



postscript. Leaving Their Imprints

The refurbished Oklahoma Memorial Union is a classy place where student pride in their surroundings discourages the sort of personal graffiti sometimes associated with public places where young people hang out. The exception to this rule occurs once each spring in the dark-wooded confines of the Clarke-Anderson Room, a new addition to the west of the Will Rogers Room. On this occasion, leaders of organizations campuswide are invited to leave their names indelibly etched in OU history at an annual “table carving,” sponsored by the Union.

Six years may not make an “event” into a “tradition,” but this activity is headed in that direction. Since 1999, leaders of groups ranging from student government to academic, social and special interest activities to captains of athletics teams and spirit squads have assembled for a recognition reception where they are told that their names carved into a designated tabletop will be preserved for the ages, there for them to show their children and grandchildren.

The heavily used Clarke-Anderson Room is an appropriate place for such a remembrance. Named for the family of OU alumni donor Linda Clarke Anderson, of Houston, the facility is lined with booths, complete with Internet plug-ins, and is a popular gathering place for food, study and conversation. Focal point of the room is the original Sooner Schooner, recently retired from service in favor of a sturdier, more maneuverable model.

The carving session itself has evolved. First the tabletop’s finish is stripped to allow access to the bare wood, and a recessed bronze plate is attached, proclaiming “Leadership Table” and the year. At the inaugural 1999 session, the student leaders struggled with a variety of carving tools to pierce the hard maple surface of that year’s table before settling on an electric etching device called a Dremel. When the line of inscribers at the reception proved too long, the table in subsequent years was moved to the Union Business Office for the rest of the week to accommodate late signers. The top then is refinished, protected by a Plexiglas covering and relocated to the booth, where a group photograph taken in front of the Schooner hangs in a place of honor.

Inspiration for the table carving came from President David



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In this instance, no penalty will be assessed for defacing public property as graduate student Jay Corwin helps inaugurate a new OU tradition by adding his name to the 1999 Leadership Table.

Boren’s Yale undergraduate memories of “the tables down at Mory’s . . . the place where Louie dwells.” There the “Whiffenpoofs assembled” and with their classmates also carved their names, some of them later quite famous. Had Boren arrived at OU for law school with an earlier generation, he might have remembered the deeply chiseled tables at the old Copper Kettle on Campus Corner, where Sooners assembled, but in those Prohibition Days not so much “with their glasses raised on high” as for the ultimate campus dinner date.

Clarke-Anderson’s “leadership tables” are arranged in booths chronologically, beginning with 1999 in the far southwest corner. But will their tops, as has happened at Mory’s, be hung on the walls when the



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Student leaders from across the campus gather in spring 2004 for a photo to hang above their inscribed tabletop in a booth at the Oklahoma Memorial Union’s Clarke-Anderson Room.

available tables are exhausted? With only six claimed so far, 59 tables remain at the ready to sustain the new tradition. By the time the class of 2063 takes title to the last one, however, there may be so many famous names represented that an alternative solution to display them will have to be found. —CJB