



This is probably the last group picture ever taken of the original four members of the University faculty. Left to right, William N. Rice, languages; Dr. David R. Boyd, president; F. S. E. Amos, history; Dr. Edwin DeBarr, science.

Watching O. U. for Half a Century

WHEN the University of Oklahoma first opened its doors to students 46 years ago, in three upstairs rooms of a store building in Norman, a faculty of four men was entrusted with the job of establishing a center of culture in a pioneer land.

The University has come a long way since that day when the original faculty surveyed its student body of about sixty and found that only one of them was really ready to study college subjects. Now the University has a student body of more than 6,500. The physical plant has grown to a campus of 217 acres with facilities valued at \$7,300,000.

Three of the four original faculty members are still living. They have watched the University grow for nearly a half-century. What do they think about its growth, its mistakes and its achievements, its needs for the future, as the institution nears its Semiscentennial?

Strangely enough, although Oklahoma has gone through vast changes during the period, and social and economic conditions are far different from the pioneer days, these veteran educators say that the problems of the institution now are much like they were in the early days.

The original four faculty members were Dr. David Ross Boyd, the first president of the University; Dr. Edwin DeBarr, William N. Rice, and French S. E. Amos. Dr. Boyd died in November, 1936, at his home in Glendale, California, where he was living in retirement.

Mr. Amos resigned as assistant professor of government last spring and moved to California. Dr. DeBarr, whose name

was synonymous with science through the early part of the University's history and whose name was given to the Chemistry building, is now living in Norman and is a consulting chemist. Mr. Rice, who taught on the University faculty only during the first two years, is living with a son and daughter in Capitol Hill in retirement from a lifetime of teaching.

The three men still living have had a rich experience. With Mr. Amos' retirement last spring, they are all sufficiently detached from the University itself that they can speak their minds freely. What, then, do they have to say about the state's chief cultural institution?

EACH has his own viewpoint, according to his special field of work, but in the main, they emphasize these points:

1. Keep the University out of politics, and free of other "influences."
2. Give it enough financial support to provide good men and good equipment to work with.
3. Make education practical enough that the student will be able to get along in the world after graduation.
4. Do everything possible to develop character in students—to make them good citizens as well as good scholars.

Mr. Amos, who left the faculty to go into the newspaper business for many years but returned to the University in 1925, was the most emphatic in warning the state against the danger of political and "big business" influences exerted on the faculty.

"One of the biggest threats to academic freedom is the subtle influence ex-

erted by the big industries of the state," he said. "The faculty member is really in a dilemma. If he doesn't express himself on public issues on which he is well informed, he is accused of being unprogressive. If he does express himself and happens to state a viewpoint that some public officials or big business men don't like, there is likely to be an immediate effort to get him fired."

Mr. Amos believes that, while the early-day students got more individual attention from faculty members, that the present-day improvements in facilities for educational work more than offset the disadvantage of larger classes.

"In the early days, University education consisted largely of question and answer work in class, because there was no library, very little equipment, and no research facilities," he said. "I think University education has improved in nearly every way. At first the University was about like a young couple just starting in housekeeping—it needed everything all at once."

The chief weakness he sees in university education of today is that it doesn't always prepare a student to meet the industrial civilization of today when he gets out of school.

"I think we might well remember the words of the Greek philosopher who was asked the best way to teach boys. His reply was: 'Teach them these things which they will use when they become men.'

"I think the University should emphasize the practical angle of studies

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grams of relief and old age pensions, it has become apparent that a trained personnel to direct each of these activities is imperative. The University, foreseeing this need, has established a School of Social Work. Recently this school has been recognized by The American Association of Schools of Social Work, and those who complete this course in the future will be able to meet government requirements as case workers, administrative assistants, and directors.

Another aspect of this whole program of improving the quality of public administration has developed recently. A movement has been started to give in-service training for those regularly employed in government service. The Federal Government is co-operating with the state educational agencies at the present time in various parts of the country in conducting institutes or short courses for the benefit of public employees. The University of Oklahoma, through its institute program and short courses, has been co-operating with public agencies in this training and there is every reason to enlarge greatly our activities in this direction.

A recent article in the *Survey Graphic* describes a new movement in which college graduates of courses in public administration may be assigned to governmental bureaus for a period of practical training and observation. We are told in this article that out of this movement of the National Student Federation grew the National Institute of Public Affairs, with headquarters in Washington. Its purpose is to help articulate college courses and governmental procedure through a system of federal internships. Like internes in hospitals, those who are admitted to departments for practical experience learn by watching and doing. Some of these internes even pay their own expenses; others have fellowships from universities, and recently a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation was provided to assist in this experiment.

The University of California has worked out a plan by which graduate students in public administration are permitted to work in the personnel offices at the state capital. These students have one-year appointments and are paid a nominal salary by the state. In Wisconsin, an agreement has recently been reached between the state government and the State University by which students of special ability are awarded what is called "public service scholarships." The holder of one of these scholarships agrees to serve the state after graduation for a limited period of time as an apprentice in some department of the state government. At the end of this apprenticeship, he is permitted to take an examination for a permanent civil service position.

While this whole scheme of governmental internships and co-operative re-

lationships between publicly supported institutions and state governments has barely had a beginning, its possibilities are so great that these arrangements seem destined to meet with popular favor throughout the country. If governmental opportunity is open to the talented youth of the nation who are eager for public service and who are trained and inspired by competent teachers, the effect on public administration will be momentous. It will increase the faith of the people in their governmental institutions and inspire a greater respect for those who serve in high places.

