



LETTERS

Take Time for Shakespeare

It was with pleasure that I found Dr. Yoch's article ["Shakespeare Times Six"] in the Spring 2005 issue of *Sooner Magazine*.

I took his class in 1972 and not only remember the play I performed (*King Lear*) but stress and inflection examples such as "Lettuce oh Lettuce . . ." and a spirited rewriting of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, redefining words like . . . "gyre and gimble in the wabe."

I majored in English at OU. As a teacher, I used the Folger Hands-On Shakespeare method in my Senior English classes at Muskogee High School. I always gave Dr. Yoch the credit for my understanding of this performance concept in the classroom. Watching students who never "got Shakespeare" experience that *Eureka!* moment in a paper crown and feather boa is why I taught for 10 years.

I am a proud parent of two OU graduates, a third there now and a fourth coming in 2006. I always advise, "don't miss Dr. Yoch's Shakespeare class." Majors and course requirements restricted the first two; perhaps the last two will be lucky enough to experience his lessons in interpretation, language and motivation.

*Chrissie Clark Wagner
'73 bs lang arts
Muskogee, Oklahoma*

The Honorary Ring Bearers

I thoroughly enjoyed the latest copy of *Sooner Magazine*. Now that I have retired from Oklahoma University and moved out of state, the magazine has been an excellent way to keep in touch with what is happening at OU.

I especially liked the story, "A Ring For Their Fingers." A number of years ago when I did a program for our alumni club in New Orleans, there was a presentation about the class ring and ring ceremony. Since I no longer had the ring from my old university, my wife, Roberta, suggested that I get the OU Ring. Considering that I was a professor in Norman for 38 years, we both thought that I could be

an informal honorary alumnus. I am glad to see that there is now an official recognition of honorary alumni and especially pleased to see it was Gene Thrailkill, who as director of the Pride brought so much to OU.

*Stephen Sloan
NYU '58, '62, '67, OU '66
(based on the year I arrived in Norman)
Fellow: Office of Global Perspectives
and University Professor
The University of Central Florida
Professor Emeritus
The University of Oklahoma*

Editor's Note: Professor Sloan was an often-consulted specialist in the study of terrorism long before it became the hot-button issue of post-9/11. Retired in name only, he continues his teaching, research and consulting. Two weeks before the 7/7 bombings in London, he attended a conference sponsored by the British War College, which brought together intelligence personnel from political and security services.

Credit the Gymnastics Champs

Each issue of *Sooner Magazine* is special—full of good writing about interesting things and always exceptional photography.

This spring issue was just as good as every one of the others, but two items were of particular interest to me, the first being the new art museum, which I must see. The photography probably doesn't do it full justice, particularly since architect Hugh Jacobsen, not known for modesty (unlike every other architect!), says that it is "the best thing I will ever do in my life." Certainly that is a tribute to the building, placing it among many other creations in his remarkably creative life.

And your glowing tribute to the National Champion Men's Gymnastics team is long overdue. You have given the team and the coach well-deserved credit for remarkable accomplishments.

*Charles Ward, '50 arch
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

J-Grads Doing Well

Your winter issue that arrived this week was just outstanding. It's great to see so many OU J-School grads doing so well whether they are covering the wars or not.

James, my youngest son, who studied art at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, has been Congressional correspondent for the *New York Daily News*, and now has a new assignment as national security and terrorism writer.

My novel, *The Christmas Hour*, has done okay. Last time I looked, amazon.com still had it listed No. 1 among books with the word "Christmas" in the title.

When I moved to Arizona late in 1999, I jump-started my journalism career and currently am putting the finishing touches to a manuscript that is a collection of columns and features. It's just a fun project and hopefully will be out by the fall.

Our little mid-fifties J-School group will be back to OU the weekend of the Texas game for another of our annual reunions. Two years ago they flattered me by coming all the way out here when I offered to host the event.

Keep up the good work.

*John Martin Meek, '58 ba journ
Green Valley, Arizona*

The Afghanistan Experience

I was there also, from November '03 to August '04, with the Oklahoma 45th, and am an OU alumnus, class of '69, '79, and '96. I was a medical officer and provider at various places in Afghanistan, and Ben [Fenwick] did a great job describing his experiences there ["Embedded in Afghanistan," *Sooner Magazine*, Winter 2005]. I was sent to the west end of Afghanistan, in Heart, where we never knew what was going to happen, but it was the experience of a lifetime.

I am with the 700 SPT BN, "C" Company, Edmond, Oklahoma. I am a major and a physician assistant and have been in the National Guard for almost 25 years, in Oklahoma for 22. I work for OG&E in civilian life, as an occupational health coordinator. I met Ben at Camp

Phoenix when we were there together for a few weeks before we came home.

