



The long-awaited announcement finally came to a euphoric crowd anxious to share the new chief executive's hopes for the future.

A PRESIDENTIAL HOMECOMING

INTRODUCTION: *The aura of good feeling and optimism in venerable Holmberg Hall was almost tangible. Representatives of every segment of the University, city and state communities jammed into the old auditorium for the announcement that had been anticipated for weeks. U.S. Senator David L. Boren was the choice of the OU Board of Regents to become the 13th president of the University of Oklahoma.*

Boren's acceptance remarks in Norman, and later in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, were exactly what his audiences longed to hear. He left no doubt that he was happy to be coming home—leaving a position of national power and influence to direct the fortunes of the institution close to his heart. His would be a different sort of presidency, one based on the traditions he reveres, dedicated to the students with whom this OU graduate still identifies.

All that was missing from the historic occasion were the members of the far-flung OU family who could not crowd into Holmberg to add their applause to the president-designate's welcome. For them, Sooner Magazine offers a reprise of April 27, 1994. —The Editor

Remarks by U.S. Senator David L. Boren OU President-Designate

As we meet together in Holmberg Hall, named after the father of symphonic music in Oklahoma, we reflect upon the rich history of this institution. We remember the vision of David Ross Boyd, the first president, who not only planted the University itself on a wide open prairie but also lovingly planted the first trees in Norman to shelter it. We think of the renaissance years of President Bizzell, who attracted bright, young scholars and teachers from all over the United States. Many began their teaching careers here and wrote their greatest words here—great teachers whose names we remember—like Parrington in intellectual history, Sears in environmental studies, Ewing in political science and countless others.

From those early days to the present time, some of the finest minds—and greatest hearts—have been found within the boundaries of this University community. We have many to thank for building such a solid foundation, and three of those presidencies are represented on this stage—Presidents Richard Van Horn, Paul Sharp and George Cross.

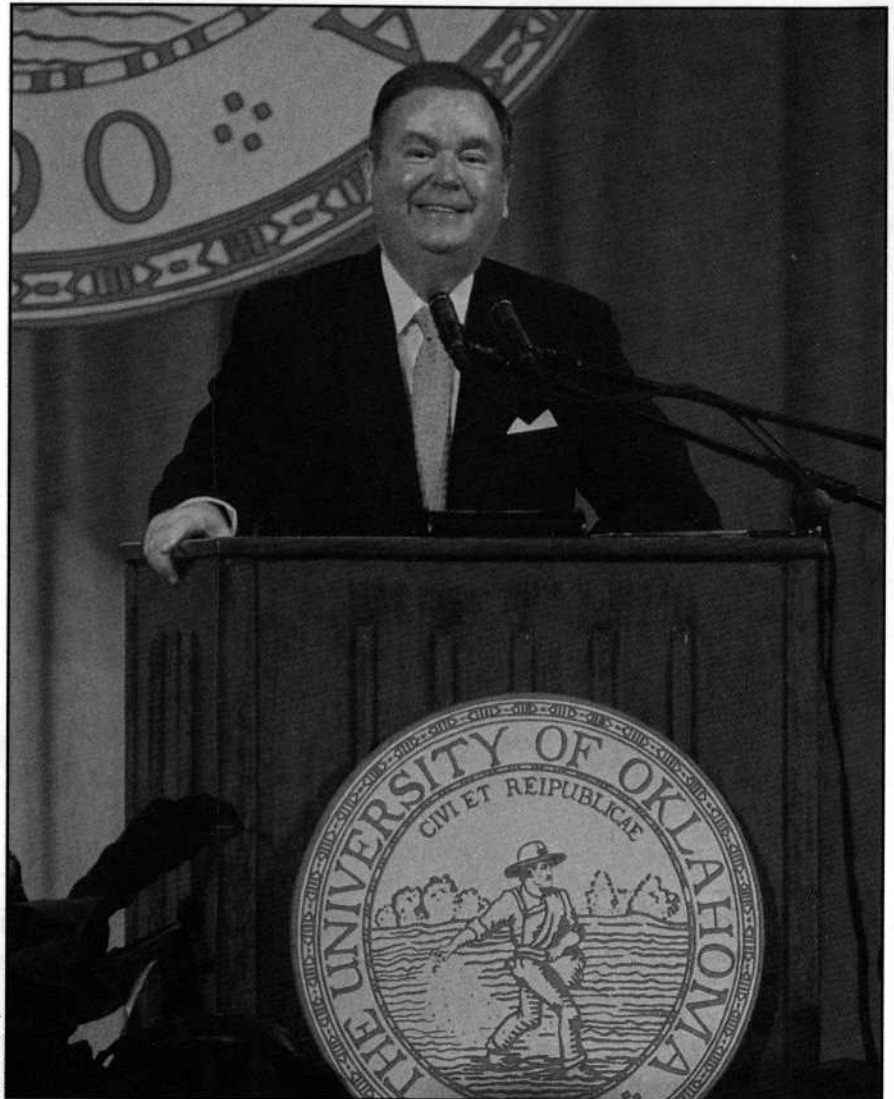
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This is a great institution—worthy of being loved and cherished for itself, worthy of a lifetime of commitment. Today, Molly and I join you in committing ourselves and all of our energies to the task of caring for our University. Today, we join our hands with yours, and together we will achieve the greatness that is within our reach.