These illustrations are sufficient to indicate the broadening base of educational opportunity. The future holds out great hope, it seems to me, for useful public service for those who look ahead and prepare for these opportunities when they come. I want the University of Oklahoma to fully comprehend its opportunity and measure up to its responsibility in the expanding program of education for social need.

Some one has said that "the state universities are the vitalized expression of popular sovereignty thinking their thoughts in education and cultural organization." My hope for the University is that it may fully measure up to this ideal. To the extent that our resources permit, it is our determination to serve every legitimate need of our people; and to that end it has been our sincere desire to make the boundaries of the state the limits of the campus. There is no question that the University occupies a place of confidence in the thoughts of the citizenship of the State. The fact that the students who are now enrolled in the University for the new year come from every county, city, town, and almost every village in the State is evidence enough that the people believe in the quality of educational opportunity which the University offers and in the ideals that guide and direct its program. My colleagues assembled here this morning appreciate the place of esteem in which the University is held and we are all anxious to justify the confidence imposed in us.

The University as a functional agency of our democratic society will ever be alert to its obligations. Those of us responsible for directing and guiding the institution's destiny will constantly work toward keeping our objectives adjusted to the needs of the people whom we are called upon to serve. The University of Oklahoma has done much through the years to train men of high purpose and ability to serve the public in many capacities. It is my hope for those of you who are entering upon your work today that you may look forward in the years to come to your opportunity to serve our people as those are doing who have preceded you.

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Dr. DeBarr favors letting a student take pretty much what courses he wants, on the theory that he won't get much good out of the courses he is forced to take.

However, he does favor a liberal arts education for every student, regardless of what occupation or profession he goes into.

Dr. DeBarr's emphasis on the importance of good equipment for university work is the result of a life-long conviction. When a student himself, he alternated his college work with years of teaching in order that during the time he was in school he could have the best available facilities for studying and could spend all his time at it.

When he first came to Norman to teach science work in the University, there was no laboratory, and he took money out of his own pocket to buy equipment and set up the needed laboratory.

He worked for years towards a good, modern chemistry building and refused to compromise by accepting mediocre quarters on the campus. He won his fight and the chemistry building, named DeBarr Hall in his honor, was completed in 1916. It was well planned and equipped for the needs of that time and future years.

Because of the personalities involved, Dr. DeBarr doesn't like to talk too much about some of the University's political troubles in years past, but he comments dryly that the recent troubles have been "nothing compared to the past."

There was a time, for example, when the political ouster of a president caused many years of confusion and difficulty for the institution. He's convinced that university presidents and politics just won't mix without causing serious trouble for the institution in the long run.

Mr. Rice, the third member of the original faculty still living, makes his home with his daughter, Donna, and son, Herbert, in Capitol Hill.

He is now 86 years old, and moves slowly to arise from his chair, but his mind is still alert and his thoughts are clear. He was on the University faculty for the first two years. Later he taught school in Kansas, in Norman, and in many other places.

"I have been in so little contact with the growth of the University that it would be foolish for me to comment either favorably or critically on the system as it has grown up," he said.

But he did express a wish.

"I hope the University can be kept free of politics. That kind of thing can do tremendous damage."

When Mr. Rice speaks of political influences on the University, he can speak with first-hand knowledge. He was a staunch Republican and when he came to Norman he did not hesitate to speak and write about his views on various

public affairs in the Territory. That was all right as long as the Territorial administration was Republican. But after two years, a Democratic administration took charge and Mr. Rice left the faculty—by request.

Political feeling was very strong in those days, and coming from the North, Mr. Rice was surprised to find that most of the Territory residents accepted criticisms as a personal insult. He views it philosophically now as perhaps due to the southern influence in Oklahoma.

Mr. Rice, like other members of the original faculty, remembers the religious flavor of the early days at the University. He believes that faculty members, if earnest and persevering, can do much to strengthen character in students and make good citizens of them.

Methods of teaching?

He believes that depends mostly upon the capabilities of the individual teacher. A method that would fail in the hands of one man might be used with great success by another instructor with greater ability.

Although Dr. Boyd, the fourth member of the original faculty and president of the University during the first 16 years of its history, is no longer living, it is not difficult to reconstruct his views from the comments of those persons who knew him well.

Dr. Boyd had a deep religious faith throughout his life. The University chapel exercises he conducted included a Scripture reading, a prayer, and a short, carefully planned talk. An early graduate of the University has asserted that he got more from these chapel talks than from all the rest of his college course.

He was committed to the building of good character and good citizenship as well as scholarship in his students. He liked close contact with the "plain people" of the state and he spent much of his time traveling over the state to tell people about their University—often sleeping in sod houses, dugouts, and log cabins.

He was an untiring worker, and handled a great volume of administrative details with his own hands. Not a deep scholar himself, he was yet so imbued with faith in the value of higher education that he gave the University of Oklahoma a great impetus toward its present standing in these 16 years he devoted to it.

There is, perhaps, more than passing significance in the fact that all four of the original members of the University faculty were men of high ideals, committed to character-building and citizen-building.

When these veteran educators say "Keep the University free of politics," "Give it enough money for good men and good equipment," "Make education practical" and "Train students for good citizenship"—we know that they are speaking sincerely and with deep conviction.