy Vessels.

In my junior year at the University of Oklahoma, after receiving an injury the previous year, I thought I would never play football again. You can well imagine what a frightening thought this was to an individual who had lived 15 previous years thinking of nothing but football. Boyd Gunning asked me to go to an Oklahoma alumni meeting in Madill. At a time when I did not like myself and did not have confidence in myself, Boyd Gunning did. As a result of his having confidence in me, I was able to come back and have my happiest year at Oklahoma in 1952.

As you stated in your article, Boyd Gunning did things his own way that one did not find in any book. Kitty Shanklin Rountree first told me the saying in my freshman year at the University—"The University is more important than the football team. Always remember it." Boyd Gunning, three years later, taught me the true meaning of this saying.

Again, thank you for bringing back some fond memories about a great man.

*Billy Vessels, '54 B.S.  
Coral Gables, Florida*

*Editor's Note: Billy Vessels' "happiest year," 1952, brought him the coveted Heisman Trophy. His good friend—and OU's—the late Kitty Rountree was president of the OU Alumni Association.*

As one of the fortunate ones who benefit from the Boyd Gunning school of on-the-job education with a "family" touch, I especially appreciated your unique, accurate and meaningful eulogy of Boyd in the Fall/Winter 1990 issue of *Sooner Magazine*. As the director of the Alumni Development Fund for a few years in the '60s and a supporter of the University (not always some of its leaders) both before and after, I have had an uncommon opportunity to recognize the bonding which Boyd added to the alumni (and indeed to all) fund-raising efforts of the Uni-

versity. He managed to make up for some very average leadership of the University at times with his "yes—but . . ." business philosophy. While I am not sure that his "training program" worked on me, I am certain that it worked for the University of Oklahoma. If you know of a comparable person now associated with the University, please share him with us in order that we may properly appreciate such a person during his or her lifetime rather than after death.

*Gerald Eckley, '51 L.L.B.  
Kingwood, Texas*

## The Murals Endure

I was pleased to read Robert Shead's letter in the Fall/Winter 1990 *Sooner Magazine*. I was particularly interested in his description of the murals which he painted for Dr. Paul Sears.

Three of the murals are still displayed in Room 129 of the Botany and Microbiology Building. The paintings provide an informative, attractive addition to the room, which is utilized primarily for instruction in plant anatomy and various courses on non-vascular plants.

Dr. (George) Goodman and Dr. (George L.) Cross remain active and usually visit the department every day.

*Leonard Beevers, Chairman  
George Lynn Cross Professor  
Botany and Microbiology*

## Lydia Haag Remembered

To those who did not know her well, Lydia Dorothea Haag, who passed away at her Norman home on January 30, might not have seemed the kind of professor whose students would tag her "Teach." But there were students who called her that—right to her face. On the other hand, there were those who quivered in their collective boots when she entered the classroom as she could be perceived as a taskmaster whose will seemed quite unbending. Told of this after she retired, she was totally and completely amazed. "Afraid of me?" she replied. "Why in the world would a student be afraid of me?"

Why, indeed.

Because Miss Haag would not accept second best. She would not tolerate a half-done job. In a world that is often less than perfect, she demanded and

expected perfection. The daughter of a Coalgate, Oklahoma, mine inspector who was killed in a cave-in when she was 12, Lydia learned early that life was precious and time a gypsy thief. The family moved to Norman in 1915 in order that the children could be educated at the University. Her three brothers, Henry "Heinie," Felix Emanuel "F.E.," and Herman, distinguished themselves in University of Oklahoma football uniforms.

Lydia became an English teacher, a grammarian extraordinaire. Her early days in the classroom were spent in high schools in Henrietta, Chickasha and Norman, where she influenced scores of young men and women. Henry Brooks Adams' famous line, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops . . ." was surely written for her even though it was penned in a day and time when gender was accepted as mostly masculine.

When she was enticed from Norman High School to the University of Oklahoma in 1946, her influence took a different turn as she became the teacher who taught the teachers. Her proudest moment came in 1967 when she received the Matrix Table award as the "Outstanding Female Faculty Member."

She loved nothing better than having a former student call to ask her where the commas should go or how to diagram some complex sentence. A recognized grammarian, she authored four work books for the Economy Company and saw them adopted by school districts across the country. An avid reader, she was on the editorial committee for *Levite* of Apache Publishing Company.

An avid sports fan, Lydia rarely missed an OU football or basketball game and took great pride in the fact that she tutored most of the players at one time or another. . . .

She is survived by a host of friends who will be glad to know that when her "summons" came, she was able to be "sustained and soothed by an unflinching trust," and could approach her grave "Like one that wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

*Molly Levite Griffis, '60 B.A.  
Norman, Oklahoma*

**(More Letters on Page 32)**



## Memorable Sooners

The Fall/Winter *Sooner Magazine* is memorable to me for several reasons. One, as a retired teacher of English, I was pleased with the quality of the writing in all the articles. Then too, I revived memories from names of people I knew—or know.

