

# He Planned His Own Fame

By MALVINA STEPHENSON, '32, '36

**A** STOCKY, well-built youth of 19 impatiently smoothed his tuft of stubborn red hair, adjusted the frayed collar of his wrinkled suit, and strode briskly into the front entrance of the Dawson Produce company, in Oklahoma City, one hazy afternoon in the early autumn of 1911.

"I'm Huey Long from Louisiana," he announced confidently. "I'm going to work for you, Mr. Dawson."

The somewhat bewildered store owner stared in amazement. Of all the salesman-applicants he had interviewed, this one was the most unusual. "And what are you going to do?" he queried.

Immediately unfolding his well-planned scheme, the young fellow from the red clay hills of the south continued, "I want to go to school down at Norman to get an education, and I can do it by selling produce for you on the basis of a five per cent commission."

"I'm going to make the towns of Lexington, Noble, Purcell, and Norman," he concluded as he felt of the two thin silver pieces in his pocket, his capital investment in a college education.

Huey got the job. And Kaye W. Dawson, the Oklahoma City produce man, became the first employer of the fiery southern boss who walked from the corn pone hills of Louisiana to the peak of national prominence.

But Huey's plans worked like that. He was the playwright of his own destiny. Whether it was a salesman's job or a political campaign, he gave the cues and the actors simply fell in line with his cleverly manipulated plot. And fate didn't trick him for 42 years. Then a little slug of lead from the gun of a political foe ended his amazing career.

After Huey mapped out his salesman's territory, the highway to Norman was the only stretch between him and a college education. But the problem of getting there never stopped this "hard-riding" little redhead. He could walk—or hop a freight train. He'd come all the way from Louisiana in a box car, and a heated one at that.

But this time Huey had to walk. And walking in those days didn't mean hitchhiking. He beat out a footpath every step of those 18 miles to Norman. Perhaps he smiled when he passed this spot just 20 years later. As a United States senator, this same young man rolled into Norman with an escort of police, mili-

tia, and wailing sirens to address a University assembly called in his honor.

But when Huey walked into Norman in 1911, they didn't kill the fatted calf. The newest salesman of the Dawson Produce company found his night's lodging in the barn of the local electric light plant. It is the irony of Long's strange fate that the finest state capitol building in the nation today should stand in silent tribute to the man who launched his college days under the roof of an accommodating shack.

Fired with enthusiasm for success, Huey rose early the next morning to invade the business district of the town. He knew his law training hung in the balance. Lightly brushing aside his inexperience as a salesman, the scheming youth carefully laid the plans for his first venture in the produce business. Again it worked. He placed a long distance call to Dawson for a rush order on potatoes.

"Huey Long calling the Dawson Produce company, Oklahoma City, collect," the youthful salesman triumphantly called over the wires. Minutes of silence dragged into endless agony. This one sale

meant a \$20 commission—his only hope to enroll in the law school the next day.

"Mr. Dawson doesn't accept collect calls. Says that's one of his hard and fast rules," the glib operator returned.

Long might be down—but not for long. Schemes for money turned rapidly in his nimble mind. He affectionately toyed with the hand-turned leather billfold, the treasured gift from the girl in Louisiana. He made the decision.

Reluctantly swinging into the nearest pawnshop, he traded the valued purse for a 25 cent piece. The investment should bring him the coveted twenty dollar bills. But luck turned on him. The telephone call brought word that the wholesale house couldn't furnish the potatoes.

This was too much—even for the zeal of Huey Long. He lost his spirit. Discouraged and embittered over the whole situation, he turned his steps toward the railway station. He waited around for the friendly whistle of a passing freight.

Standing there on the platform of the windswept station at Norman, he was thinking of going back to Louisiana when he met a friendly stranger. The sympathetic gentleman lent him five dollars. Huey used this to get his name inscribed on the register of the University of Oklahoma.

The kindly stranger was the affluent Ralph C. Jackson, prosperous salesman-ager for the Frisco lumber company. And Huey never forgot his friends. They will tell you that. Only a year ago when this man was broke and discouraged, it was Huey who got him a \$300-a-month

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**THE NOVEMBER STRETCH**

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leading a sustained drive up the field, plunged over from the 1-yard line for the second in the second quarter.

Corbett tallied the third on a 5-yard run on a reverse in the third period. Cutchall's also came in that period on a 10-yard pass from Woodrow Huddleston. Breeden kicked one extra pointer to make it 25.

