

The Class of 1944

By ROY GITTINGER, '02BA

The five years from 1939 to 1944 was a period of two new presidents and the disruption of University life due to world war.

During 1944 only 477 degrees were conferred in four Commencements—June, August, September and December. The reader will remember that this total was smaller than at any time for a quarter of a century. The enrolment for the year 1943-44 was about 5,800—3,500 regular students, 1,000 Navy trainees, and 1,300 Army trainees. The Navy trainees attended regular classes in the main but the Army trainees were only nominally University students.

The appropriation for the University at Norman was about \$1,200,000 with nearly \$600,000 additional coming from the so-called revolving fund made up of fees. The income of the School of Medicine and the two hospitals was about \$800,000. The Geological Survey had an appropriation of \$37,000. The area of the campus proper was 222 acres, 5 acres having been purchased in 1943. The Max Westheimer Flying Field which the University acquired in 1940, a tract of 160 acres lying three miles northwest of the campus, must be mentioned separately, although in August, 1942, it was merged with the North Naval Base.

Space will not permit more than mention here of the two naval bases established at Norman for the duration of the war. These bases were not a part of the University and neither the Army and Navy personnel attached to the faculty nor the Army and Navy trainees enrolled in the University were connected in any way with these bases. Four structures for the use of Army and Navy personnel and the Jefferson House, residence hall for men, had been constructed in 1943, as well as a federal housing project known as Woodrow Wilson Center consisting of seven University houses and an activity building providing accommodations for 900 men. Moreover, the legislature had appropriated more than half a million dollars for a Research Institute Building, \$350,000 of which were available in 1943-44.

In August, 1941, Joseph August Brandt, class of 1921, took office as the seventh president of the University. President Brandt was already well known on the campus. He had served as director of the University Press from 1928 to 1938. He had gone from the University of Oklahoma to Princeton, New Jersey, to be director of the Princeton University Press. The experience of other western universities seems to show that the most successful president is one who has been identified with the state and is an alumnus of the University but has also had training and experience elsewhere. The new president met these requirements.

The difficulty was that President Brandt had had no educational experience. He had never taught in the classroom. He had not had anything to do with University administration except the administration of the press. As a newspaper man he had a flair for publicity, and he seemed to think that the important thing was to say something or do something to keep the University and its president in the public eye. In the ten years he had been a part of the University he had had the loyal support and backing of President Bizzell and of all members of the University administration in the conduct of the University Press. He had not been asked or expected, however, to take part in the

conduct of University affairs in general. Many of the other young members of the faculty, as was natural and almost necessary, had no particular part in determining University policies. New members of a university faculty are ordinarily content to serve apprenticeship before asking to take part in university administration.

Mr. Brandt in his ten years with the press evidently had discussed University policies with younger members of the faculty and came back to the campus with the avowed determination of doing two things: First, the general faculty must be organized to assume a larger share in University control; second, younger members of the staff must be trained for greater participation in University affairs.

Those who had had to do with the management of the University of Oklahoma for many years prior to 1941 had sought to maintain and emphasize stability both in policies and in personnel. It seemed better for the University to be known for its conservatism than for its willingness to experiment. At the time, 150 of the 240 members of the faculty of professorial rank had served 15 years or were beginning their fifteenth year. Fifty-three had served 25 or more years. It must be added that all administrative committees were dominated by members of the staff who had been on the campus for many years, and further that the general faculty met only at intervals and had little part in directing University affairs.

In the opinion of the new president it was no longer necessary that the University be known for its conservatism. On the contrary, it seemed to him that the University should take part in the exploration and testing of new fields of education. The general faculty was revitalized and the University was organized, representative of faculty opinion, to assist the president and to supersede the Administrative Council.

President Brandt moreover had been impressed by the publicity received by the University of Chicago in the establishment of a two-year college leading to the bachelor's degree. He was eager to secure similar publicity for the University of Oklahoma. He did not seem to realize that the Chicago plan of conferring the bachelor's degree at the end of what is considered the sophomore year has not been particularly successful. The greatness of the University of Chicago lies in its professional and graduate schools, and no one has sought to interfere with the standards and methods of these divisions of the university.

The University College nevertheless was organized in September, 1942, to include only freshmen with the understanding that beginning in September, 1943, sophomore students should also be included. As a concession to faculty opinion and the desires of students, the University College was to be only a mechanical scheme for the enrolment and advising of students. In no sense did it provide a new and unified curriculum for all entering freshmen. Those expecting to study engineering enrolled in the regular freshman curriculum of the College of Engineering. This same policy extended to other divisions of the University. There were curricula in arts and sciences, business, pharmacy, art, music, and education. Lip service was given to the idea of unification by the occasional use of expressions like "the humanities,"



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but there was no common course, or class, in humanities in the plans of work.

