

Now It's 'Dean Emeritus'

By F. G. Tappan

THE many friends of Dean James H. Felgar were shocked last summer to learn of his resignation as dean of the College of Engineering. The Board of Regents, upon accepting his resignation, appointed him Dean Emeritus and professor of engineering.

Mr. Felgar has been connected with the College of Engineering at the University since its organization in 1909, serving as its dean from 1909 until 1937, a period of twenty-eight years.

Although a native of Iowa, according to *Who's Who in America*, he started in the direction of Oklahoma at a very early age. He stopped however, for awhile in Kansas, where he received his early education and afterwards his A. B. degree from Kansas University in 1901, being elected to Phi Beta Kappa during his senior year. After completing a year's work in engineering at the University of Kansas, he went to Chicago and attended the Armour Institute of Technology, from which he holds his degree of mechanical engineer and more recently the honorary degree of doctor of engineering. After engaging in engineering work in Chicago for a short time, he came to Oklahoma, stopping for a few months at Stillwater where he taught engineering classes at Oklahoma A. and M. College.

Early in the spring of 1906 Mr. Felgar came to Norman as instructor in mechanical engineering, being one of two members of the engineering staff. The School of Applied Science had been organized here in 1904, with Mr. Majors, instructor in mechanical engineering, in charge. Majors was succeeded by C. M. Jansky, who taught electrical engineering and physics. Mr. Felgar became the head of the School of Applied Science in 1908 when Jansky accepted a position with the University of Wisconsin. In 1909 the School of Applied Science was reorganized into the College of Engineering, with Schools of Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering, and Mining Geology. The School of Chemical Engineering was organized in 1912 with Dr. Guy Y. Williams as director. The department of mechanics was organized in 1910 with Mr. Dwight in charge; previously this subject was taught by the faculty of mathematics. Professor H. C. George came to the University of Oklahoma in the fall of 1924 to head the newly organized School of Petroleum Engineering.



Dean Emeritus J. H. Felgar

In 1927 the School of Architectural Engineering was organized with Harold Gimeno in charge; the School of Engineering Physics had already been organized under Dr. Homer Dodge in 1923.

The first engineering degrees were granted in 1910 to one civil and one electrical engineer; in 1917 there were fifteen engineering graduates; in 1930 the number had been increased to sixty-one, and the present senior class numbers about one hundred and sixty. The engineering enrolment increased from nothing in 1904 to nearly fifteen hundred during the present year.

This history of the College of Engineering is very intimately tied up with the activities of Dean Felgar. With his broad general scholastic training, his activities and interests could not be confined entirely to engineering however. He has for years been one of the most active members of the Lions Club, the Norman Chamber of Commerce, community chest drives, the Norman Country Club and the Presbyterian Church, in the building of which he took a very active part and where he has for many years been an elder. He has always been very closely identified with any movement in Norman looking toward the betterment of social conditions for the underprivileged.

In connection with his educational activities he has taken a very constructive part in the Society for Promotion of Engineering Education. He is a member of Tau Beta Pi and Sigma Tau, honorary societies, and the Beta Theta Pi social fraternity.

He was a charter member and past president of the Oklahoma Engineering Society which, after several years was reorganized as the Oklahoma branch of the American Association of Engineers. At the present time he is on the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Society of Professional Engineers, and a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He is a charter member of the Norman Country Club and the University chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. He has been on the Athletic Council of the University since 1907. He has been very active in the Norman Chamber of Commerce, having served as vice-president and member of the board of directors.

In spite of his manifold duties in connection with the University, town and church he has never been too busy to listen sympathetically to the hundreds of engineering students who seek his help and advice on all sorts of problems, religious, social, moral and financial as well as educational.

His greatest personal assets making for success in engineering education and as dean of the College of Engineering have been his absolute fairness in adjusting controversies, his ability to appreciate both sides in an argument and his motto that "youth must be served"—must be led and encouraged in education and never forced or driven into a position.

In an article in the *Sooner Magazine* for April, 1931, under the title of "The Goal of the Engineering College," Dean Felgar says, "What is the goal of any educational institution? Is it not to enable and encourage individuals to develop the talents that each may have in the pursuit of happiness so that he may be of service to himself and also to the community?"

"Every college curriculum should contain subjects which will help the student to take his position among men; subjects to develop his personality; a background of literary, social and philosophical subjects which would help the engineer to take his place on equal terms in competition with other intellects; training which will help him to co-operate with his fellowmen rather than differentiate himself from them; material which will help a man to talk something else besides 'shop' with people he meets outside of business and professional relations."

The summer of 1935, after twenty-nine years of continuous service, Dean Felgar was granted a sabbatical leave of absence. He still conducts classes on Organization and Management and Engineering Contracts, two fields in which he has been vitally interested for many years.