

## A Roller/Kitts Summer

I enjoyed the article and reminiscences on history of science at OU. I graduated with a B.S. in chemistry in 1964, went to Johns Hopkins for a Ph.D. in chemistry, and then to law school and have been in law since then. I was one of those who got out of grad school in 1970 and the job market for Ph.D. chemists was in negative territory. I presently work as a contracts attorney for the U.S. Army at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland in biological and chemical R&D.

I took two courses in history of science in the summer of 1963 and worked in the Chemistry Department. As I recall, David Kitts taught the first segment, Ionians up to Galileo, and Duane Roller did the balance. Dr. Kitts, whom I had for introductory geology, was a wonderful teacher, and he was probably the reason I even took the history courses. Dr. Roller was far more serious, but I believe it was during his half of the summer that we all stood in front of Bizzell and observed a not-quite-total solar eclipse. What better lab for a history of science course?

Your article brought a closure to a wonderful summer in my past. I vaguely recall there was an article on Dr. Kitts in the *Sooner* some years ago. No doubt I have it filed away with my old, old course notes from that summer. I definitely still have them.

As an aside regarding professors one remembers: As a freshman I also had Dr. Jewel Wurtzbaugh for English. My mother was taught by her about 1930, and my sister also was in her class. When I got to Hopkins, I discovered that she had her Ph.D. from there and was remembered as a terror even then. So much for the memories.

Robert W. Poor, '64 B.S.  
Kingsville, Maryland

## The BOQ Tragedy

The last two issues of the *Sooner Magazine* described in detail the tragic BOQ fire of 1949. I was a student attending the University on the GI Bill and was housed at the South Campus Fire Department. The fire department was made up of regular firemen plus about a dozen or so students who received limited compensation or housing for their ef-

forts. It was a pretty good group.

On the night of the fire, the alarm bell rang in the early morning, and we arrived in a few minutes. The scene was horrendous with escaping students with arms full of clothing and other possessions running in all directions. The fire was burning out of control so that it was impossible to get near enough to have any effect with our limited equipment. We soaked mattresses and crouched down behind them but all effort proved futile to move close to the blaze. The clotheslines between the wings of the building were incinerating with an explosive effect. I remember my skin becoming dry as parchment.

Eventually, the fire subsided, and our remaining effort for the remainder of the night was spent in drowning the embers. In the morning we entered the building to look for possible victims. My three-man group found the third unfortunate student who met a terrible end to his life. I still remember having a distinct physical reaction. These are my memories.

Richard E. Martin, '51 B.S.  
Clifton, New Jersey

## What About Reunions?

This is a story you have probably heard over and over again, but I can at least try to get the idea across to the administration of the University. The only time I ever hear from the University (I am a 1954 graduate) is when they want money. The exception is *Sooner Magazine*. Yet even the *Sooner* doesn't go far enough.

Why does the University not have class reunions? Why does *Sooner* not have class notes? Frankly, I haven't been on campus in almost 40 years—my travels do not take me to Oklahoma much—and I have little interest in current events there. But I would love to hear what my classmates are doing—or have done. My professors have mostly left this world, so I'm not likely to know any of the current faculty. But what did happen to my old professors? I was a business major, so would be especially interested in those professors, but am willing to learn about others.

Yes, the University does have an annual day in the fall when alums are welcomed back. But I, and I suspect

others, would be much more interested in returning for a weekend reunion of my class (more than one could be held at the same time, but with separate functions and parties). My wife is a graduate of the University of Colorado, and she has a reunion every five years. I even enjoy going to them. My graduate school also has a reunion every five years, and I have attended every one of them, and my 40<sup>th</sup> is this September. You bet I'll be there. And my money goes where my interests are. I have related this to several people over the years and have never had a response. Deans, fund raisers, fellow alumni. All have said it is a great idea, but nothing has happened.

Can you help spread the word?

Rike D. Wooten, '54 B.B.A.  
Denver, Colorado

*Editor's Note: The Reunion Programs office was established in 1997 to revive the class reunion tradition at OU. The format is developing slowly, beginning with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Class of 1948 in 1998, followed by the Class of 1949 in 1999 and last year the classes of 1950, 1960 and 1970. The 2001 reunions will honor 1956, 1951, 1946, 1941 and 1936. Class notes and other alumni news are the province OU People, a tabloid published by the University of Oklahoma Association.*

## Naming Practice Denied

Recent events in the School of Petroleum Engineering are bringing all sorts of thoughts to mind, and I seem to not be able to accept them as presented. I will digress a bit as a starter. The paleontology museum—I did not see one word with a credit to a beloved professor—J. Willis Stovall. My connection (and I have not researched any distance behind my arrival in 1935) tells me that without Professor Stovall there would still be no museum! So where was that name and remembrance—I hope at least some card identifying him as the source of each and every bone in his basement cache awaiting the museum!

