

Working Dean

New Head of the College
Of Arts and Sciences Is
Busy Man by Long Habit

DR. EDGAR D. MEACHAM, a Sooner alumnus, '14ba, and University faculty member for a quarter of a century, has become head of the largest college of the institution. Appointment by the Board of Regents in late spring made him dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

As assistant dean since 1926 he has put into a practice code of fairness, kindness, and loyalty. His friends are without number both among the students he has counseled and among his associates.

Complicated student problems continue to confront him almost daily, and he'll admit that they worry him. One of the most difficult is the question of how to deal with capable students in the University who will not make their grades. Solution lies, he believes, in the complicated task of determining the cause of such students' attitudes.

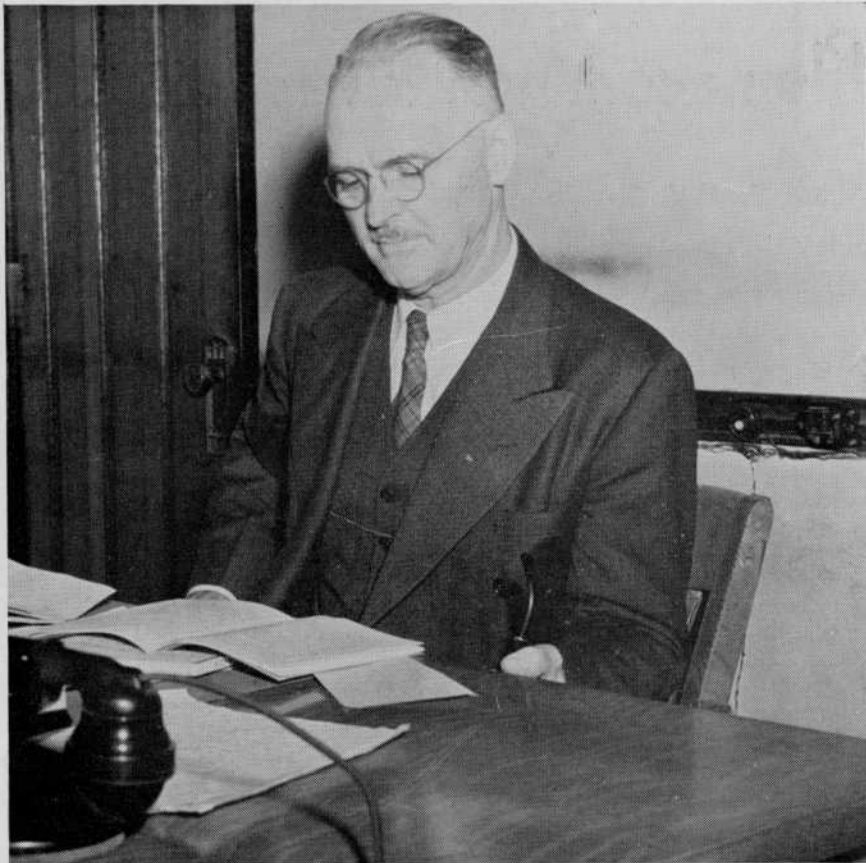
Other students are not successful in school because they are apparently incapable. Often, he says, their failure is due not so much to inability as it is to misdirection of effort.

"Too many young people come to the University declaring that they are going to be a doctor or teacher or a lawyer when they are much better suited to other fields." Here the problem is to attempt to determine their aptitudes, then to recommend proper courses of study.

Another group comes to school both willing and capable but at a financial disadvantage. Loss to society as well as to the individual is likely to accrue if this student must be refused a college education. Yet discovering means to aid him is more than difficult.

These problems and others that come into a dean's office call for a man who knows youth and is interested in its welfare. Dean Meacham was "made" for the job.

Born at Smithfield, Texas, he was one of the older boys in the large family of a Texas cattleman. When Ed was nine, the family moved to Oklahoma and settled on a large farm near Clinton. He worked there with his brothers and father ten years before he had a chance to be-



Dean E. D. Meacham in his office

gin his high school education. In 1907 he and his brother, George, now a member of the Oklahoma Highway Commission, started to Southwestern State Normal School, Weatherford.

They had to keep in close touch with the farm and return every summer to work. The boys and their father farmed their own 160 acres and five quarter-sections of leased bottom land.

