

# Lawrence N. Morgan

BY WILLIAM WITT, '30

*This is the second of a series of articles by William H. Witt, '32, assistant director of the department of publications, extension division, dealing with interesting people on the campus of the university who have lived colorful lives and have attained recognition in their particular fields of endeavor without public attention being directed to such achievements. The second article is an interview with Lawrence N. Morgan, professor of English, who is shown in the accompanying photograph seated in his home library.*

A FEW years ago the uninformed students on the campus of the university asked him how he liked college. Today it is not unusual for Lawrence N. Morgan, professor of English, to be accosted with this question, "What is your major subject?"

This is as it should be since Professor Morgan is a young man and small of stature. The new student or the student who has been denied the pleasure of enrolling in courses with Professor Morgan and has not been told of Mr Morgan's achievements has no way of knowing that the principal character of this discussion has been on the campus for twenty years. It behooves every new student to make the acquaintance of this amiable gentleman.

When a student has been on the campus long enough to learn the names of all of the professors, he soon hears of "Fess" Morgan. The freshmen of the present day will know Professor Morgan sooner than did the freshmen of five or ten years ago, because for the last three years he has served as the chairman of the enrollment committee for freshmen in the college of arts and sciences and chairman of the freshman orientation period, and is likely to continue in this capacity.

During the years I have been on the campus I have heard a great many complimentary things about Mr Morgan, although I had never taken any of the courses he offered. It was a privilege I had often wanted when I was permitted this opportunity of a long talk with the dispenser of drama.

We have often heard of specialists and authorities in the field of business or science, but Mr Morgan is one of the most interesting specialists I have ever talked to or read about. His field is that of the drama, and he is a recognized authority in the subjects of the Restoration, eighteenth century and modern European drama.

He is interested in people and even though he spends many hours at his home in his fine library doing research along the lines he most enjoys, he is never too busy to talk to his students or other students who wish to understand more thoroughly the work of the Restoration, eighteenth century or modern European periods.

In addition to his undergraduate courses in drama, Professor Morgan teaches a graduate course on John Dryden, the English dramatist. Dryden is a favorite with Mr Morgan, although he believes that the matter of selecting favorites is a difficult task in that one's opinion changes as he goes into a subject and as moods and immediate interests change.

Being particularly interested in the field of the Restoration drama Mr Morgan is naturally interested in Dryden. Dryden, a poet, essayist, and dramatist is the most representative writer of the last half of the seventeenth century, Mr Morgan believes. To understand the attitudes and inclinations of people living in a particular period, the most expeditious method is to look into the literature of the age.

Although Dryden was such a successful literary figure. Mr Morgan does not, of course, rate him with Milton as a poet, nor does he place him as the first literary critic. Even though Dryden was a critic, it is dangerous to say that he was the first, even as it is dangerous to say any man was the first to develop or do a certain thing, Mr Morgan points out philosophically.

"I like Dryden, although I am convinced that other men excelled him in particular forms and types of literature. Dryden did not write high comedies of manners as did another favorite of mine, William Congreve. His poetry is not so good as that of Milton, but his satirical poetry is better than that of his con-

temporaries. Pages of Dryden's prose cannot be equalled by any written in his own time," Professor Morgan states.

If Mr Morgan does pick out and list his favorites, he is quick to recognize the opinions of others and points out that the men he lists may not be the greatest writers of any period, but that their works appeal to him because of the merit in subject matter and the writer's ability to adequately picture the spirit of the age in which he wrote.

As Professor Morgan swings into his discussion of these three important periods in the development of the drama, he is able to paint with a deft brush clear pictures of the period in question, obtained from his vast storehouse of knowledge of the works of each writer in each period.

In the discussion of the eighteenth century of drama, he told me that the period was not great in as far as drama was concerned. It was during this time that the so-called sentimental comedy and domestic tragedy developed; and towards the end of the century, what for lack of a better name, romantic tragedies, under the influence of the German drama, became popular. He believes that the eighteenth century was interesting as far as the drama is concerned for what was being developed rather than for the works which were written. In this period, Professor Morgan lists as the most interesting dramatist, R. B. Sheridan, and judiciously adds David Garrick, the actor, as one of the most dominant personalities of the time. It was interesting for me as a layman to note that in Garrick's period the actor was just as important as the dramatist in the literary world.

To the average reader, Professor Morgan states, the productions of the modern European period in the drama are more interesting to read than those of the Restoration or the eighteenth century.

