



# LETTERS

## The Fighting 21st

Thank you for publishing ["The Fighting 21st, Fall 2006]. My father, Austin H. Bell, M.D. was in Bougainville at the time of the Japanese offensive to regain the island. My father never spoke of the fighting that took place or the operations that he and many other doctors took part in or the kind of conditions that they had to operate in. I knew that it must have been very rough, but I did not know how rough it really was. The article tells it all.

I knew about a third of the doctors that were in the 21st through my parents. My father, Dr. Bell, was at Wesley Hospital from 1936 until about 1960. He graduated from Vanderbilt Medical School and was on the staff at the OU Medical School. His grandson, Chris Bozarth, graduated from OU Medical School and is in practice in Oklahoma City. My brother, Austin Bell, graduated from OU in 1955 and my sister, Martha Bell Puryear, in 1964. My other brother, Douglas Bell, did not go to OU. They all still go to the OU football games, a tradition started by my parents in 1946.

*David W. Bell, '61 ba, '67 jd  
Bellevue, Washington*

*Editor's Note: The Unit Roster of those who served with the U.S. Army's 21st Evacuation Hospital can be found online at [www.oufoundation.org](http://www.oufoundation.org).*

*Correction: The old church in the Philippines where the Fighting 21st set up its hospital was in San Carlos, not San Marcos, as stated in Sooner Magazine.*

## From a "Hackler Kid"

I just finished reading the article about Dr. Hackler ["Colbert Hackler's Kids," Summer 2006] and had to write. This was a very informative article, and I was glad to see he is still teaching.

I am one of his "kids" from the '60s, when he was at University School. Mr. Hackler started me on the violin when I was a fifth grader, and was my conductor until my graduation in 1970. Both of his daughters, Sally and Mary Anne, were in orchestra at different times when I played. He stayed until University School closed.

Then he went to the main campus and taught music education classes.

There are many fond memories of Mr. Hackler that are too numerous to mention. He attended School-Out-of-Doors many years. Those were fun times.

As my father (Bob Ross) stated in his "Tribute to Colbert Hackler—1981" at the retirement dinner:

"Our daughter had the good fortune of attending University School during this era of Colbert's tenure. She attempted the violin, murdered the clarinet and, for all I know, may have tried out for the choral groups. Anything for more contact with Mr. Hackler, and I must admit that those were rough days for Robin's dear old dad. He didn't know nuthin' about music because the sun rose and set right square in the middle of Mr. Hackler's collar button. But I really didn't feel ignored, because I discovered that every last one of Mr. Hackler's students felt that way about him."

I felt the same way about my father. He supported me on my musical endeavors.

I did not go to OU, but kept playing the violin until I graduated from college. Then there were no orchestras close to my work.

Keep up the good work, Dr. Hackler.  
*Robin Ross Osborn  
Amarillo, Texas*

*Editor's Note: Mrs. Osborn's late father, Robert W. Ross, was a professor of music at OU from 1946 to 1975.*

## Under the Pe-et Elm

I'm not really an OU alumna, just the child of a long-time, now deceased professor of law, Elbridge D. Phelps. My brother, Paul Phelps, who is an OU alumnus, recently sent me the link to the Pe-et Elm story. Growing up in the 1950s and '60s, we spent a lot of time on the north oval and at the old "Law Barn" (Monett Hall), while we waited for our dad to finish at the office. The big elm in front of Evans Hall was very special. I enjoyed reading the online article about the Pe-et Elm and its history. I remember writing

an essay for a DAR history contest in 5th grade about David Ross Boyd and his accomplishments, but planting the elms is a new part of the story for me.

So, *thanks* for the memories.

*Sarah (Phelps) Delaware  
Truman State University  
Kirksville, Missouri*

## A Chinese Connection

The story of "The OU Confucius Institute" [Fall 2006] brought joy to my heart. China was my destination as a recipient of a Fulbright grant in the summer of 1983. As one of 20 teachers, we were based at Beijing Normal University for four weeks study followed by four weeks travel in China.

When time came for departure, I vowed to return and teach English. Several professors had begged us to return, as they needed teachers of English who spoke the language. It seems their students with scholarships to study in the USA could read and write but not speak English.

A phone call from Beijing made my dream come true. My friend Chang Xinhua's department had been allocated money to hire a foreign teacher, and he had recommended me. At that time I was a curriculum coordinator for Jefferson County Schools in Louisville, Kentucky. I took a year's leave and lived in China on 30 yuan per month plus housing at the Friendship Hotel with a cab to take me back and forth to classes.

