

The Man From Ardmore

Lloyd Noble, 14 years a member of the Board of Regents, humanitarian, good citizen, born November 30, 1896—died February 14, 1950

He had taken the chairmanship of the drive for funds to aid the Oklahoma Heart Association because he said, "No one can say with any real assurance: 'this can't happen to me'."

And then within a matter of weeks, Lloyd Noble, a tousled-haired, small 53-year-old Ardmoreite got up from a game of gin rummy in a Houston hotel complaining of a pain in the region of his heart. He started to the bathroom for some soda to ease what he thought was indigestion. He never made the door.

Then the words, "No one can say with any real assurance, 'this can't happen to me.'" took on the aspect of a prophecy. Noble died at 1 a.m. February 14, victim of a heart attack.

They brought him home to Ardmore. This was the place he was born, grew to manhood and raised his family. It was home.

Noble was born at Ardmore on November 30, 1896. His father, Samuel Roberts Noble, was a merchant and farm owner. In 1919-20, Noble enrolled at the University and though he did not stay for a degree, a friendship between Noble and the University began and continued to his death.

His business career which made him many times a millionaire, probably began when oil was discovered on his father's farm near Ardmore. At any rate after teaching school in Carter county for a short time, A. O. Olson of Tulsa and Lloyd Noble of Ardmore formed the Noble Drilling Company in 1921.

Noble stuck to the drilling end of the business until 1932 when he began to go into production. In that year he formed the Samedan corporation, named after his first three children, Samuel, Ed and Ann. His fortunes continued upward and during World War II, he drilled in Canada for a time and sent four rigs to England to operate a number of shallow wells there.

He founded two other companies and became their president and board chairman—J. S. Abercrombie Company and the old Ocean Oil Company, both of Houston.

As a public-spirited citizen, Noble helped guide the affairs of the Republican party in Oklahoma, but although mentioned as a nominee for many high state offices, he refused each offer. A post which he did accept early in his career was the state GOP party secretary. He was sent also to the 10th legislature as a Republican from a staunch Democratic stronghold.

As a humanitarian, Noble will probably be remembered the longest. While making air trips over the state, Noble got a clear picture of soil erosion. And remembering the dust and drouth that broke his father because farmers could not pay for their generous credit he determined to do something about it.

"The only people on earth who have entire freedom from fear," he loved to say, "are those who know and love the land."

And with the idea of eliminating all the fear he could, Noble created the Samuel Roberts Noble foundation which has been in operation three years and has made a visible imprint on farms of Carter and Love counties. The foundation has studied crops

and soils and aided the farmers in their task of creating a solid economy.

Undoubtedly, the one thing which friends of the University will remember him for above all others, was his patient work toward making the University of greater service to the state and nation.

Noble was appointed to the Board of Regents in 1934 and served for two 7-year terms which ended in 1948. During those 14 years, he helped bring the University to its present high level.



LOYD NOBLE

In his first year as regent, the board attempted to keep outstanding professors on the campus by establishing research professorships. Unable to give pay raises with the new titles, Noble personally paid each professor \$500 annually and continued the practice for several years.

He was also instrumental in establishing the David Ross Boyd and regents professorships for outstanding teachers.

Noble found many highschool graduates unprepared to carry college work. "There is an attitude in some institutions of higher learning that if a student fails to carry the work, flunk him out," he said.

He realized that the state was young and the quality of instruction in a number of schools was inadequate so he started a project to care for the students who wanted college education but didn't have the proper background.

Realizing the need for a broad education, Noble spearheaded a drive to establish the University College. All students are now required to take a variety of subjects while they are in University College.

The list of achievements carried out by the Uni-

versity while Noble was a regent is long and by no means accurate. Many of the things which Noble did personally for the University have never been revealed. As President Cross said:

"News of Mr. Noble's death comes as a great shock to his many O.U. friends. His many years of service to the institution and his generosity with respect to gifts, which he would not permit to be published, indicate his very great interest in higher education. He was an exceptional man, and his passing means a great loss, not only to the state but to the nation."

Top political leaders concurred with Dr. Cross in tributes to Noble. Said Guy Gabrielson, national Republican chairman:

"It will be a great loss not only to the states of Oklahoma and Texas, but also to the Republican party in which Noble was very active, and to the nation as a whole. He was a fine man, of high integrity, and was a leader in his business field."

Harold E. Stassen, president of the University of Pennsylvania, said:

"I am deeply grieved by the sad news of his death. He was a public spirited humanitarian keenly interested in education. The people of Oklahoma and the nation have suffered a great loss."

Governor Roy Turner said:

"The passing of Lloyd Noble is a great loss to Oklahoma. He has been a stalwart and practical friend of higher education through his long service as a member of the board of regents of the University of Oklahoma.

"Through establishment of the Samuel Roberts Noble foundation he has made a most valuable contribution to development of our natural resources. He will be long remembered for his leadership and for the faithful service he has rendered Oklahoma."

Such were the tributes paid to the man from Ardmore. At the services for Lloyd Noble in the Presbyterian Church of Ardmore, Dr. Glenn McGee read "When thou dost alms, let not the right hand know what the left hand is doing." Many people who heard the quote from the Beatitudes could well understand the reason for its selection.

Harris Is Transferred

Ruel Sutton Harris, '37ba, '37Law, a member of Shell Oil Company's crude oil department in New York for the past year, has been transferred to the company's Tulsa office as manager of its gasoline department.

Harris joined the Shell Oil Company in 1938 as a "roustabout." By 1940 he had advanced to the post of gas contract representative in the company's production department at Tulsa.

In 1941 Harris entered the service and returned to the company in 1946. Two years later he was made a gas-gasoline agent at Houston. He advanced to the position of assistant to the manager of Shell's crude oil department in New York in 1949.