



Postscript

The essence of a university

Just after 2 a.m. on May 17 — six hours into executive session — the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents named OU alumnus and Law Dean Joe Harroz as the university's new president. Harroz will serve in interim capacity for a minimum of 15 months. The news came less than a week after James L. Gallogly announced on Commencement weekend that he was stepping down as OU's 14th president. His tenure, which began July 1, 2018, is the shortest of any OU president, not counting interims. Gallogly's departure makes Harroz OU's third president in less than a year.

If it feels as though a revolving door has been installed in Evans Hall, you are not alone. Several of the Sooner faithful have complained of whiplash and residual pains in the neck, but those familiar with OU history realize that for every long-term presidency — one lasting a decade or more — shorter, more turbulent terms have followed. For every David Ross Boyd (1892-1908), there is an Arthur Grant Evans (1908 to 1911). For every William Bizzell (1925 to 1941), there emerges a Joseph Brandt (1941-1943).

George Lynn Cross followed Brandt as a stable and unifying force for a quarter of a century. But during the next 20 years, beginning in 1968, the presidency was turned over no less than seven times.

The turnovers prompted Carol Burr, then editor of *Sooner Magazine*, to offer a word of advice to future presidential candidates: "Cardiac and/or ulcer patients need not apply. All you have to do to keep this job is please almost all of the people all of the time."

In 2018, OU regents asked Gallogly, an alumnus and longtime supporter, if he would be willing to come out of retirement to take the helm of his alma mater. David L. Boren, the former Oklahoma governor and U.S. senator, had just retired after guiding the university for 24 years, a tenure just shy of that of George Lynn Cross.

The regents homed in on Gallogly for several reasons, chief among them his business acumen. He had held executive positions with ConocoPhillips, ChevronPhillips and Phillips Petroleum and had earned a reputation for taking ailing companies and restoring them to full fiscal health.

Confident he could help the university get its finances in order, Gallogly accepted the job offer. But his short time at Evans Hall was marked by controversial layoffs, budget cuts, racial incidents, the discovery of incorrect fundraising figures previously given to *U.S. News and World Report* [OU Foundation figures were accurate], and a Title IX investigation into alleged sexual misconduct by Boren and former Vice President Tripp Hall.

At the Rally to Stop Racism in January, Gallogly listened for two hours to the pain and frustration of students who felt marginalized by racist incidents on campus and the administration's response. "I love this university," said Gallogly, clearly moved. "And I'm working very, very hard to make it a better place, but I'm asking for your help, not simply your criticism."

By May 12, he had submitted his resignation after serving at his first commencement.

Yet, during his 10 months in office, Gallogly cut expenses by \$47 million, enabling him to give faculty a raise, hold tuition flat for the first time since 2013, and prioritize increased funding for graduate research.

Gallogly has always believed in the transformational power of education and the need to keep college affordable. The former CEO was raised in a family of 10 kids, often sharing a bedroom with five brothers. He entered OU Law as a former grocery clerk with a bachelor's degree in psychology and left with the knowledge and ambition he would need to run a Fortune 500 company.

Throughout his career, Gallogly remained an active and supportive alumnus, giving generously of his time and money, including a major gift to the College of Engineering that now bears his name.

As Gallogly returns to private life, we wish him well and thank him for his service, just as we welcome Dean Harroz to Evans Hall. Harroz, a familiar face at OU, has served as law dean since 2010. An Oklahoma native, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa from OU in 1989 with a B.A. in economics and a minor in zoology. He earned his law degree at Georgetown University Law Center and served as legal counsel to then-U.S. Sen. David L. Boren.

In 1994, Harroz returned to OU as vice president for executive affairs. His 12-year term as OU General Counsel is the longest in university history.

Addressing concerns of Harroz overseeing a Title IX investigation into his former boss, OU Regents Chair Rainbolt-Forbes stated that Harroz would not be involved in the ongoing Boren investigation.

"Dean Harroz is a close friend of President Boren," says OU professor emeritus George Henderson, "but, more important, he is an independent thinker whose loyalty is first and foremost to the University. He is his own man."

And he will be his own kind of president. But as OU approaches its 129th year, students, alumni, faculty and friends know that the temporal occupant of the president's office, no matter how brilliant or well-intentioned, is not the essence of the university.

What makes OU "OU" is 130 years in the making, blending the inspiration and accomplishments of thousands, from David Ross Boyd, who willed OU into existence to Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, who fought to make it more inclusive. From football coach Bud Wilkinson, who brought the university its first national championship to ballerina Yvonne Chouteau who taught OU to dance. OU's essence comes from professors, who never give up, researchers who turn hard work into life-saving technology, and students that win national awards and dress like bananas at Sooner basketball games.

The essence of OU is not a person, but a work in progress, a product of everyone who has passed through its doors, then returned to lend a hand to those who follow.

—Lynette Lobban