I worked with teachers of English to change their methods to a more modern approach, enabling students to practice speaking aloud in class, a major departure from the traditional. My teachers knew Russian quite well, but change in politics dictated they learn English. They were eager to learn, and we had fun using British materials wherein a frequent question was "Ms. Shy, why was that funny?" and I could not explain British humor.

My husband is Gene O. Sinex, a 1939 graduate of OU in the School of Petroleum Engineering. Gene was a consultant working out of Tulsa, employed by CNOOC (Chinese Offshore Oil Co.) and was housed at the Friendship Hotel.



Our only date was attending a Chinese propaganda movie one night on campus. Gene continues to correspond with some of his associates.

We both continue to keep in touch with another friend, Dong Wan Li, mostly by e-mail. Wan Li, who was sent to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution and thus missed going to college, is a fine example of China's rapid change to a modern nation with dominance in economics, technology, and education of its population. Today he owns his own car; he has recently bought a townhouse for his family. When I first met Wan Li, he was a dishwasher at the Friendship Hotel. He asked me if I would teach him English, and he would teach me Chinese. With proficiency in English, he found a better job, [which] included travel to foreign countries. In 1999, he visited us in New Mexico and wanted to see the Grand Canyon—his dream for many years. He was so impressed, saying that very few Chinese had seen the interior of our country. He shared with us his impressions of the Tiananmen Square debacle in 1989. A terrible day for China. And who called us on 9/11? Dong Wan Li, to express sympathy and shock at the awful crash into the Towers.

Gene's two brothers were also OU graduates: James (now deceased) and Brad of Houston. Our granddaughter Susan Sinex Magee graduated in 1996, and we hope to continue with more of the Sinex family continuing this tradition with OU.

*Laura Shy Sinex  
Springdale, Arkansas*

### Now It Can Be Told

I just recently came across this article, titled: "Some college pranks reek of creativity. Some make you wonder, 'What were they thinking?'" ["Prologue," Summer 2004]

I figured there is no real need to wait ten years to find out the original story, so here it is in short order:

The original oranges in the Seed Sower were placed there by two members of Beta Theta Pi (Bryson Varner of Pauls Valley and Matt Allen of Oklahoma City,

both being juniors at the University at the time and living in the Beta house) and one member of Kappa Kappa Gamma (Anja Marie Summers of Colleyville, TX, then a freshman residing in Adams dorm).

The oranges were technically tangerines purchased at Homeland on Lindsey Street. The cashier was actually an NU fan, who made fun of us for not using actual oranges.

We traveled late that night from the Beta House over to the South Oval. The two men climbed up the pedestal of the statue, and the young woman handed the oranges up to us a few at a time. The men placed and arranged the oranges in the Seed Sower's bag while Ms. Summers provided perspective on how the oranges looked from the ground. All the while we



Robert Taylor

The orange-laden Seed Sower

were hiding behind the statue and pedestal as intermittent cars passed by the area.

After we were satisfied with the appearance of the oranges, we could not resist stopping to play at the fountain, where Pe-er's soap bubbles had formed a perfect donut or disc shape due to the running water; the soap formation was actually so pristine and perfectly smooth in shape that only the natural occurrence of running water could create it. We play-

ed for a bit, then started back toward North Greek. OUPD even stopped us as we were walking, and, of course, we thought we were in trouble. They really just wanted to know whether we had put soap in the fountain, which we had not. They did not ask about the statue, so we really thought we got away with something special.

The next day on the way to class, I saw a cherry picker on Lindsey Street, which I presumed to be removing the oranges. Actually, the university was just taking an official picture, which is now timeless in all Sooner football fans' hearts—especially ours. Ms. Summers had taken pictures during the act, but the pictures were subsequently lost, so the story is really only verifiable by word of mouth of the members of Beta Theta Pi living in the house at that time.

Later that season, with each subsequent win, the stunt was duplicated as Josh Heupel and the Sooner defense led Oklahoma to the BCS Championship game and OU's 7th national football title.

*Matt Allen  
Norman, Oklahoma  
OU Juris Doctor Candidate 2007*

### No Taxidermists Need Apply

I read "OU Research Takes a Classical Turn," a beautifully written story [Winter 2006] by Debra Levy Martinelli, who quoted T. H. Lee Williams, OU's vice president for research and dean of the Graduate College, as saying, "The stock and trade of a university is the creation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas."

He stated the essence of what a university is all about. My wonderful philosophy professor taught that so well. And the words of Chicago's Rabbi Ben Zion Kaganoff come to mind: "Education which is simply intellectual taxidermy—the scooping out of the mind and the stuffing in of facts—that kind of education is worthless. The human mind is not a deep-freeze for storage; the human mind is a forge for production."

*Arthur H. Prince, '96 ph.d. phil  
Memphis, Tennessee*