

# Scholar and Teacher

By S. R. HADSELL

DEATH drew the curtain on a 32-year period of service to the University of Oklahoma when Professor Theodore Hampton Brewer died suddenly the afternoon of September 19. He passed away calmly at the home of his sister, Mrs. Ruth Stith, in Norman, as a result of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Thousands of alumni have known him as a learned, scholarly professor, as a witty toastmaster, as an able head of the English department, and in recent years as a retired department head who still enjoyed teaching and who met his classes up to the day of his death.

After funeral services at the McFarlin Memorial Church, conducted by Rev. A. N. Evans, the body was taken by his nephews, Theodore and Richard Stith, to the family burial ground in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, Kentucky, where he was laid to rest beside his mother, his father, and his brother-in-law, Glenn Stith. Survivors include two sisters, Mrs. Ruth Stith, Norman, and Mrs. Virginia McLucas, of Boulder, Colorado. A brother, Samuel Brewer, New York City, preceded him in death. Robert Brewer, Tulsa, a cousin, died three years ago.

T. H. Brewer was born in Aberdeen, Mississippi, in 1872, moving to Kentucky when he was six. His father was a prominent minister in Kentucky, presiding elder of the Louisville district at his death. His mother was manager of the Methodist Orphans' Home there for six years. She travelled extensively for the institution and raised an endowment for it. His uncle, T. F. Brewer, for whom he was named, came to the Indian Territory seventy years ago as missionary to the Indians. After statehood, he was the high school visitor for the University of Oklahoma. He founded Harrel Institute, a school for Indian girls, which later became Spaulding College. At one time, two boys were in attendance at the school, Will Rogers and Robert Brewer, T. F. Brewer's son. The Mary Brewer fund at the University of Oklahoma was established to perpetuate the memory of Professor Brewer's aunt, Robert Brewer's mother.

When Professor Brewer came to the University in 1908, his mother came to make a home for him. He was never married. He became dean of bachelors on the campus. In other ways, he owed a great deal to his mother. She taught him through primary and intermediate



*Professor Brewer as he appeared at the time of the dedication of the University Library Building*

school. Then he entered Louisville Male High School upon examination, and ranked highest, a tribute to his mother's teaching.

He could have said with Matthew Arnold:

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,  
And purged its faith and trimmed its fires,  
Showed me the high white star of truth,  
There bade me gaze and there aspire.

He had some of the best teachers in the country: Baskerville (Brewer was a classmate of C. R. Baskerville, Chicago, son of the older scholar), Mims, Halleck, Flexner, Bonner, Chancellor Kirkland, who came to Norman in 1929 (aged 78) mainly to see him, although he made an address too. Mims came at the dedication of the library. There is a picture in the office of Mims and Brewer together. He enjoyed the visit to Norman last year of Bonner of Michigan, father of Mrs. C. C. Walcutt. At Chicago, he had courses with Manly, at Harvard with Kittredge, Neilson, Bernbaum, Babbitt. At Columbia, he had American Literature with Trent. His courses in Latin and Greek were so well taught, and so well learned, that he never forgot them. Classical mythology was his meat.

The summer of 1911 he spent in England, visiting the haunts of Samuel Johnson. In 1915, he was at Harvard. He spent summers after he began teaching here, at Chicago and at Columbia.

In his youth, it seemed that he would be a journalist. He was a college journalist, editor of the *Observer* and the *Comet* at Vanderbilt. Later he was on the *Nashville Banner* with Grantland Rice, and had some experience on the *Louisville Courier and Times* when Henry Watterson was editor. In 1907, he was court reporter on the *New York World*. He edited the *Olympian* magazine at Nashville; and for his uncle at Muskogee for eight months, *Four Brothers in Red*. He founded the School of Journalism at the University of Oklahoma. He was acquainted with Grantland Rice, Trotwood Moore, Alice Hegan Rice, Madison Cawein, Irvin Cobb.

He was a Phi Beta Kappa at Vanderbilt, and a charter member of the chapter at Norman. He was a member of Sigma Chi, and influenced the founding of a chapter here. He was for a long time official toastmaster of the "gridiron," produced by Sigma Delta Chi, of which he was also an influential member. His wit there was spontaneous, but he always wrote out his speeches and memorized them.

To a considerable extent University history is woven around Professor Brewer and others like him who have devoted the best years of their lives to the institution. Professor Brewer came to O. U. in 1908 as head of the department of English, of which there were two other faculty members, Miss Adelaide Loomis, and the writer of this article. The English faculty had twenty-six members when Professor Brewer resigned as head of the department in 1938. He retained his professorship and devoted his time to teaching, studying and writing.

During his first year on the faculty, he and Jerome Dowd, now professor of sociology, offered the first course in journalism. Five years later, in 1913, the Board of Regents established the School of Journal-

alism. Professor Brewer was its first director.

Although he became disassociated with the School of Journalism after three years, he never lost interest in its progress.

For thirty-two years, Professor Brewer taught English at the University. The department honored him after twenty-five years of service at a dinner where an oil portrait was presented to the University. It was painted by Patricio Gimeno, who passed away last summer. It hangs in the treasure room of the library.

He enjoyed teaching Chaucer, Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, and Mark Twain. The subjects were good, but Mr. Brewer's sympathetic comments, and his dry humor caused many a student to understand the personality of the man behind the desk and the man behind the book. His library was remarkably good; it contained mainly works, not tools, not criticism. He read constantly and kept up with recent criticism of his favorite authors. It is our regret that he did not live to publish the material he had gathered on Mark Twain.

A complete list of his student friends would be too long to print here. I recall some he mentioned frequently. Dr. Elmer Fagan, of Leland Stanford; Dr. Agnes Berrigan, Stillwater; Mrs. Earl Christmas, Minneapolis; Mrs. Homer Sheffer, Rutgers, New Brunswick, New Jersey; Mrs. Dale Morrison, Abilene, Texas; Jack McClure, New Orleans; Dr. Horace Taylor, Columbia; Gordon Bierer, Guthrie; Dr. Maurice Kelley, Princeton; Dr. Ross Taylor and wife, Wichita, Kansas; John Rogers and wife, Tulsa; Mike Monroney, Washington; Harrington Wimberly, Altus; Tully Nettleton, Washington; Edward Evans, Cleveland, Ohio; and so on. His former students wrote to him or came to see him.

As he grew older, he fell into a routine. He went for his mail. He looked into Lindsey's and Kraettli's offices. He frequently met President Bizzell, whom he loved very much, at his office, on the walks, or at the Union. At the Sooner Drug Store on Varsity Corner, his friends pretended that he had a permanent fund for "cokes." "Charge this to Brewer," they said.

His department ran without friction. He was fair and kindly as an administrator. He never knowingly injured anyone. His word was good. He set an example of regularity and conscientiousness. Although in ill health, he did not miss a class in the last two years he taught. Yes, one—he missed his class on Thursday the day he died, but on Wednesday he was at school all day. He died without pain, quietly, as he had lived. At the office we can hardly realize that he has gone; but we shall cherish—"that best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

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