In the course of years during which he has been teaching at the university, Mr Morgan has had very few students who didn't enjoy reading the plays of the modern European drama.

Framing a hurried list of the outstanding figures of the period, he lists in the column, writers, all important, although some of them are not the greatest. It was no task at all for Mr Morgan to pick a few greats or near greats from each country.

If you are curious, here they are: England, for instance, has such men as Pinnero, Oscar Wilde, G. B. Shaw, Galsworthy, and John M. Synge. Mr Morgan relates many interesting facts based on intensive study of the various periods. In mentioning England he stated that as far as the drama was concerned, the first three quarters of the nineteenth century seem to have been unimportant.



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These were the years of the great essayists and novelists. During this Victorian period, the talk and acclaim of the nation was for Scott, Dickens, Eliot, Carlyle and Arnold. But there was a turning which came in the eighties and the change of interest in the drama and the development and production of drama has continued to the present day. The majority of the men we read of in the last part of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century have been dramatists, although some of them have been both novelists and dramatists. It is sufficient to say that the drama has been of greater interest and more vital to the people since this evolution which began in the eighties.

In the list of Italian dramatists, Professor Morgan likes D'Annunzio, but adds that many people would prefer Pirandello, and opinions are opinions after all. Among the Germans, Hauptmann leads the list; Spain, Benavente; France, Rostand, Brieux, and Maeterlinck; Russia, Checkhov; Norway, Ibsen; Austria, Schnitzler; Hungary, Molnar; and Sweden, Strindberg.

From time to time Professor Morgan has been interested and has done special work in the field of drama, but at the present time is working on one of his most extensive and interesting pieces of research, that of tracing the history and development of plot used in the *King's Henchman*, of which there are several variations. His progress in this work is slow, due to a lack of available materials.

Along with other developments on the campus of a growing university, Professor Morgan has watched the library grow from a small set of books to its present gigantic proportions. During the years

the library has increased in stock of materials suitable for research in drama and it now possesses many old and valuable English chronicles. Professor Morgan considers the facilities quite adequate for the average graduate student, but not for exhaustive research in the drama of any of the three periods. The development of the library indicates a general increase in the importance of creative literary effort for Oklahomans.

Mr Morgan had once planned to become a newspaperman before he entered the teaching profession and his colorful background would have suited admirably for such a career.

He was born in Yokohama, Japan, January 22, 1890, if the date means anything in view of his retention of youth and a progressive outlook on life. His father was a missionary and teacher, head of mission schools in Yokohama and Nagoya, Japan. The first years of Mr Morgan's life in Japan were interesting ones although his tenure in the Orient was cut short by the removal of his family to the states, in North Carolina, the old home of both of his parents.

Mr Morgan recalls some of the events of his life in Japan and tells one incident which gives us a picture of the primitive conditions existent in the Nippon center at that time.

"One of my earliest recollections is of a fire in the French school next door to the mission in Yokohama. The fire could not be put out by the elementary Japanese fire apparatus, a hand pump and a few buckets. Just as it seemed that the fire would destroy the school and all surrounding buildings, a detachment of U. S. marines landed with an engine and hose that effectively control-

led the blaze. My memory is a little hazy on whether they ran the hose from the harbor or stuck it into a well on the mission grounds, but I have a clear picture of the hose running through our yard. I remember distinctly the feeling of confidence we had that now all would be well. Since then I have always thought the famous saying, 'The marines have landed and have the situation in hand,' had a personal application."

Mr Morgan's boyhood was spent in Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he studied in the public schools and graduated from high school. Here was a picturesque spot to live in the old south. Goldsboro was the last headquarters of General Sherman during the Civil war when that Union soldier was making his famous march to the sea. Mr Morgan said that even now, the name Sherman is not overly popular with some of the residents of his old home town.

He received his college education in the University of North Carolina where he graduated with the degree of bachelor of arts in 1912. He specialized in English and history. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and since he has been at the University of Oklahoma, has served as the president of this chapter. He is a member of Zeta Psi social fraternity from North Carolina. During his senior year he received his training for the Fourth Estate, serving as editor of the *Tar Heel*, college paper. His ability as a journalist was further recognized in Oklahoma when he was made a member of Sigma Delta Chi, the journalism fraternity, at the university.

Jobs for college graduates were fairly hard to obtain in those days, even as today, so when Dr. Edwards Mims, at that time of the North Carolina English department, now at Vanderbilt, recommended Mr Morgan to Theodore Hampton Brewer of the University of Oklahoma, he was accepted. Mr Morgan came to the university as an instructor of English in the fall of 1912.

