



LETTERS

Treasures for All to Enjoy

I was surprised and pleased to read the article about the McGhees [*Sooner Magazine*, Summer 2014]. Cecilia was my mother's first cousin and one of her best friends. I am named after her (my middle name is Cecilia).

I was privileged to visit Farmer's Delight as a child and an adult. In 1997 I visited and spent time walking around the grounds with George, peeking into barns and buildings for a glimpse of some of the treasures that will now reside at OU.

The DeGolyers and the McGhees have given many treasures to the University. Now everyone who visits the History of Science Collections and the other collections at the Sam Noble will have the pleasure of seeing these amazing artifacts.

*Peg Malloy, '69 ba English
Nichols Hills, Oklahoma*

Mentor, Teacher Philip Nolan

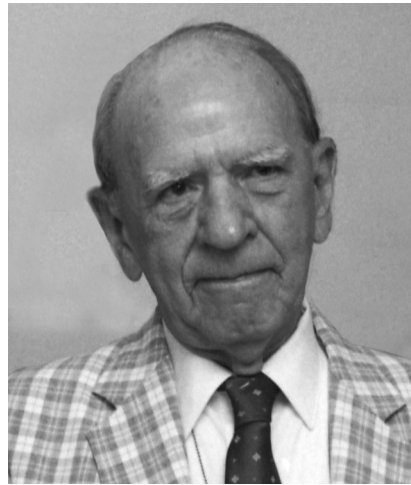
I am writing this letter to honor my great mentor and teacher, Dr. Philip J. Nolan, former chairman of the Classics Department and the Letters Program. As a sophomore student touring the humanities building, I encountered a well-dressed gentleman who told me of the Letters Program of study. Honor students were eligible for a course of study in the classics, with areas of concentration in history, philosophy, and English and required courses in an ancient and a modern language. Dr. Nolan, an urbane, sophisticated man, was dressed elegantly in a tweed jacket; his trousers sported a Phi Beta Kappa key. We talked of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity where I lived and Dr. Nolan was the advisor.

I promptly enrolled in this Letters Program, but majoring in pre-medicine, I had to take additional courses to complete these requirements.

I came to know this remarkable and distinguished man as "Philip." He had a warm, cordial and friendly manner, and he emanated confidence and command of his chosen field. He had been an outstanding and prize-winning stu-

dent at Cornell University, where he had pursued his undergraduate and graduate studies. In his classes, he was engaging with a winning sense of humor delivered in a booming, laughing voice.

Philip had lost much of his vision to macular degeneration, so he taught most of his classes from his remarkable memory. As we stumbled over our beginning



Dr. Phillip J. Nolan

Latin translation, Philip joked and moved us along. Since his vision was quite limited, Philip listened and attended closely to his students. All of us were awed by the scope and breadth of his knowledge.

We came to experience the Greek and Roman classics. Philip talked to us of character and of its opposite, the tragic flaw. This was particularly interesting to this aspiring psychiatry student. As I neared graduation, I needed a few more hours of college credit. Philip recommended that I do a course in directed readings where you were not required to attend classes and complete a term paper. He outlined a course on "The generalizing power of comedy" after Aristotle's chapter in the Poetics.

Thus, I was able to get a good, basic education that would complement my later medical and psychiatric education. Philip helped me with my application letter to medical school. I went on to study at Yale New Haven Hospital, Cor-

nell Medical School and Mount Sinai Medical School. I began my practice of general psychiatry in New York City and later in Palm Beach, Florida.

This wonderful basic education in letters has aided me to have a full, rich, rewarding and interesting life. The Letters Program still exists, and I would encourage all interested students to pursue it. It has made all the difference in my life, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

I would welcome hearing from any of my classmates and friends at my office address 5712 Briarwood St., West Palm Beach, Florida; 561-503-9477.

*Robert D. Williams, M.D.
'60 ba letters, '70 med
West Palm Beach, Florida*

Passing of Russell Mathis

It is with a heavy heart that I share with you the news that Dr. Russell Mathis, Professor Emeritus of Music, passed away in September in Charlottesville, Virginia. Dr. Mathis had resided there since the passing of his beloved wife, Barbara.

Russell enriched the cultural life of the University of Oklahoma and the Norman community for well over fifty years. I was proud and honored to be one of his students during my undergraduate years and one of his friends during my professional career. He and Barbara were some of the first to welcome me back to Norman in 2007.

Dr. Mathis was appointed to the School of Music faculty in 1962 as Director of Choral Activities.

He was a key advocate for the arts during his tenure, including:

- Director of the OU Summer Session (1968-1972)
- Assistant Provost for Special Programs (1972-1976)
- Chairman of the Voice Division (1976-1990)
- Director of Music Theatre (1987-1990)
- Retired Faculty Program (1990-2003)

During his tenure, OU vocal ensembles appeared on television broadcasts, performed coast-to-coast in the U.S. and toured internationally. For touring ensembles to Poland and Romania, he was awarded a citation of appreciation from the United States Army in Europe.

Under his direction, the OU Concert Choir participated in the first Viennese Symposium in 1969, co-sponsored by the American Choral Directors Associa-



Dr. Russell Mathis

tion. He was a charter member of ACDA and National President from 1974-1977.

He received critical praise for OU's award-winning production of "Lysistrata," which was chosen to perform in Washington, D.C., at the first American College Theatre Festival in 1969. As music director for University Theatre, Russell was a "bridge builder" between students and faculty in drama, dance and music before there was a musical theatre department.

His sons, Jon and Rob, currently live in Virginia and Maryland. Memorial celebration events were held in Norman on October 17.

*Rich Taylor
Dean, Weitzenhoffer Family
College of Fine Arts
Executive Producer
OU Musical Theatre*

OLLI a Hit with OU Boomers

Often when people talk about OU's recent accomplishments, they mention new buildings, National Merit Scholars, great faculty, and the hardware various sports teams have brought home. The University community is thriving and encompasses all who live in and around Norman.

Another unique aspect of the University community is the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). The program

day. Additionally, we now offer OLLI courses on OU's Health Sciences Center campus in Oklahoma City.

While OLLI at OU is one of 120 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes nationwide, we are unique in that University faculty teach our courses instead of members.

At the time of the 2009 article, our goal was 500 members in order to receive a \$1 million endowment. We reached that goal and are now seeking



In an August push to reach its goal of 1,000 members to qualify for its second \$1 million endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation, OLLI at OU attracted a packed house to MemberMania! Annual memberships are \$40, and each course comes with a minimal fee. For more information on OLLI at OU or to become a member, call (405) 325-3488 or go to www.ou.edu/olli.

offers noncredit courses to adults age 50-plus in areas like film, literature, religion, science, history, art and music.

You may remember introducing readers of *Sooner Magazine* to OLLI at OU in summer 2009, when we were a relatively small program on campus with about 350 members and sharing one classroom on the south end of campus. Today, OLLI is a thriving program with more than 700 members. While we still offer most of our courses on south campus, our classrooms are now in OCCE's Forum Building. It's not unusual for OLLI to take up a wing with six courses running at the same time on any given

1,000 members so we may receive another million dollars.

I hope the readers of *Sooner Magazine* will take advantage of all that OU has to offer, including courses at OLLI.

*Chris Elliott
Director, Osher Lifelong Learning
Institute at the University of Oklahoma*

Editor's Note: OLLI is that love-of-learning opportunity you always wished for but never had time for when you were at OU. No pressure, no tests, no term papers to write. Enrollees love to take the classes, and faculty love to teach more "mature" students who really want to be in their classrooms.