

Sooner Portraits



JUDGE MURRAH

Youth Was Served

In 1917 a tow-headed, freckled lad was kicked off a Rock Island freight train just east of the Skirvin hotel in Oklahoma City. He was an orphaned youngster of 15 making his way from Alabama to the home of his grandmother who lived in Grady County. With him, on that occasion, was his younger brother, George.

The freckled faced lad was A. P. Murrah, '28 Law, who has since lifted himself by his boot straps to Federal Circuit Judge. At the time of his appointment he was the youngest federal judge in the United States. He was 33.

Young Murrah had to work every inch of the way for his education. He worked on a farm and saved enough money to start highschool. He worked in a pharmacy while attending the Tuttle highschool and finished a four year course in three years. He was valedictorian and class orator.

It was in Tuttle that Murrah acquired the nickname "Fish." It was a shortened version of "Gold fish," a name given him because of his light yellow hair.

After being graduated from highschool he began thinking of college. His first move was to find a job. In the course of his search he strolled into the Smoker, a well-known cigar and tobacco store in Norman. "Fish" announced to the owner that he was going to work for him. And he did. He later worked for the Roy Clark Tailoring Company in Norman and during summer months worked in Paul's Clothing store in Oklahoma City. With this combination of work, Murrah supported himself during his years at the University.

While still a student he won his first law case. So effective were his arguments for his client that he first succeeded in hanging the jury. On a second trial he won a verdict for his client. He em-

ployed the same sort of arguments that he had learned at the Smoker where people gathered to discuss events of the day.

June came and graduation. Now he was faced with the question of where to practice law. After some deliberation he decided on Oklahoma City. For a while he worked in Gomer Smith's law office and later formed a partnership at Seminole with Luther Bohanon, '27Law. The firm prospered and later moved to Oklahoma City. In Oklahoma City Leonard Savage, '39Law, and J. I. Gibson, '30Law, were added to the firm.

Then in 1937 President Roosevelt nominated Murrah to fill Oklahoma's new federal "roving" judgeship. The senate approved the nomination speedily, ending a year-long scramble for the post. Young Murrah had been selected over many older contenders.

"Fish" is married to the former Agnes Milam, '27ba. They have two children.



COMMISSIONER WIMBERLY

Identified With Progress

The Federal Power Commission in Washington may not know it, but in their midst is one of Oklahoma's most ardent and active civic workers. He's Harrington Wimberly, '24ba, identified for more than 20 years with progressive movements of the state and his home town and county.

After his appointment to the Power Commission in 1945, Wimberly resigned as State Democratic Party Chairman and as a member of the board of regents of the University. But he continued his work with the Oklahoma Society for Crippled Children. And even today he is still affiliated with this society, serving as their director.

In 1924 he received his degree in journalism from the University and the same year became advertising manager of the Altus *Times-Democrat*. After a short period as editor of the *Cordell Beacon*, he returned to the Altus paper, eventually to become publisher. Wimberly was president of the Oklahoma Press Association in 1937-38, and was a director of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association from 1940 to 1943.

Although busy with many business activities, he



HISTORIAN WARDELL

was never too pressed to give personal attention to individual cases of crippled children. Those most closely associated with him have often commended him for his ever alertness in seeking out needy cases and seeing that they were cared for. In many cases this required his personally financing the individual on many trips to and from the hospital. One time Wimberly raised several hundred dollars through public subscription in his newspaper to make possible new limbs for a person brought to his attention.

While attending the University he was business manager of the *Oklahoma Daily*, student newspaper, and was a member of Sigma Delta Chi, honorary journalism fraternity. He was also a member of Alpha Tau Omega social fraternity.

His interests run in various directions. In 1945 he and a group of Altus men interested government officials in a project which would furnish water for the vast Altus-Lugert irrigation district. Today this project places water on approximately 6,000 acres of land. Wimberly has shown the same interest in agricultural problems as he has in providing for the crippled and poor.

He has served numerous terms as a director of the Altus Chamber of Commerce and was president of that body for a year. He has also been president of the Rotary Club and is member of the Masons and Elks. Wimberly is an active member of the Variety Clubs of Oklahoma. So many outside activities do not prevent him from doing a first class job as a member of the Power Commission. Proof of this is that President Truman in 1948 asked the senate to confirm Wimberly's reappointment to the commission for a full 5-year term.

The senate hastened to do so.