

Meet the Regents

By NANCY ROYAL

Seven Men Who Control Destinies of the University
Differ Widely—But They All Take Duties Seriously



AT 10 o'clock in the morning on the first Monday in each month, blonde Elizabeth Kee, secretary to the president of the University, looks up at the big clock high on the wall beside her desk.

On the click of ten she glances expectantly toward the door—and in walks E. C. Hopper, brisk and businesslike, who lives farther from Norman than any other member of the University Board of Regents and who shames them all by invariably being the first to arrive for the monthly session.

Mr. Hopper walks directly into President Bizzell's office with little more than perfunctory greeting to anyone, hangs up his hat, lays his briefcase on the long polished table in front of the president's desk, and silently announces that he's ready to go to work.

Seldom does he have to wait more than an hour before the six other men on the board have arrived, tossed off a few minutes of good-natured razz, and, like Mr. Hopper, settled down to a serious contemplation of University affairs.

These seven semi-mysterious gentlemen who constitute the present governing board have worked so tirelessly and effectively for the University that old-timers, who have seen regents come and regents go, say there has never been a board like this. And they add that, by all the laws of chance, there never will be again.

This is the "dream" board of all time, the board that has Gone Places and Done Things, and the seven men who constitute its membership have completely divorced themselves from the popular conception of such a group. There's nothing ponderous or pontifical about any one of them, no hint of remoteness or austerity, yet such is the power of their positions that even a high administrative official becomes deferential—whether he realizes it or not—when a regent walks into his office.

Top left is Joe W. McBride, newly elected vice president of the Board of Regents. Center is Lloyd Noble, who just completed a year as president, and below is Harrington Wimberly who resigned to run for Congress but lost the race and has accepted an invitation from Governor Phillips to again serve on the board.

Punctuality in attending board meetings is by no means the sole virtue of the regent from Eufaula, for Mr. Hopper's colleagues vouch for his reliability and his innate tendency to get things done with a minimum of flurry.

When any legislative measure reflects the influence of the board of regents, it is almost certain that it was adapted to legal procedure in the deft mind of the quiet gentleman who works silently and efficiently in doing his job well.

Most colorful of the regents at the moment is sandy-haired Lloyd Noble, '21, Ardmore drilling contractor, who has just completed an action-packed year as president of the board. A few weeks before Mr. Noble's seven-year appointment was to expire, Governor Phillips announced his intention of reappointing the flying regent and immediately sent his nomination to the Senate for confirmation. The gentlemen of the upper house not only approved the appointment, but did so openly without even the usual formality of sending Lloyd Noble's name to a committee for discussion and possible rejection.

And Mr. Noble is a Republican!

During board meetings he takes any amount of razzing from the rest of the boys, who remind him pointedly of the status of "his friend Willkie," whom Noble supported vigorously during the presidential campaign. He also gets it in the neck regularly when there is some hitch in the athletic program, which is the Ardmore member's prime interest.

With all his hard-headed practicality, however, Mr. Noble is a dreamer, a dreamer with the most admirable quality of being able to bring reality to a vision that would remain nothing more than a vision if it were left to some less ambitious person for fulfillment.

Like Mr. Noble, John Rogers of Tulsa is also a Republican and also connected with the oil industry, in the capacity of general counsel for Chapman-McFarlin, Tulsa oil company. There, however, the similarity ends, for the two men are direct opposites.

Probably no attempt at contrast could show as well the antithetical personalities of the two as an incident of a couple of months ago, when both were called from Tulsa by Governor Phillips for a conference relating to the movement toward coordination of state educational institutions.

Both planned to take the same train for Oklahoma City, but went to the station separately. Mr. Noble bought a regular ticket for the trip, and, after glancing around futilely for sight of Mr. Rogers, sat down sociably in the chair car.

He started for the diner after a little while and on his way, as he passed through a Pullman, he found Mr. Rogers riding there in splendid isolation.

"What in the world are you doing in a Pullman, John?" he chided. "That's what's wrong with you Tulsans. You're always so darned exclusive you don't know what's going on in the world."

The two regents ate together and, after they left the diner, Noble sat down with Rogers and they began a discussion of the problem facing the governor's committee.

In a few minutes the conductor came through—and soaked Mr. Noble \$1.56 for riding the remaining few miles in typical "Tulsa" seclusion with John Rogers.

Mr. Rogers, appointed in June, 1940, is now serving his second term on the board. Scholarly and idealistic, he amazes other board members with his easy familiarity with art and literature and manages to read omnivorously despite his full business and social schedule.

His dress is impeccable and his manners beyond reproach, and probably never in its history has the board been dignified by the inclusion of a greater gentleman than John Rogers.

A graduate of the University School of Law, Mr. Rogers is a firm believer in the power of individual initiative, imagination and energy in any achievement. One of his favorite subjects, about which he can become most eloquent, is the necessity for the survival of private enterprise.

Big Joe Looney, '20ba, '22law, with a legislative manner and a voice that booms even through the closed, strong door of the president's office, was chosen by his colleagues to succeed Mr. Noble as president. He is



senior member, having served longer in continuous term than any other man in the history of the board.