Professor Morgan later spent one summer in Columbia university and in 1915 entered Harvard where he completed his work for the master of arts degree in 1916. In 1917 he was ready to do his bit for Democracy, and went to the second officer's training camp in Leon Springs, Texas and in 1918 was sent to Camp Travis. After each tour he returned to the university where he remained until 1921 when he went again to Harvard to study Restoration drama. While in the eastern college he served as an assistant to Dr. J. L. Lowes, and taught the works of the Romantic poets.

He plans to return to Harvard to complete work for his doctor's degree. Of course it would be well to mention that he remained a bachelor for some time, but was finally married in 1930.

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fifty confidential bulletins (warning of fake schemes and bad advertising plans, and hints on good business); attended twelve association meetings outside the state; and sent out 27,185 pieces of mail. He has delivered 100 addresses to press associations, student journalism groups, chambers of commerce, and other civic organizations, mostly along the lines of business and advertising.

His work in the Oklahoma Press association was varied, including presentation of radio talks on advertising; issuing of a special university press bulletin on advertising; warning against fake advertising and fraudulent schemes; selling of machinery and papers; circulation and country correspondent ideas; the upholding of advertising rates; the writing of a field manager's page in the *Sooner State Press*; and individual problems such as saving one publisher \$600 on a questionable advertising deal, and saving another publisher \$1000 on a partnership deal.

He spent fifty days in the state legislature encouraging a new state resale law, which provided for just rates for newspapers publishing resale lists; campaigned for a new law to include publication charges as part of the court costs of a case, and to provide for no special disposition of the case until all court costs were paid; and endorsed a change in the initiative and referendum law which would require the publication of a full petition initiated or referred to by the people.

He campaigned for a new journalism building on the university campus, and the history of the association was finished under his supervision. There are many similar actions and accomplishments too numerous to mention.

During the time that he was field manager, Rutledge was president of the Newspaper Association Managers, Inc., and a member of the executive board of the Associated Industries of Oklahoma. While in Norman, he was active as a church member, being for some time a popular teacher of a university class in the First Christian church, and a member of the official board of the church. He is also a member of the Rotary club, and Sigma Delta Chi, honorary journalistic fraternity. Rutledge is a graduate of the University of Missouri school of journalism.

His place as field manager has been taken by Ray J. Dyer, outstanding advertising man in the state, a graduate of the department of journalism of the University of Kansas, a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Delta Chi. He has been telegraph editor of the *Oklahoma City Times*, and managing editor of the *Oklahoma News*. In 1928, he became secretary of the Oklahoma Ice Manufacturers association in charge of merchandising and advertising. The central of-

fice will remain on the university campus.

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## LAWRENCE N. MORGAN

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The reminiscences of Mr Morgan are decidedly enlightening. It would be, of course, too lengthy to mention the colorful turn in the train of events in the university's progress which he has observed during these happy years he has spent on the campus, but progress has been phenomenal.

As he gazed out of the window of his office in the liberal arts building taking in a panoramic view of the modern college, Mr Morgan recalled that when he first came to Norman there was a double row of trees along the unpaved street which is now known as Boulevard and that the unpaved oval ran south of the auditorium. The buildings were few in number, the administration, education, old science hall, the frame gymnasium and the old engineering building being the principal structures reaching above a half dozen less imposing wooden sheds. The law building was in the process of construction. Dr. Stratton D. Brooks was inaugurated as the new president the year Mr Morgan came to the university.

He remembers a great many of his students, and particularly does he like to point to those former students of his who have risen above the ranks. He recalls that Orel Busby, now a justice of the state supreme court was editor of the old *Umpire*, student paper, and that Dr. E. D. Meacham, now assistant dean of the college of arts and sciences was a student in his class the first year he taught modern drama.

Mid the scenes of his early experience as a teacher, Professor Morgan has grown to love the university, to be happy in his work and enjoy the association with the different generations of students all young and eager. Is it any wonder that he keeps young, or that his interest in his branch of the field of education grows stronger day by day?

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### Now correspondent

Mrs Minnaetha Popejoy, assistant professor of voice, has been appointed state correspondent for the *Musical Courier*, national weekly music magazine published in New York City.

She will contribute musical news for the column, "Music News From Coast to Coast."

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The government printing office has just issued *Institutions of Higher Education in Sweden* by Alina M. Lindegren. It is pamphlet No. 32 of the Office of Education and may be had for ten cents by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

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