In this room, there are many who are special to me. I want to take the privilege of introducing just a few of them to you. First is my partner in life and in all that I do. She truly loves this University, and we come together as a team. My wife, Molly Boren. Seated with her are our daughter Carrie Boren and our son Dan Boren.

Seated with my family on stage are two others who have had a special place in my life. One of them held the highest office ever held by an Oklahoman, only one step away from the presidency of the United States, an outstanding graduate of this University who, by his example, taught me that it is possible to serve in the political arena without compromising one's principles and personal integrity. The former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Carl Albert.

Also seated on the stage is a person who has been my intellectual mentor. I first met him, when along with Dr. Cross, he sat on the committee that selected me as a Rhodes Scholar. While I was at Oxford, I once was asked by one of the leading scholars in Britain if I could name the most outstanding university press in America. At first I hesitated, only to have him point a finger at me and say, "You should be ashamed! It's in your own state, and it's led by Savoie Lottinville, one of the most brilliant people in your country." Years later, I was asked in an interview to name the best educat-



Tim Money

Boren explains his decision to accept the OU presidency: "If we get everything else right but fail to provide for the education and nurturing of the next generation, we will lose our place as a great nation and our strength as a society."

ed person I had ever met. Without hesitation, I named someone—not from my years at Yale and not from Oxford. I replied with the name, Savoie Lottinville from the University of Oklahoma.

I am proud to have these and many others here with me today, and I am excited to be coming back home to a university with so many strengths.

One of our greatest failings as Oklahomans is that sometimes we fail to have confidence in ourselves. Even when observers from the outside comment on the talent of our people and the strength of our institutions, we shrink from believing them.

Let us just look at the facts. We

have one of the strongest and brightest student bodies in the United States and rank in the top 10 of all universities in the number of Merit Scholars enrolled. Our students excel in every area from athletics to the arts. We have a committed faculty, which includes many of national and international stature in their own disciplines. We have a dedicated alumni, who have increased their contributions to this University by one-third in the past five years. We are gaining a national reputation in selected areas of research, and research grants have increased 40 percent in four years. I note that these last two milestones have been reached

during the tenure of President Richard Van Horn, and we thank him for his efforts.

We have strong graduate and professional schools, including a medical school that was ranked as one of the nation's best in the *U.S. News and World Report* survey. We have the oldest university press in the Southwest and one of the best in the United States. We have two of the greatest collections of their kind anywhere at the Bizzell Library in western history and the history of science, a fine collection of art in the Fred Jones Jr. Museum and the largest political commercial archives in the world. With the Sarkey's Energy Center, we consistently rank in the top three universities in this country in energy education and research, and we have recently developed the finest weather research center of its kind.

We excel in all areas of the arts from music and dance to theater and the visual arts. As just one example of excellence in the arts, we are launching, with the help of Max Weitzenhoffer, a new program in musical theater, which will allow new works designed for the New York stage to first be performed here at the University.

We are in the process of building a new home for the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History with a lead grant from the Noble Foundation, which will make this museum and its collection the largest in the nation outside the Smithsonian Institution.

My point is a simple one. This is a great University. Let us no longer keep it a secret! Let us no longer keep it a secret from each other or from the people of Oklahoma or from any other audience we can address across our country and beyond.

Let us also let the people of our state know that each and every one of them

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has a stake in what happens at this University. To the leadership of our state, I say today, do not think of this University as a revenue consumer. Through its research, through its training of our work force, through its contributions to the quality of life that attract new investors and residents to our state, it is a revenue producer and an engine of economic growth.