The Sooners scored 20 first downs to 7 for New Mexico and gained 321 yards in scrimmage against 35.

Outclassing the Lobos from the start, the Jones boys had the ball game pretty much their own way. Melbourne "Nig" Robertson, playing his first game of the season, gained 94 yards through scrimmage on 10 plays for an average of 9.4 yards a try. Raleigh Francis picked up 44 yards on 4 plays before he was injured.

Vital statistics were in favor of the Sooners.

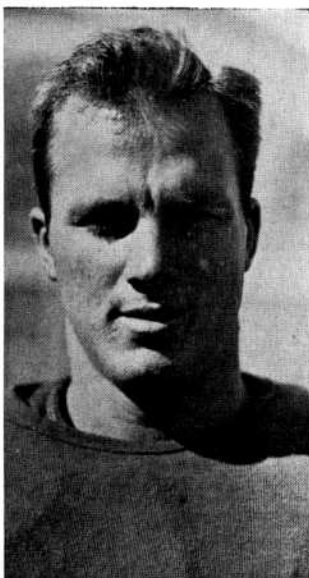
The score by quarter:

Oklahoma	6	7	12	0	25
New Mexico	0	0	0	0	0

**Oklahoma 3, Colorado 0**

On the second play of his collegiate career, Raphael Boudreau, Purcell sophomore, kicked a 43-yard field goal that gave Oklahoma a 3 to 0 win over the University of Colorado in the season's opener.

A complete new team of Sooners was sent into the game at the start of the second quarter. On the first play, Boudreau threw an 18-yard pass to Jack Baer, Shawnee sophomore quarterback. It gained some of the ground the Oklahomans needed for a first down, but not enough. With fourth down and several yards to go, Boudreau dropped back to



the 33-yard line and hoisted one directly between the crossbars.

Ed "Mickey" Parks and Ben Poynor, veteran stars, were withheld from the game, the former because of scholastic difficulties, the latter because of a leg injury.

With a 3 to 0 lead, Captain "Biff" Jones' team played safe ball during the remainder of the game. Not a pass was attempted during the second half. Woodrow Huddleston, Seminole sophomore, was the Oklahoma leading ground gainer. He gained 45 yards in 6 plays.

Vital statistics gave Colorado the edge: First downs—Colorado 8, Oklahoma 5; Yards gained rushing—Colorado 124, Oklahoma 103; Yards gained forward passing—Colorado 58, Oklahoma 31; Total yards gained—Colorado 182, Oklahoma 135; Passes attempted, forward—Colorado 19, Oklahoma 6. Forward passes completed—Colorado 5, Oklahoma 2. Lateral passes attempted and completed—Colorado 0, Oklahoma 1. Punts—Colorado 12, Oklahoma 15. Punts average by kick—Colorado 39.2, Oklahoma 38.9.

Score by quarters:

Oklahoma	0	3	0	0	3
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0

Nine full coaches bearing 460 fans rode the Santa Fe's special train to the Oklahoma-Colorado game at Norman, the train making the run from Oklahoma City to Norman in the record time of 23 minutes.

For the first time in five years, the governor of Oklahoma saw a football game at Norman. Gov. E. W. Marland and Senator T. P. Gore were in the Sooner stadium when Oklahoma defeated Colorado 3 to 0. Former Governor William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray scorned to attend football games the four years he was in office.

Raphael Boudreau's 43-yard placekick against Colorado made Oklahoma's old-time fans delve deeply into their scrapbooks. They discovered that Dan Short was the first Oklahoma player ever to kick a field goal via placement (against Texas at Oklahoma City in 1903) and Bill Cross the first to propel a drop-kick between the crossbars (against Bennie Owen's Bethany Swedes at Oklahoma City in 1904).

Six hundred and fifty automobiles passed over new oiled highway No. 74 in the first hour after the Oklahoma-Colorado football game. State highway patrol cars report that there wasn't a

single accident on either highway 74 or 77 during the afternoon of the game, another record for Sooner football traffic.



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job with a New Orleans motor car company.

Huey's day in the law school included a class in Dean Monnet's contracts. Even after Huey hit the front page with such force that every move he made was hot newspaper copy, he never forgot the dean. The minute he'd cross the state line, he'd joke about his former professor with affectionate stories of old college days. It was about some pinochle game, about some class antic—at any rate, he cherished his law school days.

When Monnet visited in Washington last spring, Long entertained him at a special dinner and had a long chat about the days when the bustling redhead was just another law student on the growing Sooner campus.