The true name of the museum should have been "The University of Oklahoma Museum of Geology and Paleontology," donated and made possible through the generosity of so and so.



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## A Real Heart-Warming Story

A year ago last summer during the swimming season, I noticed Mitchell, my 6-year-old son, was having problems with his heart. He was born with a congenital defect of the most critical valve in the heart—the aortic valve. . . . Aortic stenosis is a constriction of the valve that results in narrowing of the valve. The narrowing causes higher than normal pressures in his heart. In Mitchell's case, the narrowing did not significantly affect his heart function at that time, so he had no restrictions on physical activity. However, the cardiologist went on to explain that over time the valve would deteriorate, and his heart function would worsen. He would likely require surgery sometime in his lifetime, hopefully in his teenage or young adult years.

In 1998, he developed a "strep" bacterial blood infection through a small cut on his hand. Despite a mortality rate of 16 percent, he recovered after receiving IV antibiotics. He did well until the summer of 1999. During swim practice, Mitchell would become extremely tired and out of breath. When he would get out of the water, you could see his heart pounding so hard through his thin little rib cage that you thought it would blow up. On a follow-up trip to the pediatric cardiologist, we discovered that his heart valve had been almost totally destroyed by the strep blood infection and that an open-heart operation was urgently needed to replace the valve.

In the summer of 1984, in between my first and second years of medical school at the University of Oklahoma, I had worked at Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City as a surgical assistant. There I was first introduced to Dr. Ron Elkins, a pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon. I recall the seriousness of watching him and his team work to save the lives of those little babies.

In 1996 I was an assistant professor in surgery, plastic and reconstructive surgery, at Washington University in

St. Louis. One day I happened to be skimming the *New England Journal of Medicine* and saw the lead article on a heart operation, written by one of my Washington University colleagues, Dr. Nick Kouchoukos. The article described an elaborate open-heart operation to correct my son's problem—an operation that is so specialized that only

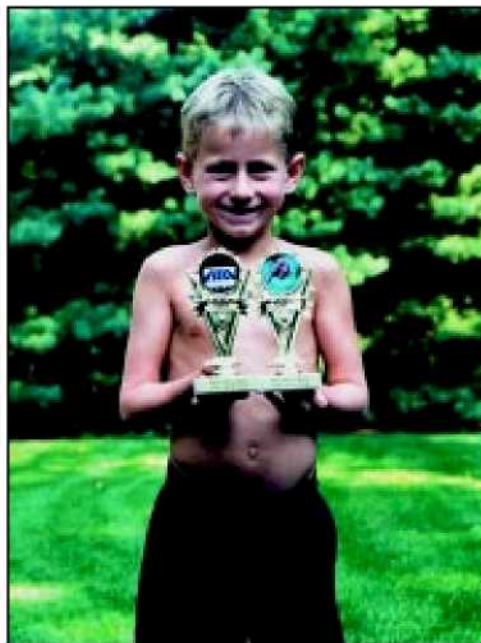
a few cardiac surgeons feel comfortable performing it. The study reported excellent long-term results in children. Moreover, the reviewer for the article was my former professor at the University of Oklahoma, Dr. Ron Elkins. On further discussion of Mitchell's case with Dr. Kouchoukos, we decided to schedule a visit for Mitchell to see Dr. Elkins in anticipation that one day Mitchell would need this operation.

In October 1999 we took Mitchell to Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City for Dr. Elkins to reconstruct Mitchell's heart in a procedure known as the "Ross Procedure." The complex operation removes the abnormal aortic valve and repositions another valve of the heart into its position. The valve sacrificed from the other side of the heart is replaced with a cadaver valve. The open-heart surgery, which lasted

almost five hours was uneventful, and Mitchell returned to St. Louis six days later.

Since the heart operation, Mitchell has returned to playing sports like all the other kids. This summer he was back on the swimming and diving team at Creve Coeur Racquet Club. In July he won two first-place ribbons in his division and was named swimmer of the week. The smile on his face is something that brings tears to your eyes. Mitchell has won over the "hearts" of so many people with his big smile and his "big heart." It is one of those heart-warming stories that deserves to be shared with others.

*Timothy R. Jones, '80 B.S., '83 M.D.  
Creve Coeur, Missouri*



Mitchell Jones

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Now I presume you will be ready for the bottom line—The University of Oklahoma School of Petroleum (and Geological—if you prefer) Engineering should remain just that. Upgrade it, modify it, computerize it, revise it, change-the-requirements-to-fit-the-marketplace-today as times require. But don't change its name. To change its very name makes it "not the place I graduated," and I will have no basis

ever again forevermore! I liked my roots! Aggrandizement can be received by the recognition of the donation for the upgrading, for the chairs endowed, for any and everything, except the very name of the institution!

