
PROLOGUE

When it came to communicating, Louise B. Moore had no equal

The passing of another of the University of Oklahoma's legendary teachers on June 5 unleashed an outpouring of old war stories—in this case old *Oklahoma Daily* stories—among the J-school grads of the '50s and beyond who gathered in Norman for her memorial service. And those who couldn't be there somehow felt the need to communicate with each other from all parts of the country by phone or the written word. She was, after all, the glue that bound us together, all those ink-stained products of hot-type journalism who bore with pride the condescension of the rest of the student body, the disdain of the English faculty, the occasional hostility of the administration.

To her face, she was "Mrs. Moore," among ourselves just "LBM," from the familiar monogram with which she initialed our stories—those that made the grade and those that didn't. Louise Beard Moore, associate professor emeritus of journalism, adviser to the student newspaper from 1952 to 1971, member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame, a newspaperwoman of the old school and yet the youngest person any of us knew. The obit said "born in November 11, 1905"; that couldn't be right. That would have made her 86, and we all knew she was ageless.

Mrs. Moore didn't just talk to you, she interviewed you, as if what you had to say was the most important statement made that day, and to her it was. She could rattle off three questions before you could answer one and never skip a beat. On a whirlwind tour of Europe not long ago, I heard her do the same with a bewildered French family—with nary a common language between them. With her, "need-to-know" was not a security clearance, it was a way of life.

Journalists, believe it or not, are required to complete a course in ethics. Mrs. Moore didn't teach that course; she lived it. And the effect was much more telling than any textbook could

have been. We went to school on the principles of accuracy. We had her standard to adhere to, and our failures were embarrassingly public. Unlike other students whose mistakes were protected by the sanctity of the gradebook, ours were displayed in 10-point type for all the campus to see. She defended us right or wrong—but better to be right than wrong because then you had to face LBM in the semi-privacy of her *Daily* office.

By and large, she liked us a lot—as long as there was something there to like. The lady was an excellent judge of character. Not everyone who passed through the *Daily* staff went on to epitomize the capable, responsible citizen she strived mightily to produce—but most did. That was all she required to be your friend and lifelong advocate. Long after she had retired, and the old Smith Corona manual ceased to turn out news copy, she was the clearinghouse for volumes of correspondence replete with clippings for or about former students, keeping them in touch with and tied to the University and each other as no official publication ever has.

Sooner Magazine valued highly her contributions when we were fortunate enough to enlist her services. In those instances, it was difficult to tell who enjoyed the assignment more, the interviewer or the interviewee. For the article on Page 31 of this issue, Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence medalist Norman Crockett requested that he be photographed with Louise Moore, who had nominated him for the honor.

The letters being exchanged about Mrs. Moore are marked by such a strong thread of shared experiences and sentiments as to be almost repetitious. Remarkably we each seemed to consider our relationship unique, each of us the favorite student of this favorite professor. She never would have allowed us to be so redundant; that blue pencil would have flown. But then not one of us wants to write -30- to this, our fondest Sooner memory. —CJB