



At 69 years of age and well into his retirement, Bob Goins is doing what he loves best—working.

Although he officially retired from the University of Oklahoma's Department of Regional and City Planning in 1987, Goins holds the title of professor emeritus and continues to teach at least one course each semester on favorite topics such as urban design, urban history or urban conservation. As a faculty member in OU's Advanced Studies Program, he also teaches city planning basics to public administration students at military bases throughout the world. He continues to consult around the state and is putting his skills to work in Norman through a variety of community projects. And in his spare time, he is working on two historical atlases—a multivolume set on American Indians and a revised edition of his *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*.

"Retirement is allowing me more opportunities to do the things I love," Goins says. "My work is the greatest joy! I guess I'll be here as long as I have something to offer and as long as they'll put up with me."

The University has been "putting up" with Goins for a long time. The Norman native began studying architecture at OU in the late 1940s.

"It seemed like that was to be my destiny," he says. "I think a lot of it had to do with my father, who did carpentry and enjoyed building things. I was always impressed with that."

Goins' studies were interrupted by two years in the Army during the Korean War. He returned to OU with a heightened sense of social issues, realizing that "there was more to building urban life than just designing homes and buildings." With a newfound sense of purpose and help from the GI Bill, he completed his architecture degree and began graduate studies in regional and city planning.

City planners, he explains, generally focus on the physical aspects of the city—how a city should grow, the separation of land for different functions, the movement or transportation within a city, and how individual property owners interact and protect their rights. By its very nature, Goins says, it is a job that requires a lot of

public interaction, as well as patience and persistence.

"Planners can be up to their eyeballs in volatile community issues, and sometimes you come home and wonder, 'Why didn't I become a pharmacist?'" he says. "But most times it can be a real pleasure—especially if it is perceived by the public that you are really helping."

After completing his master's degree, Goins began job hunting with different cities, but OU made him an offer he could not refuse, and before long he was teaching full-time and researching with Lee Rodgers and Robert Lehr, two colleagues who would

become lifelong friends. Years later, Goins served as chairman of his department and deputy director of the Oklahoma Center for Urban and Regional Studies.

Looking back on his career, the thing that brings Goins the greatest pride is his relationship with his students.

"Regional and city planning is a very small and intensive program. We've turned out more than 400 graduates over the years, many of whom I still hear from today. To see them work and succeed as professional city planners and know that I've played a part—that's truly the best part of this job.

"I've spent my whole career right



Robert Taylor

Throughout his "retirement," Bob Goins, at left with regional and city planning colleague Richard Marshment, has continued working for the institution and the community. But he and his wife, Juanitta, OU's assistant budget director, also enjoy travel, gardening and Bob's two grandsons, Maverick, 3, and Hudson, 2.



here at the University. It's something I never really expected to do, except I'm so glad it worked out that way."

Goins admits his life sounds a bit parochial, yet his career has taken him around the world several times. In his full-time teaching days, he traveled throughout the United States and Europe for his research on the post-industrial era New Town Movement, aimed at creating ideal cities by advance planning and design to limit growth—rare luxuries for many cities.

"That was one of my specialties when I was teaching, and I spent a sabbatical in Europe and a lot of time in this country looking at these towns and photographing them," he says. "I still use a lot of the slides in my classes today."

While he has visited some of the world's most beautiful and progressive cities, Goins is happy to remain in Norman, where he feels an undeniable attachment to his roots. "The University environment is what has kept me here," he says. "There is a real strong pull that anyone connected with the University can appreciate... a total richness and civility. It's very insulated, but in a healthy way, because I think you're spared some of the more troublesome aspects of our larger society."

Goins realized early in his career that if he was to live in an insulated environment yet still be an effective city planning professor, he would need to step outside that environment through consulting. His city planning projects took him all over Oklahoma and to communities in Nevada and New Mexico.

