

Barney Burns, Carlsbad, New Mexico, and George McElroy, Stillwater, a pair of senior lawyers at the University, are scheduled to appear in a series of debates in the North and Middle West during January and February. They will represent the University in the one long debate trip of the forensic season.

## The New University Forum

BY WALTER EMERY, '33 law.

(Sooner Debate Coach)

**I**NDIVIDUAL success is determined largely by the ability of the person to win support for his ideas, or to persuade others to act as he wants them to act.

A business man with excellent ideas may fail because of his inability to control the conduct of men. The lawyer may be well informed in the law, may know more about it than most of the members of his profession, and yet he may fail because he does not know how to convey his ideas to the judge or to move the jury to action. The political leader may be highly educated and have sound ideas of government, but if he cannot win public support for his ideas, he may accomplish little or nothing. No matter what the profession may be, a knowledge of the principles underlying effective argumentation is almost indispensable to success.

Glenn Frank, president of the University of Wisconsin, recently expressed the view that debating, as sponsored by the high school and college debating leagues in this country, is of profound educational value. Many other leading educators, who have seen the tremendous educational force of debating in our high schools and colleges, have expressed the same view. Alexander Meiklejohn, former president of Amherst College, in his essay, *Student Activities in College*, says:

"It seems to me that stronger than any other group, tougher in intellectual fiber, keener in intellectual interest, better equipped to battle with coming problems, are the college debaters—the boys who, apart from their regular studies, band themselves together for intellectual controversy with each other and with their friends in other colleges."

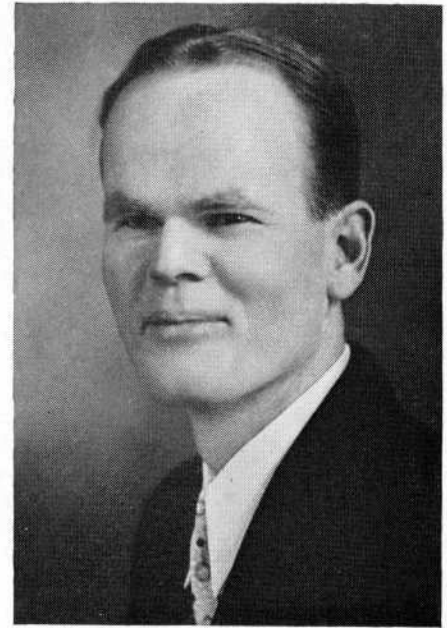
Another important advantage of debating which should not be overlooked is that it makes possible a free interchange of ideas and encourages the expression of thought. The framers of the

constitution provided in the bill of rights for freedom of speech. Although this provision does not mean that one has license to say anything he wishes to say, it does mean that he is privileged to express his ideas so long as that expression does not invade the private rights of others or endanger the government. In America we have free interchange of ideas. The freedom of private and public discussion is protected by law. It is on the anvil of debate that we are able to hammer and shape our opinions into definite policies of government. We revolt at the thought of undue suppression of this right. As Justice Holmes has said:

"But when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the open market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out."

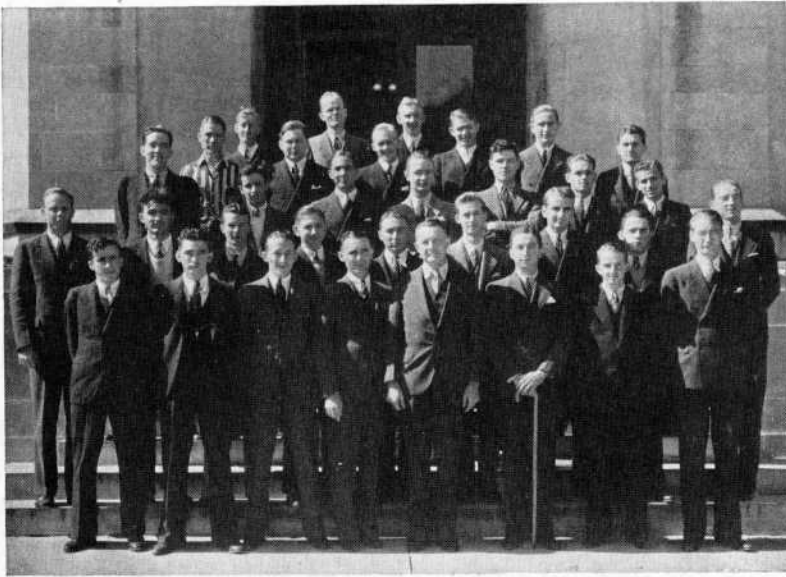
We can agree with Justice Holmes that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the open market. Here it is that debating plays an important part. It brings out in the open the clash of ideas, and the public is able to accept that which is true and reject that which is false.