To all of our citizens, I say today, this University, as a flagship for education in our entire region, touches the lives of all of us by training our future leaders. We desperately need leaders of wisdom and vision. Great universities produce them.

John Dewey once said, “Education is not preparation for life; it is life itself.” Every day, this University enriches the lives of all of our people. Today I urge our people to support this University because it is here that we find public lectures to keep us growing intellectually; it is here that we find athletic events to excite and invigorate us; it is here that we find great artistic events that feed us spiritually.

We must make sure that every Okla-

homan understands that the well-being of this University is critical to the well-being of this state. We must alert all Oklahomans and all Americans to one simple fact: if we get everything else right but fail to provide for the education and nurturing of the next generation, we will lose our place as a great nation and our strength as a society.

While we carry the story of the strengths of this University and its vital importance to the community, there is much more that we must do to achieve true excellence.

My first goal as president will be to build in this University a strong sense of community. Molly and I have not come here to become part of the university *administration*. We have come here to become part of the university *family*. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends on all of our campuses should feel that they are all part of that family.

It is common for all of us to take as our role models those from our own personal experience. My experience at this University fortunately exposed me to George and Cleo Cross as its leaders. Their love and concern for every member of this community—from the most distinguished professor to the greenest first-year student—permeated the University. From his walks across the campus to the open chairs at his table for coffee at the Student Union to the dinners and lively discussions at the president's home, President and Mrs. Cross helped build a true sense of family. President and Mrs. Sharp and others have nurtured that same spirit and kept it alive.

Our society has become more complex since the Cross and Sharp years, and so has our University. There are new challenges that require new tools of leadership. But one thing

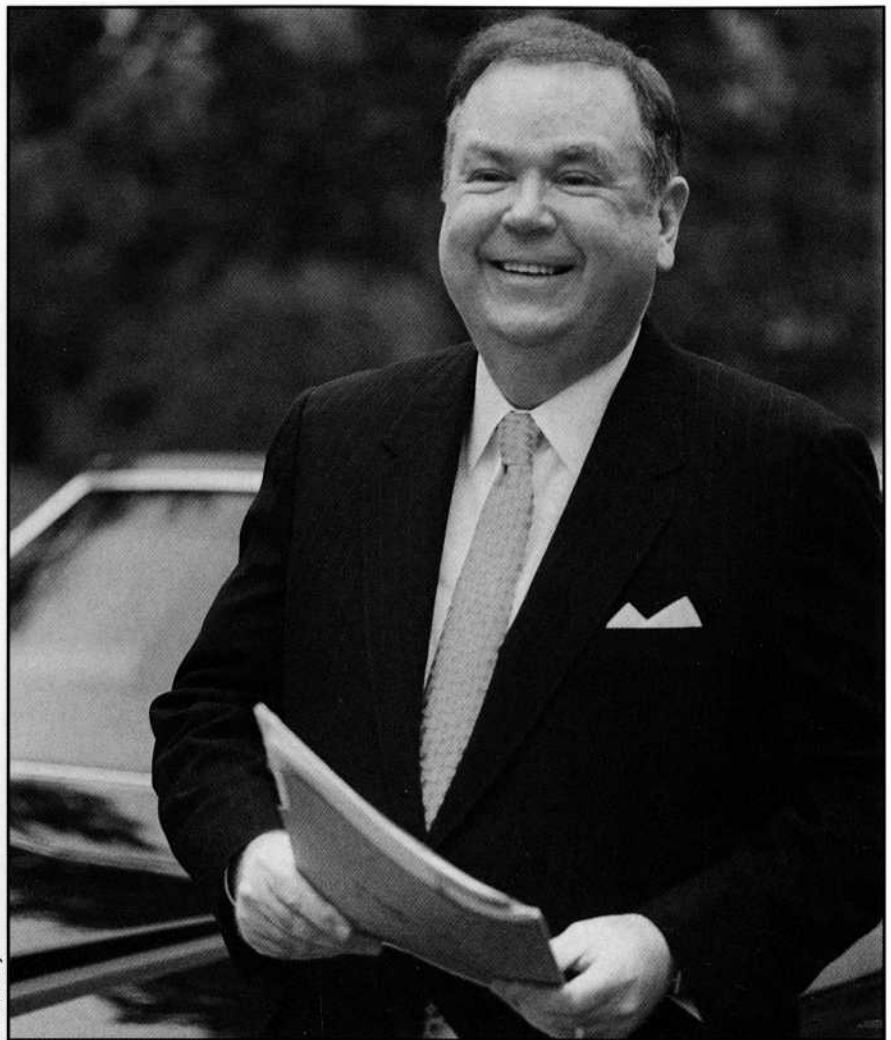
is certain, the hallmark of a great university always will be a spirit of family and community.