Suppose that some super, super rich graduate or person donated say a billion or so dollars. Do we show our gratitude by changing the very name of the University of Oklahoma to "So

and So University of Oklahoma"? I should hope not!

Now, I am very grateful to every person and corporation that has made any donation to our beloved University. Such donations should be earmarked as directed by the donor, but should carry no more weight than that of any other donor—and never should be recognized by a name change of the

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# Letters

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very institution being honored!

A person's accomplishments are just what they are—not what he gave to church, schools, medical research, the betterment of any and all mankind. Hopefully his accomplishments are rewarded by promotions, pay increases and bonuses, or the success of his own business plus peer recognition. The correct place for his name is etched in the minds of his peers, his business associates, improvement in technology and the like, his patents, his thank you notes.

I am very grateful for Mr. (Curtis) Mewbourne and his wonderful gift. There are many, many ways to say we all appreciate his gift—but not by changing the name of our school—because it is still the same school it was the day it began. Each day it merely became better and better . . .

*D M Best, '37 B.S.  
Houston, Texas*

*Editor's Note: While understandably unsettling to their graduates, institutions often change the names of academic divisions, sometimes to reflect changes in the discipline—and, yes, in appreciation of private endowments. Alumnus Curtis Mewbourne's \$6 million gift to the School of Petroleum Engineering was so recognized, joining the recently endowed Price College of Business and Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communications. The natural history museum has had four names, one of which was Stovall from 1953-87. The drive leading to the new Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History and its Preservation Center, containing all the collections not on exhibit, both bear Stovall's name.*

## How About that Sheriff!

Your article on Bob Stoops ("New Sheriff in Town," Summer 2000) was excellent. Coach Stoops will indeed bring back the same level of performance both Coach Wilkinson and Coach Switzer achieved. We'll have many years of outstanding football to look forward to with Coach Stoops at the helm. Thanks for the article.

*Robert Cox, '76 B.B.A.  
Norman, Oklahoma*

## English Placement Test of 1937 (Continued from Page 23)

### KEY

Use a red pencil. Underline, or check in red, each error. Mark your grade on the outside of blue-book. Thus:

T[heme].	70
G[rammar]	80
Av. 2	150
	75

I. Theme. Has the student followed the directions 1 to 4? Is the theme neat, orderly, legible, intelligible? Is it interesting? Is it literate? Spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, word usage. Does the student divide his material properly or show that he knows how to construct a paragraph?

II. 1-20 Diagram

Lindbergh (American) is \ aviator

Analysis:

Lindbergh	sub. nom.	world's	modifies aviator
American	nom. in apposition with Lindbergh	the	modifies world's
An	modifies American	famous	modifies aviator
Is	predicate verb	most	modifies famous
Aviator	predicate noun—nom. after is		

- 21-25 1. who subject of verb is  
 2. us object of preposition of  
 3. me object of preposition to  
 4. who subject of verb can be trusted  
 5. whom object of verb have elected.
- 26-35 1. was  
 2. were  
 3. setting  
 4. takes  
 5. be  
 6. were  
 7. were  
 8. will  
 9. shall  
 10. lay
- 36-45 1. dangling modifier (participle)  
 2. lack of pronominal antecedent  
 3. use of transitive for intransitive verb  
 5. use of verbal contraction for possessive pronoun
- 46-47 1. yes  
 48-52 2. yes  
 3. no  
 4. no  
 5. no
- 53-57 1. adverb  
 2. preposition  
 3. conjunction  
 4. verb  
 5. adjective
- 58-62 1. adverb  
 2. adjective  
 3. noun  
 4. adverb  
 5. noun
- 63-72 lie—lay—lain  
 lay—laid—laid  
 raise—raised—raised  
 hang—hanged—hanged
- 73-76 1. complex  
 2. simple  
 3. complex-compound  
 4. compound
- 77-86 1. yes  
 2. no  
 3. yes  
 4. yes  
 5. yes  
 6. yes  
 7. yes  
 8. no  
 9. no  
 10. no
- 87-100 1. The topic is the first sentence.  
 2. average or medium  
 3. complex  
 4. In sentences 2 and 3. They think—they have imposed, etc.  
 5. 3 or 5  
 6. No  
 7. Yes  
 8. It is a unit; it will not divide; it sticks to one point  
 9. "The majesty of history".  
 10. History may deal with national events; memoirs may deal with the details of biography.

*[Source: Sardis Roy Hadsell Papers, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Box 1. The Hadsell Papers contain several versions of the Placement Test from the late 1930s and other material relating to them—their cost, the rate of passing and failing, an analysis of the kinds of writing errors students made, etc. The observations regarding Parrington were also made by Professor Hadsell, a student of Parrington's and a long-time English professor at the University. The author wishes to thank Professor David Mair, the present director of the First-Year Composition Program, and Professors Susan Kates and Ronald Schleifer for their help in preparing this piece.]*