

embodied her sense of building on potential: “How can we encourage faculty to assist with recruiting?”; or “Wouldn’t OU and Oklahoma be better served if many more students studied abroad and became familiar with global issues that impact our state?” The underlying message was that we could and should always try to do better within our budget constraints.

In contrast to her public leadership, she presented a dif-

ferent persona to the Provost’s office staff, including “faculty fellows” who got some time off from teaching and the opportunity to sample academic administration. Wadlow had the wonderful ability to convey a sense of how she valued those she worked with. In the close work of her office, as in her larger “university” work, she served as mentor to the people she worked with and those they served. The work

she accomplished continues to serve us all.

In July 1991, she left OU to become the Chancellor (i.e., President) at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, where it was so cold that even those dogs had to wear boots outside. Wadlow set an upper limit on the thermometer settings on campus, and soon everyone was wearing “Wadlow Wear,” i.e., long underwear and down jackets. Yep, that was Joan

Wadlow: Tough, determined, more than willing to confront challenges, and always mindful of the well-being of those she served. Wadlow died on December 8, 2021, at the age of 89. 📍

Nancy L. Mergler served as a professor of psychology and director of the OU Honors Program before becoming Provost of OU’s Norman campus. She is an inductee of the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame.

EPILOGUE



Mystery Photo: “Wheels of the West”

OU’s Western History Collections has tens of thousands of images covering the university’s 134-year history. Occasionally, the names of individuals have been lost to time—like in this shot of Gamma Phi Beta sorority’s 1956 Sooner Scandals winning act, “Wheels of the West.” If you can help solve the mystery by identifying people in this photo, e-mail us at sooner magazine@ou.edu.