And being a former student meant something to this man who stepped across Soonerland in his amazing climb to fame. Until his tragic assassination, the Louisiana dictator was an active member of the Sooner alumni association.

The avid youth got his first real taste

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Jack Harris, all-Big Six end, has been hampered this season on account of frequent injuries. The great pass catcher hopes to get in condition for the closing rush.

## Send \$3 Be a member

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of politics while he was a freshman on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. His insatiable desire for power was to grow until he would some day find himself entrenched in the administration of a state government as yet no man had ever been.

After enrolling in the law school, he jumped into politics immediately. That was in 1911 when he became a bitter opponent of Woodrow Wilson. He told the students he didn't think a prof would make a good president. Huey was for Champ Clark. Carefully working out his plans, the crafty young politician started in after the hero of his fellow students. This bit of political philosophy often proved to be clever strategy. He always launched a vitriolic attack rather than champion a special cause.

"In a political fight when you've got nothing in favor of your side, start a row with the opposition," Huey counseled years later. He learned that rule when he tried to get the pro-Wilson students fighting among themselves, and succeeded. But strange for Huey—he did not succeed in winning the country for Clark.

In those early days, Huey began to master crafty technique that was later to guide his fantastic course. Some of these tricks were some day to make even a congress pause in annoyance. The art of filibustering was mastered one night when Huey and his fellow students took a late train ride.

An interrurban ride brought them to Moore. Boarding the midnight train at the Moore junction, the burly redhead and his companions moved up to the front of the baggage car to prolong the time when they must face the conductor.

Soon the baggage car door opened and an irate conductor demanded tickets. The young law student from Louisiana led the group in filibustering until the conductor put them off half a mile north of Norman. But a brisk evening hike soon took the rollicking law students to their destination. Filibustering won the point. And Huey didn't forget.

With Huey as a member, the freshman class of 1911 rose to new heights. The annual battle with the upperclassmen in the shadows of the old spoonholder took on new vigor when this husky kid from the clay hills fell in line with the first year group. Huey mapped the campaign of battle and reduced the hardy sophomores to their first tie since the territorial curtain raised on its new university back in 1892.

Dr. C. N. Berry, Oklahoma City, then a sophomore, smilingly recalls another incident when Huey led the freshman group to a grinding victory.

"We had just come in from a sophomore picnic," he tells. "A bunch of us football fellows were together, but the freshmen made a surprise attack. Our

picnic ended out in the shade of the old elm trees—the only trouble was that we were quite attached to the trees."

Jostling through his first year in the law school, walking from town to town to make his salesman's calls, Huey grew impatient with the long road ahead. He turned to seek his fortune where he could make a quicker start.

As a salesman for a flour company in Memphis, he met his wife-to-be at a baking contest. With his bride Huey rented an apartment at Tulane university where he finished a three year law course in only 8 months.

As soon as he was a full-fledged lawyer, Huey and his bride returned in triumph to his home parish, Winnfield, and hung out his shingle. With his brother, Julius, as his partner, Huey served the cajuns and sapsuckers of the red clay hills in all legal matters. But Huey didn't think much of Brother Julius as a lawyer.

"The partnership, in two months made about as many dollars as that, so I went out for myself—all for Huey," the late senator once observed.

After Long broke into politics, Dawson used to be down in Louisiana every spring on business. He first renewed the old business acquaintance when Long was railroad commissioner. Then at the gubernatorial inauguration in 1928 Dawson was around again to see the man who planned his fame and then made it.

"What I most admire about Long was that he always carefully worked out his campaign for attack and then stuck to it," Dawson comments as he reviewed the career of the man who cut a lurid path in the field of American politics.

Just how far would Long have gone? Did he really have serious ambitions of becoming president? These questions have puzzled observers ever since Long began to seek a political career outside the bounds of his native state.

This question also perplexed Dawson, his long-time friend in whose home Long was a guest when the Louisiana dictator spoke in the state on labor day just before his tragic assassination.

Dawson asked Long during this trip, "Huey, are you really after the presidency of the United States? Are you going to become president?" After watching Long's fantastic plans unfold with clock-like precision, this gray-haired veteran of the '89ers had learned to respect his spectacular ambitions.

Long quickly rejoined, "I'll send you a copy of my new book—"My First Days in the White House."

And that first chapter opens with all the exuberance of the Long optimism and ambition.

"It had happened. The people of the United States had indorsed my plan for the redistribution of wealth and I was President of the United States."