

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Homecoming Is More Than Just Rah Rah Stuff

A University Homecoming, such as Sooners will enjoy November 20 when the Oklahoma Aggies visit Norman, probably means little more than a day of joviality, football, and hit-and-run conversations with long lost friends, to some alumni.

That, in itself, is possibly reason enough for Homecoming. The trouble of preparing a few social events such as a dinner-dance and tea, and publicizing the event so that alumni can make it a point to return on a special day and be assured of seeing a maximum number of other alumni—is all well repaid if those who attend have a good time.

But Homecoming means more than a day or two of fun to thoughtful graduates. And we believe that there are a good many more of this type than some of the cynical columnists and magazine writers would have us believe.

These alumni who are sensitive to the aims of a University find a mental stimulation in breathing the intellectual atmosphere of the campus. They come back to the campus from a world that is full of ruthless business competition. A world ruled pretty largely by the standards of "getting ahead" in a material way. A world in which success is judged largely by a man's financial or political power or professional prestige.

On the University campus, the standards are entirely different. As a whole, the University community recognizes intellectual worth, it emphasizes the importance of social ideals, it praises achievements for humanity instead of achievements for self.

Of course these ideals are mixed with the very practical job of teaching students to become capable in their chosen lines of work. But it is the special set of standards and ideals that lifts the college campus somewhat above the workaday world.

And we believe that this clean freshness of the intellectual atmosphere on the campus is actually enjoyed at Homecoming by many an alumnus even though he may not be actually conscious of it.



Sudden Death Still Menaces O. U. Students

During a single year, six University students have lost their lives in accidents on the highway between Oklahoma City and Norman. Primarily, the road is dangerous because it was designed many years ago. The sharp turns and narrow slab were not designed for speeds of fifty and sixty miles an hour.

Recognizing the critical need for improving this congested strip of highway, the State Highway Commission set aside funds to widen the 18-foot slab three feet on each side. The Commission's good intentions are commendable, but the experience of other states in highway building indicates that this widening will only increase the severity of accidents and not prevent them.

In 1932, New Jersey completed its express highway between Trenton and New York. It was a four-lane highway with wide curves, and was regarded as the country's finest super-highway.

But what happened? Instead of reducing accidents, the four-lane super-highway actually increased the fatal-accident ratio as well as the average speed of traffic. Four years after the highway was completed, New Jersey saw its error so clearly that it began the difficult task of splitting the highway and rebuilding it into two one-way sections.

Dr. Miller McClintock, head of the Harvard Bureau for Street Traffic Research, has done exhaustive research into

traffic problems and accidents. Some of his findings were explained in great detail in *Fortune* magazine a year ago.

Dr. McClintock had this to say:

"The three-lane road (intended to relieve congestion and make overtaking easy and safe) turned out to be the most dangerous thoroughfare ever built. If the road builders had deliberately set out to make accidents, they could not have contrived a more murderous weapon. Down the middle of the road they opened that inviting strip for fast traffic; and drivers from both sides scrambled for possession of it, meeting in the most sickening varieties of head-on crashes and side-swipes."

In two years New Jersey's super-highway killed 168 persons and injured about 1,800 although it was a four-lane highway and theoretically should have eliminated the head-on crashes.

Highway experts, according to Dr. McClintock, have come to the very definite conclusion that the only really safe highway is one consisting of two one-way slabs, with an "island" between to keep the two streams of traffic separated.

Of course this two-slab type of highway is more expensive. Probably it is too expensive for Oklahoma's debt-ridden Highway Department to consider at all.

At the same time, it is sad to think of spending many thousands to increase the state's investment in a death trap highway that is not in accord with modern safety design.

Widening the present road from Oklahoma City to Norman should make it easier to stay on the slab. But the experience of other states indicates we can expect more serious accidents—not less. New Jersey's bloody experiment seems to indicate, in fact, that we may expect more deaths.

The experience of other states should be considered when the work starts on improving the new direct route from Eastern Avenue in Oklahoma City south to a junction with Highway 77 at Midway. There is no paving there now. When paving is started there—as it inevitably must some day to replace the present death-traps on Highway 77—it should be built in two one-way slabs according to proved safety principles.



This being the month for Thanksgiving, we duly express thanks for what the last Legislature saw fit to appropriate for the University . . . But we'd be much more thankful if the actual figures on increase in enrolment were considered in dividing appropriations among the state's institutions of higher education.



Sane Attitude On Syphilis Tests at O. U.

Although, as might be expected, there were a few public protests from over the state when it was revealed that the University was giving the Wassermann test for syphilis to freshmen in military science and physical education (in connection with routine physical examinations), the general reaction was sensible and wholesome.

Students welcomed the tests as a common sense precaution against spread of the disease among students, and also viewed it in a broader sense as an important step in the present nation-wide campaign to stamp out this disease.

Student opinion hailed as old-fashioned any suggestion that they would object to taking the test.

It is interesting to note that after five hundred students had been examined, only two positive reactions had been obtained.