Believing in the worthwhileness of debating and convinced that all students can profit from participation in this activity, those of us charged with responsibility of promoting it at the University inaugurated a new plan for the purpose of bringing more students into the debate organization. Although the importance of winning decisions is not to be underestimated, it was thought that the greater emphasis should be placed upon the training and development of



good speakers. Instead of having only six or eight men on the squad, it was thought better to allow a large number of students vitally interested in forensic training to participate in the debates.

In order to accommodate a larger number of students the University Forum was organized last year. All students who signified a specific interest in debating and who made a creditable showing in the annual debate try-outs were admitted to membership in the organization. Originally the organization had a membership of thirty-two men. It has been enlarged so that at the present time it has a membership of forty-nine. With increasing interest being shown all the time, it is believed that



Here are members of the recently organized University Forum: Left to right: First Row: Alfred Naifeh, Tulsa; Silas Freeman, Stratford; John Hall, Nowata; Robert Tyler, Cement; Josh Lee, head of public speaking department; Sam Minsky, Sapulpa; Cooper Redwine, Oklahoma City; Walter Emery, director of debating. Second Row: Kirk Woodliff, Wewoka; Orville C. Goodman, Allen; Gene White, Sulphur; Harold White, Tulsa; John Hodwitz, Oklahoma City; John Fishburn, Norman; Woods Hankinson, Oklahoma City; Morrison Stephens, Oklahoma City; Bryan L. Rakestraw, Oklahoma City. Third Row: Henry Lee McConnell, Altus; Jimmy Hawes, Norman; Leslie P. Henry, Oklahoma City; John Mathews, Oklahoma City; Leroy Allen, Bristow; John A. Croom, Tupelo, Mississippi; Floyd Gore, Tecumseh. Fourth Row: Herman Greenhaw, Hobart; Finis Gillispie, Hobart; Leslie Thomson, Shidler; Keller Henderson, Oklahoma City; Leslie Pain, Carnegie; J. F. Haning, Wewoka. Fifth Row: Hugh Turner, Oklahoma City; Barney Burns, Carlsbad, New Mexico; Tom Dopler, Graham, Oklahoma.

within a year or so the organization will have twice this number. It is hoped that eventually a large portion of the student body will make up the membership of the group.

The University Forum has a regular meeting on Wednesday evening of each week. The programs for the meetings vary, some taking the form of the conventional style of debate, some including informal discussions led by faculty members, and others involving procedure similar to that used in the Oxford Union where interruptions and heckling of speakers are allowed. In addition to these regular meetings, group sessions are held in which debate material is analyzed and the debaters given personal criticism on delivery. A compartment of rooms in the Union Building has been assigned for the use of the Forum. Plans are under way to equip these rooms with a research library where debaters may find periodical material on various topics of the day.

Such subjects as inflation, stabilization of the currency, and socialized medicine are typical subjects which are debated by members of the Forum.

In line with the movement to bring the institutions of the state closer together, a series of debates with Oklahoma schools has been arranged. All of these debates will be broadcast over the University broadcasting station, WNAD, and the schedule is as follows:

- Philips University, December 14.
- Oklahoma Baptist University, January 11.
- Oklahoma City University, February 8.
- Oklahoma A. & M. College, February 15.

Central State Teachers College, February 22.

Northwestern State Teachers College, March 8.

Panhandle A. & M. College, March 22.

East Central State Teachers College (Date not set).

Southeastern State Teachers College, (Date not set).

In addition to this series of debates with local colleges, a program of debates with schools outside the state has been provided for. Such schools as Kansas State College, the University of Kansas,

St. Louis University, the University of Arkansas, and others will send teams to the University for debates this year.

Several interesting trips are being planned for those who show special ability in the Forum discussions and debates on the campus.

The reorganization of the debate work has been effected for the purpose of giving forensic training to a large number of students, and for the purpose of developing good public speakers who will make a creditable showing for Oklahoma in all inter-collegiate debates.



The daughter of the first University alumnus, C. Ross Hume, '98as, '00M.A., Anadarko attorney, enrolled this fall in the law school to follow the profession of her father and elder brother, Ross G. Hume, '29as, '31law, Oklahoma City. She is Dorothy Hume, popular University student. She will complete her law course in June, 1936. Miss Hume is active in campus affairs and is a member of Alpha Chi Omega.