Dr. Oscar Jacobson was my teacher in History of Italian Art. He was delightful, and the course was helpful to me as I toured European art galleries. Dr. Edward N. Brandt Jr. was a pupil of mine at Central High School. He was a good student. Dr. E. E. Dale was my teacher in History of the American West. He was already a legend in 1938, but still active and knowledgeable.

Theodore H. Brewer was my teacher for two semesters of Shakespeare—fair—and for one semester of Chaucer—his favorite and thoroughly enjoyable—and one semester of Dr. Samuel Johnson, when he complimented me on a book review—memorable!

L. M. "Fess" Morgan was my all-time favorite teacher. . . I took 60 hours of English, and Morgan was the teacher in a majority of the classes. He had a priceless sense of humor and was really interested in those students who tried and *came to class*.

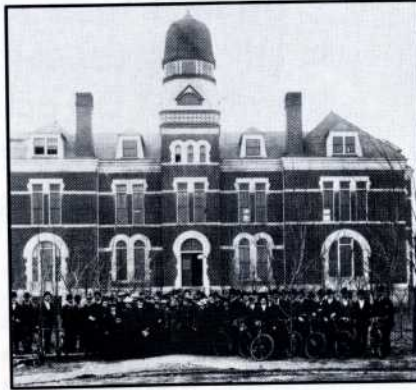
Ellsworth Collings was the supervising teacher in a summer class in Practice Teaching. This involved studying methods for presenting American Literature to a class of students in University High School. . . .

The OU Trombone Choir received enthusiastic applause a couple of years ago after their performance for members of the Ladies Music Club at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. Although I do not know members of the Broadway Gala, I was interested in the account of their performances in Europe. How great that those young people present such a fine picture of American youth!

I, too, with the writer of one letter, feel it was a mistake to change the name of DeBarr Hall. It was named for a person who had done a great deal for the University and was not involved with the group demanding the abolishment of a part of OU's history.

That *Sooner Magazine* deserves kudos!

Doris N. Taylor, '28 B.A., '39 M.A.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



### For Want of a Caption

The omission of a caption under the photo above in the special Centennial issue left long-time Sooners puzzled about their inability to identify this venerable structure. OU's first and only building throughout its first decade burned in 1903, as did its successor in 1907.

### The Centennial Sooner

Thank you for the special commemorative issue of the *Sooner Magazine*—"A Year to Remember."

The excellent photographs and detailed writing enable me to savor the events from the Preview on. It is not like being there—but it is an excellent substitute.

Margaret B. Branchflower, '41 M.A.  
San Jacinto, California

I want to add my congratulations to the many others I know you must have received for the outstanding Centennial edition of *Sooner Magazine*. It is really a beautiful publication and one to be saved and reviewed in the years to come. It brings back a lot of wonderful memories from 1990. The selection of pictures is outstanding, and I know there were thousands for you to choose from. It must have been difficult selecting the few you were able to use.

Again, congratulations for the outstanding work you are doing! All issues of the *Sooner Magazine* are great, but the Centennial issue was very, very special.

Barbara H. Tuttle  
Executive Secretary  
OU Board of Regents

I always look forward to reading the latest edition of *Sooner Magazine*. Today, as I retrieved the magazine from the mail box, I immediately knew

something was special about this issue.

What a marvelous piece of work you and your staff have completed with the production of this publication. You are to be commended for your extensive editorial and pictorial review of the events of the year.

I did not attend the events of the centennial year at the University of Oklahoma, however, this edition of *Sooner Magazine* has given me insights into the fantastic year you must have just completed.

Wallace Goodman, '70 B.A.  
Enterprise, Alabama

### Centennial: The Book

My copy of *Centennial: A Portrait of the University of Oklahoma*, arrived this past week. Though I have not had a chance to spend any time with the text, I thoroughly enjoyed each and every selected photograph.

Thank you so much for creating a treasure on behalf of Oklahoma University. Your work has not gone unnoticed, I know, by all of the OU alumni and friends who have received a copy of the book.

On one of my very first days at OU, I attended a luncheon where. . . I was honored to be presented a copy of *The Sooner Story*. I am so proud to have both books in my personal library!

Mike Cathey, '85 B.S.  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

*Editor's Note:* The *Sooner Story* was published by the University of Oklahoma Foundation in 1980 on OU's 90th anniversary. *Centennial: A Portrait of the University of Oklahoma, the institution's 100th anniversary 188-page coffee table book, is available at \$35 from the Office of University Affairs, 730 College Avenue, Norman, OK 73019-0395.*

### Praise for Ruby and Louise

Thank you for Louise Beard Moore's article on Ruby Sullivant. Obviously at our ages, we are not too integrated in this technologic world and so need some lighter reporting. I do hope you will find others to write about.

Your story brought back hundreds of memories.

Marie Roberts Cress, '28 B.A.  
Perry, Oklahoma