During the speculative period of several months when everyone in the state was wondering about the board's plans for a successor to President Bizzell, Joe Looney took time off from his intensive legal duties in Wewoka and wrote a guest column for R. V. Peterson, editor of the *Wewoka Times-Democrat*.

He called it "Wanted: A University President," and in it he outlined the qualifications for a man who might be chosen to control the destinies of his own alma mater. The description of the presidential ideal was detailed and vivid—and it fits Joe Brandt like a kid glove.

Naturally, then, Mr. Looney beamed broadly over later accounts of Brandt's selection in his home town paper. After all, hadn't he scored a journalistic scoop by writing the story weeks before, with everything about the new president included except his name?

Mr. Looney, along with John Rogers, contributes technical and legal advice during the board meetings. He is generally serious, but when business is finished and there's a period of general levity, Joe Looney is in there pitching.

And as Wewoka is the home town of one board member, so is Seminole, its traditional rival city, the home of another—Dr. Claude Chambers, who is proud of being one-quarter Cherokee and wears beautifully authentic Indian jewelry to prove it.

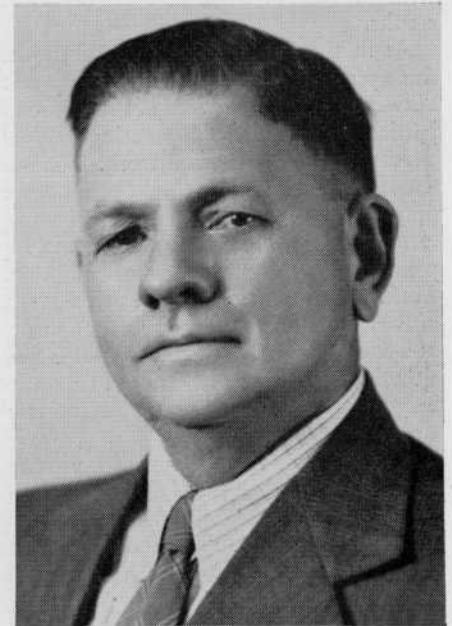
Dr. Chambers eclipses any other regent in poundage and is correspondingly vital and expansive. During less formal moments in the president's office the Seminole regent lets fly with a few choice anecdotes generally conceded to be the best stories ever told in that historic sanctum. Some of his colleagues guffaw appreciatively at "Doc's" stories. The more straight-laced minority is less understanding and President Bizzell, it is said, merely laughs politely and uncomprehendingly.

Dr. Chambers likes clothes and has a varied wardrobe, some of his sports jackets verging toward the collegiate type. Climax of his frequent changes, however, came at the March meeting, when he showed up in a semi-cowboy outfit, wearing a fine broad-brimmed white hat and an exquisitely tailored leather jacket.

During board sessions Dr. Chambers and Joe McBride, '28bus, Anadarko editor named to the board in March, 1937, sit at the long table and "doodle." Their doodling artistry manifests itself mainly in Indian

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On the left is Joe C. Looney, newly elected president of the Board of Regents. Top right is John Rogers; center, E. C. Hopper; lower right, Dr. Claude S. Chambers.



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symbolism, and the two draw countless Indian pictures—teepees, Indian babies and dogs—and pass them back and forth to each other in feigned rivalry.

Joe McBride, slender and collegiate in Harris tweeds, probably is quietest of all seven members, and nearest to the introvert classification. Trained in business, Mr. McBride went up swiftly in the newspaper profession. Working closely with Jim Nance, state senator from Purcell and owner of a chain of state papers, Joe McBride furnishes a solid, businesslike background, concentrated on the details of publishing, for Senator Nance's more generalized and extroverted abilities.

His journalistic ideals are not restrained to his profession, and Mr. McBride's hopes and ambitions for the University are a peculiar mixture of the realistic and the idealistic. Especially interested in publicity as a means of educating the public to the services and purposes of the school, Mr. McBride contributes a newspaperman's viewpoint that is invaluable to his colleagues.

He used to take *Esquire* regularly, and somewhat resembles one of that smooth journal's fashion plates, but he cancelled his subscription a few months ago shortly after his two children discovered the cartoons and began demanding explanations.

Another newspaperman, is Harrington Wimberly, '24ba, editor and publisher of the *Altus Times-Democrat*, who was appointed to the board along with John Rogers, to fill the unexpired term of Judge C. C. Hatchett of Durant, whose resignation came while he still had four years to go of his allotted seven.

Mr. Wimberly from the start was an A-1 regent, and he was one of the board members who pleaded most convincingly with Joe Brandt when the tall, red-headed Sooner alumnus was still hesitant about accepting the Oklahoma position. Mr. Wimberly displayed his wisdom during the few board meetings he attended by listening—just listening—and learning the complexities of controlling a large university.

When he turned in his resignation to the governor and began campaigning for the seventh-district congressional post left vacant by the death of Sam Massingale, Mr. Wimberly's friends at the University had conflicting emotions: they wanted him to win, yet they half hoped he would lose and come back to the Board of Regents on which he already had begun so promising a career.

And so they stand, seven "good man and true," each with the interests of the University at heart and each ready to sacrifice his own business and personal interests to devote countless hours to the University in an unpaid, nonpolitical position.

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