*Jerry Joern
'69 bs, '79 phys asst, '95 m pub health
Edmond, Oklahoma*

Witness to History

I was one of the very fortunate to have attended that All Star Game in 1956. ["Prologue," *Sooner Magazine*, Spring 2005] I've always been extremely proud to be in Taft Stadium in Oklahoma City that very night when history was made by Prentice Gault. As a result, I've watched with pride the wonderful accomplishments by this history-making gentleman and was saddened by his passing.

We all knew that something *special* was transpiring. It was known that two backs on the North squad had problems and would not make it. A number of us knew that there was a problem—that being that a last-minute replacement could really only be Prentice, who had excelled at Oklahoma City Douglas H.S.

Black high schools were not members of the Oklahoma Coaches Association so a special last-minute vote was taken. It wasn't that easy because there was strong sentiment against his playing. It was my understanding that it took three separate votes before cooler heads prevailed. It all took so long that he couldn't even get dressed in time to take some pre-game reps and to learn the game plan.

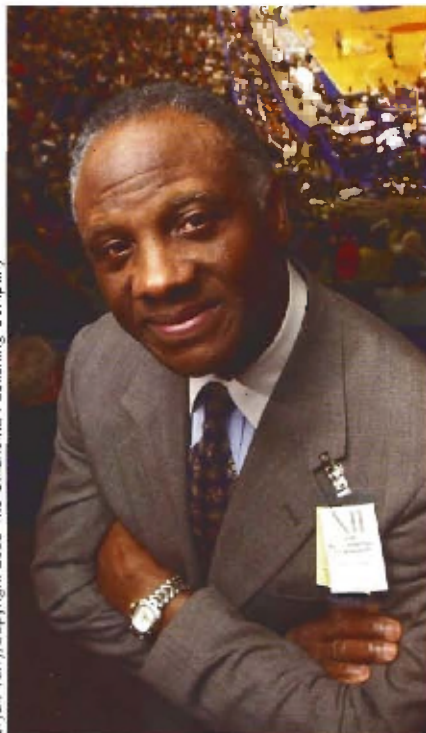
The rest is history!!! He didn't even start, yet as I recall, he scored three TDs. Early in the 3rd quarter he ran the length of the field, untouched, for a touchdown. He was the obvious MVP, yet it was 15 minutes after the game was over before they announced him the Game MVP—Prentice Gault.

It took considerable time before the Coaches Association announced the game open to all schools, but that was the first of many barriers Prentice overcame. That was the first year of my 50-year career as a graduate OU geologist, and it set a standard for me for my entire life.

*Chuck Noll, '55 ms geol
Houston, Texas*

Right Man at the Right Time

I appreciated so much your "Prologue" piece on Prentice Gault. He was everything you said and came along at just the right time—for African-Americans and for all of us. It's hard now to believe what the situation was at OU



Byron Terry/Caplight 2000 The Oklahoma Publishing Company

The late Sooner great Prentice Gault is pictured at the 2000 Big 12 basketball tournament in Kansas City's Kemper Arena.

and elsewhere when Prentice became the first black player for the Sooners, and how much happened so fast after that.

*John C. Campbell, '58 ba journ
Washington, D.C.*

Editor's Note: Alumnus Campbell was editor of The Oklahoma Daily at OU in the fall of 1956 and today guides Campbell Communications, the Washington-based strategic research, marketing and communications firm he founded in 1981.

More than a Football Icon

The Prentice Gault "Prologue" was simply wonderful! Thank you for telling

his story and sharing his historic legacy. As an African-American graduate of OU, I came to know the historic significance of Prentice Gault in the school's history during my time there, but your "Prologue" revealed many things I did not know about him. For the first time, I realized that he was a trailblazer for more than just football; he was an example for educational excellence. I am a proud OU alum and will continue to look for ways, much like Gault, to leave a lasting legacy for those to come.

Shawn Emerson Simmons, Ph.D.

*'93 bs pet eng
Houston, Texas*

Coach Bruce Drake

[re: "OU Basketball's Mama Drake," Spring 2005.]

I first met Coach Bruce Drake in 1937. I had entered OU in the fall of 1937. I had an NYA job and was put in charge of one of the independent districts. I played on the winning intramural basketball team. Of course we played in the old field house. I had to see Bruce about the scheduling of games. He and John Jacobs had their office in the building. I found that I was a better tennis player than a basketball player.

*Sam H. Johnson Jr., '42 ba chem
Tucson, Arizona*

Burton Hall's Architect

Imagine my delight, surprise and joy when my brother, William Stanley Burgett Jr., forwarded this terrific story about Burton Hall! [*Sooner Magazine*, Summer 2004] I visited the building in October 2004 and sat quietly by the massive fireplace remembering my father, the School of Architecture and my life in Norman. I spent many a day playing in the shadow of this building.

Thank you so much for your kind words about his place in the history of OU architecture. Truly, he was a man for whom his vision of place was all about soul.

*Tina Burgett, '75 ba soc
New Haven, Connecticut*