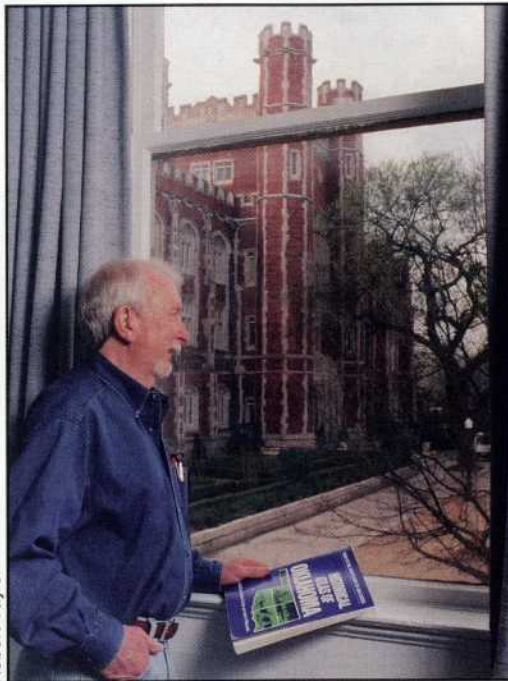
One of his most enduring consulting jobs—serving as city planner for Ada, Oklahoma—has continued for more than 30 years and given him the rare opportunity to see many of his long-range plans come to fruition. "Ada has been like my own little laboratory," he says. "I really understand how it works."

Since his retirement, Goins has taken on even more consulting work and has begun choosing Norman jobs that are near and dear to his heart. One of his

favorites, Legacy Trail, took downtown Norman's railroad corridor and transformed it from a community eyesore to a beautifully landscaped walkway, complete with historical lighting.

"One of the things I feel very strongly about is good neighborhood conservation, where we do good house-keeping and keep our residential areas clean and repaired."

In his own neighborhood, Goins



Robert Taylor

For many of his 50 years on the OU campus, Bob Goins kept watch over his beloved University from the window of his coveted corner office in the Carnegie Building, overlooking Evans Hall and Parrington Oval.

has drawn plans for the restoration of Lions Park—of which he has fond memories from his own boyhood days and happy times spent there with his children, Caroline, Christopher and Elizabeth. He is hopeful that the city council soon will approve the project, which will add a large gazebo, improved walkways and lighting, and new landscaping.

Closer to campus, Goins is creating a red-carpet welcome for visitors to the University's new Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, scheduled to open in spring 2000. The project, which began this spring, in-

volves widening Chautauqua Avenue to four lanes from Highway 9 north to Timberdell Road, where the museum is located. His plans also feature historical lighting and a curved walkway that will allow people to see the museum from different perspectives.

The Chautauqua Avenue widening is not the first University-related planning project in which Goins has played a role. Under the direction of the late OU President George Lynn Cross, Goins and Rodgers, now department chairman, co-authored OU's Physical Development Plan in 1965. College deans and other campus leaders were surveyed to create a long-term plan for campus growth, which included such facilities as an energy center, a new music center and concert hall, an expanded student union and a larger building for OU's natural history museum.

While it is rewarding to see such big dreams become realities, Goins is equally enthusiastic about the creative touches promoted by President David Boren to improve OU's physical environment, from creating cozy outdoor spaces for socializing to adding historical markers that promote a sense of campus pride.

"President Boren has shown a sensitivity that I greatly admire," Goins says. "His efforts to improve academic excellence and to beautify and restore the campus really make a difference in how people feel about this place."

Goins talks about the Norman campus as if he owns the place. But then he has spent more than 50 years of his life either studying or teaching in the same building, OU's venerable Carnegie Building. For many of those years, he had one of the most coveted offices on campus with second-floor windows overlooking the north oval and Evans Hall.

"One of my great joys in life has been to work in this handsome old building and to look out my window and see this beautiful campus and hear the clock tower chiming nearby," he says. "It's like living in a village."

—BRENDA WHEELOCK