Just as a spirit of community is essential to our success, so is another fundamental building block of a great educational institution. While we must continue to strive for excellence in selected areas of research and graduate and professional education, there is nothing more important to the future of this University than true excellence in the teaching of undergraduate students. Many students are touched by this University only in their undergraduate years. They will take that experience back with them to their home communities, where they will become leaders and an important part of the social fabric of our state and nation. It is in the undergraduate years that the close emotional bond between student and University are formed and a tradition of lifelong support for the University is established.

I value research and professional education. Research and teaching are not competitive but are complimentary. The discovery of new knowledge stimulates better teaching, and the transmission of the findings and methods of research to students breathes new life into the entire process.

However, above all, we must never forget that all of the buildings and all of the staff—from the campus policeman to the president—are here for one purpose: to create an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. That is the central mission of the University, and nothing must be allowed to detract from it.

I recall the words of my friend, the late president of Yale University Bart Giamatti: "Surely all of us can recall certain voices, the voices of teachers



Tim Money

Delighted by his reception on the Norman campus, the president-designate leaves the Union to deliver his acceptance address in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

who literally changed the way we live our lives. I am concerned that the next generation not be deprived of those voices. I wish them to be as strong, as effective, as those who came before, and they will be if we never lose sight of our purpose here."

Each of us remembers the voice of that special teacher who touched our lives. Each of us remembers the discussions that they stimulated beyond the classroom. Each of us remembers those times when we were invited into their homes and were treated like members of their families.

In many ways, higher education has lost some of its support and standing in our society because it has lost its commitment to its central purpose. Whether it is in making decisions

about tenure, or deciding levels of compensation, or the allocation of scarce resources, nothing—absolutely nothing—should be given greater value than the value of teaching. No one on this campus—and in my opinion, no one in this society—deserves to be honored more than great teachers.

To demonstrate my own commitment to teaching and to students, I will ask to teach an undergraduate course in political science.

In the months and years ahead, as all of us work together as a family, there are many other challenges to undertake. Learning doesn't confine itself to neat departmental boundaries, and more innovative interdisciplinary approaches will be needed. We need to educate the next genera-



David Boren, center, greets Oklahoma Supreme Court Justices Marian Opala, left, and Alma Wilson, who were part of the capacity crowd of students, faculty, staff, alumni and community and state leaders at the Union Ballroom reception following the announcement of his appointment as the University's president.



Boren had his own family on hand as he proclaimed his intention to create a spirit of family and community within the University. Shown with the other half of the Boren team, his wife, Molly, right, are daughter Carrie, left, an actress in New York, and son Dan, a student at Texas Christian University.


tion to live in a much more international environment. The University of Oklahoma can become an innovative leader in creating a center to bring together those from law, business and graduate and undergraduate programs in language, history and cultural studies who could prepare our students to take on new business, diplomatic and political challenges in areas like Latin America, Mexico, China and the rest of Asia.

Diversity is a strength on our campus. We grow most from exposure to those who are not just like ourselves. Tolerance and mutual respect for all those of different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds are the real marks of an educated person. The international students on our campus have much to contribute to the learning and growth of our native-born students.

I hope to see the president's home become the setting for regularly scheduled discussions of small groups of students and faculty members deliberately chosen from different departments and disciplines on the issues of the day and innovative thinking in their own areas of scholarship. These round tables would help build a spirit of community and provide cross-fertilization for our thinking.

What goes on beyond the walls of the classroom really measures the greatness of a university. More informal academic discussions should take place, and students should be even more involved in community service. It is at the university that the lifelong ethic of community service should be formed. There is much to be done, but we have many tools with which to work: a great student body and an outstanding faculty ready to pull together as a single team.

The University of Oklahoma is ready to become a pacesetter and a national role model in American public higher education.

It is time for us to believe in ourselves. It is time to accomplish this goal. Let us do it—together. 

EDITOR'S NOTE: *David L. Boren will assume the presidency of the University of Oklahoma in November 1994 at the end of the current Congressional session. Serving in the interim is OU veteran administrator J. R. Morris, Regents Professor and provost emeritus.*