During the latter part of July each year and throughout August Ed bought cattle. His buying trips of from one to four or five days took him all over the western part of the state, after which he gathered the stock together and drove it to the shippers.

His straight-from-the-shoulder dealing was the kind men liked and the kind that drew their confidence. When he made an offer for a steer, he knew what he was doing. He stated his price; did not haggle or try to out-talk the owner.

Ed's normal school work ended in 1910. In the fall of that year he had his first taste of teaching school. It was in a four-room structure at Lookeba, Caddo County. His charges were students of the eighth and ninth grades—one class in the front of the room, the other in the back.

He probably would have laughed then had any one told him that that was the beginning of a teaching career. He was merely adding to his financial backlog so that he could go the University and prepare himself to be a scientific farmer.

That had been his aim for a long time and still was when he went to Norman in May 1911. The farm had always been his life. He would go back to it.

Besides the three years of high school education that Mr. Meacham took away from Weatherford, he took the daughter of the mathematics professor. He was married to Ray Ferrell December 3, 1910. The fact that he was a student of math and she was the math instructor's daughter was, however, coincidental.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Meacham enrolled in the University in 1911, she as a junior and he as a freshman. Mrs. Meacham was a charter member of the University chapter of Delta Gamma sorority. She graduated in '13.

Destiny had included nothing about farming in Mr. Meacham's adult life. At the University he soon became interested enough in his academic work to want to teach. His three preferred fields were zoology, Latin, and mathematics. As his college education progressed, the field narrowed and he chose mathematics. He received his bachelor of arts degree with a math major in 1914, after three years on the campus, including summers.

His undergraduate days were busy ones. The first fall he was on the campus he made the regular football team—left guard on the Sooner all-victorious team of '11, coached by Bennie Owen. *Sooner Yearbook* had this to say about him during that season:

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University. The couple were at home temporarily at Ada.

KING-SWAN: Miss Mildred King, '40speech, and Oscar Edward Swan, Jr. were married in September at Muskogee where they both formerly lived. Mrs. Swan was a member of Delta Delta Delta sorority at the University. Mr. Swan attended Princeton University. The couple will live in Parsons, Kansas.

Parker R. Ledbetter, '40journal, has been employed in the Circulation Department of the *Topeka State Journal* at Topeka, Kansas.

VaRue Lindsay, '40lib.sci, has been appointed librarian in Drumright High School.

LINN-THORP: Miss Anna Louree Linn, '40 nurse, and Edward M. Thorp, Jr., '40bs.med, were married September 12. Mr. Thorp is a senior in the University School of Medicine.

F. Millard Long, Jr., '40, is taking naval training this summer and hopes to complete work for a commission in time to return to his work at the University for the second semester.

Lilly Lorentz, '40ms, is head of the physics department of Miami Junior College.

Fred McMillan, '40ba, is employed as graduate assistant in the physics department of the University.

Bob McWilliams, '40journal, has been employed as news editor of Radio Station KFEL at Denver, Colorado.

John Mills, '40geol, has been employed by the Carter Oil Company and recently was stationed at Jackson, Mississippi, for geological work.

MILLS-STAEDELIN: Miss Theda Mills, formerly of Wilson, and Joseph Staedelin, jr., '40fa, of Norman, were married August 25. Mr. Staedelin is a member of Alpha Tau Omega. The couple will live in Norman.

Warren Moore, '40ba, is employed as announcer for radio station KOCY, Oklahoma City.

Hallie Morgan, '40lib.sci, has been appointed librarian in Emerson Junior High School at Enid.

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"Left guard, did good work at that position in the Texas game, where he nearly ran away with one of the Texas players. He is a consistent player on offense and defense, and promises to be one of the best linemen Oklahoma has ever had. He is the heaviest man on the team and puts all of his weight into the game. He was the only first-year man to receive his 'O' this year."

The *Yearbook* prediction wasn't wrong. Bennie Owen says today that "Meach," as he was best known, was one of the best linemen and all-around good players that ever stepped on a gridiron. Bennie recalls his co-operative spirit, his sense of fair play, and especially "that good noodle he's got on him."

Mrs. Meacham accompanied her husband on every trip the team made and never missed a game in which he played.

In addition to a full scholastic schedule and his football playing, "Meach" took part in numerous other activities. He was on the track team for three years in the events of hammer-throwing and shot-put, and student member of the University Athletic Council. He was a member of Kappa Sigma social fraternity, of which he was president two years, he was editor of the '13 *Sooner Yearbook*, member of Pe-et, senior men's honorary leadership

and scholarship fraternity, member of the Y. M. C. A. cabinet, was elected to Sigma Delta Chi, national honorary journalistic fraternity, and was winner of the Letzeiser medal for the outstanding student in '14.

The yearbook carried this quotation beneath his senior picture: "There is a perennial nobleness and even sacredness in work."

On graduating in '14, Mr. Meacham was granted a fellowship to continue study on a master's degree at the University. In September, however, President Stratton D. Brooks offered him an instructorship in mathematics. He accepted it with the condition that he could do graduate work at the same time.

September also saw "Meach" back on the football field, this time as freshman coach and assistant to Bennie Owen. He liked boys and was one of them in athletics, although he was every inch the professor in the classroom, Mr. Owen recalls.

He remained freshman coach until 1924 when other work demanded his time. Through this consistent work with boys on the football field, he became interested in helping students through disciplinary work and other extra-teaching activities. His insight into human nature as well as his genial disposition equipped him for the job of assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences which was to be given him in 1926.

Mr. Meacham completed his master's degree work in math at Harvard on leave of absence from the University and received the degree of A. M. there in 1917. Two years later he was advanced to the rank of assistant professor on the O. U. faculty.

Mr. Meacham continued his study of math toward a doctor's degree. He went to the University of Chicago in 1920, where, the next year, he was awarded a senior fellowship in the department of mathematics. He received his Ph. D. there in 1922.

Returning to the University again, he was made associate professor of math. The rank of professor was given him in 1925, and the following year he became assistant to Dr. S. W. Reaves, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

He did further research work at the University of Chicago in 1930-31 in his doctoral field of differential geometry. Today he is a member of such professional groups as the American Mathematics Society, Pi Mu Epsilon, honorary math fraternity, and Sigma Xi, national scientific research fraternity.

As a member of the faculty, Dr. Meacham has always had an important part in the athletic program of the University, even in addition to his coaching which he looked upon as his daily recreation. He was instrumental in the organization of the Oklahoma High School Athletic Association of which he was secretary until 1920. He served as president of the

University Athletic Council for ten years, and from 1935 to '38 was O. U.'s faculty representative in the Big Six Conference.

His interest in promoting scholarship has also been recognized. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, national honorary scholastic fraternity and has been elected to honorary membership in Phi Eta Sigma, national scholastic fraternity for freshman men.

Other activities outside his regular work at the University include service on a number of committees and boards.

He aided in the launching of the annual series of public lectures held on the campus during the fall term and is now on the committee in charge of them. It was he, too, who originated the idea of a President's class. He has been on the committee of selection since its inception.

Dean Meacham has been active in University alumni work since the year he became an alumnus. He was president of the University of Oklahoma Association in 1918-19 and he and Mrs. Meacham are Life Members.

Of course the man's life is not all work. Golf provided his recreation after he was forced to give up his football job. Professor L. N. Morgan, a long-time friend and associate, who has played with Dean Meacham considerably, said, "Meach is the only man that I ever saw slice a ball back over his head. He can get into and out of more trouble on a golf course than any man I ever saw."

In recent years added duties have again forced curtailment of his recreational activities. He now spends most of his spare time in his yard and garden or with a book and his pipe. He is exceptionally fond of home-grown roasting ears and friends say that he has raised some of the best in town.

Dean Meacham says, however, that his garden grows smaller every year, for one reason or another. This year his two children Ferrell, 16, and Martha, 13, have made a badminton court on part of it. "So it goes," he muses.

One would almost expect deliberate, thorough "Meach" to smoke a pipe. He does. He and his pipe are almost inseparable. As he sits in his office, he will take his leather tobacco pouch from his pocket, pull its zipper open, push the pipe's bowl into the three-dollar-per-pound Carl Henry, then lean back in his swivel chair to light it. He has only one or two pipes now, he says, but there was a time when he had a "pipe for every day in the week."

Dean Meacham is fond of books but he hasn't the time to read those he would like to have. Mrs. Meacham collects first editions of books printed by the University of Oklahoma Press, and he does well, he says, to keep up with them in addition to the literature in his special field.

O. U.'s dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has a big job. It keeps Ed Meacham busy, but he grins and takes it in his stride.