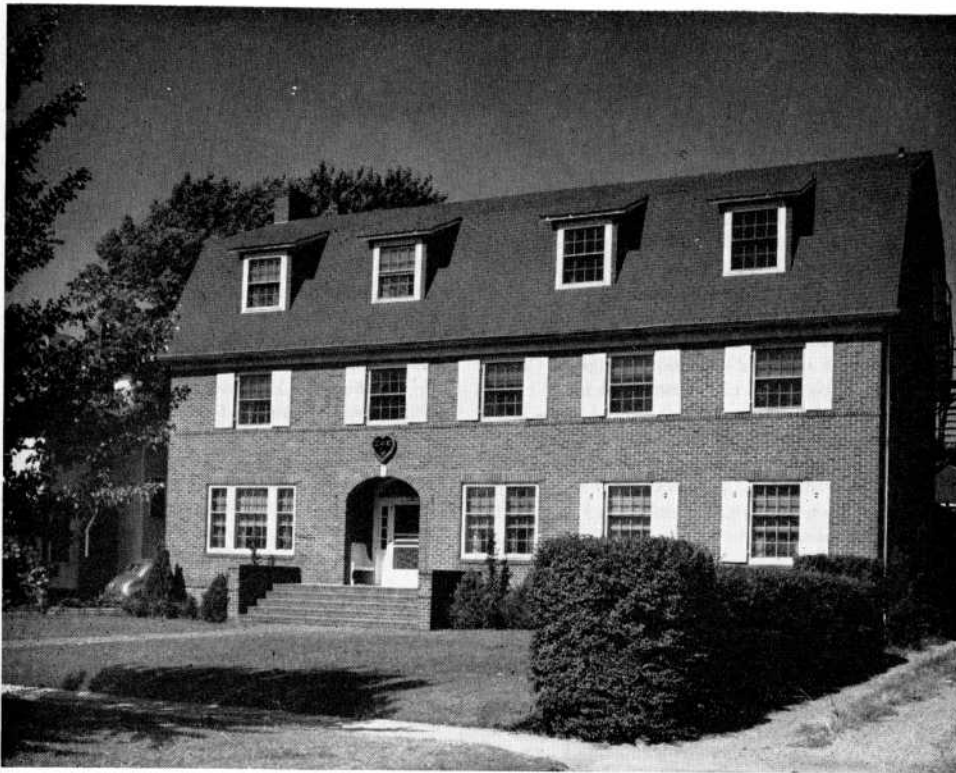
To bring about further faculty control the departments of the University were partially reorganized. They were no longer to have heads but newly selected chairmen with the administration nominally vested in the whole staff of the department and not in the chairman alone. This rearrangement was cheerfully accepted by the older members of the faculty who were glad to give up their rights of seniority. Administrative committees were rearranged and all were staffed with younger men.

Unfortunately, reforms of this sort are apt to cause discontent. Only a few of President Brandt's friends among the younger members of the faculty could be departmental chairmen or chairmen of committees and some who had been left with as little influence as before were dissatisfied. Some of the new chairmen disliked very much the organization of the University College which, in their opinion, interfered with the workings of committees and departments. When President Brandt found to his disgust early in his third year that there was as much discontent with University administration as ever and this discontent chiefly among his special friends and advisers he decided that he did not want to be a university president, and, after two years and five months of service, he resigned effective December 31, 1943—a resignation which must have been a great relief to him.

President Brandt was popular with students. Perhaps the popularity would have continued when enrolment became normal. One of his expressed desires was that everyone—faculty and students alike—should call him "Joe." This was a part of the democracy that he advocated. It should be mentioned, however, that when his ideas did not receive faculty support, especially in the matter of the organization of the University College, he arbitrarily insisted on having his own way although he tried to leave the impression that this arbitrariness was only temporary to meet existing conditions.

A cynic once said of Joe Brandt that he could never be a successful gardener. If he planted a seed today, driven by his restlessness and inquiring mind, he would have to dig up the seed tomorrow to see if it had begun to sprout.

One episode of President Brandt's administra-



Sigma Phi Epsilon

Founded at O.U. in 1946

I believe that the ideal fraternity group is the one in which is represented the scholar, the athlete and the gentleman, and that the development of worthy college manhood is dependent upon a reasonable balance of types. By himself, the athlete cannot make a fraternity. Nor can the scholar.

Upon this spirit, a new national fraternity was born on November 1, 1901, at Richmond college in Virginia. Actually, the group was the outgrowth of the Saturday Night Club, which was formed earlier in an effort to recruit the best men of the college—that they might be more closely bound together. Twelve founders were instrumental in getting the organization established.

From that birth, Sigma Phi Epsilon has grown to include 97 chapters with a total membership of some 33,000. Although 38th in the order of founding, the fraternity now rates among the top 10 in the number of chapters and among the top 12 in the total membership.

Many outstanding men in America today wear

the Golden Heart pin of Sigma Phi Epsilon. They include: James Forrestal, first secretary of defense; Woody Herman, bandleader; Edward Arnold, movie star; Dr. James Naismith, inventor of basketball; Basil O'Connor, chairman of the American Red Cross; Ben Hibbs, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*; Hal Boyle, Associated Press columnist; Robert G. Dunlop, president of Sun Oil Company; Floyd Odum, president of the Atlas Corporation; Senators Harry Byrd of Virginia, Bourke Hickenlooper of Iowa, Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado and Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin.

Oklahoma Beta chapter at the University has its share of successful men too. The pin of Sigma Phi Epsilon has been worn by the president of the Engineer's Club, the president of the Association of General Engineers, editor of *Sooner Shamrock*, outstanding freshman engineer, outstanding senior man at the University, manager of the Celebrity Series Association, two student senators, president of the Air Knocker's Club, four Big-Men of the

Campus, former campus commander of the American Legion, former presidents of IFC, YMCA, Writers' Club, League of Young Republicans and Sigma Delta Chi journalism fraternity.

Faculty members at O.U. who owe allegiance to Sig Ep include Gene Edmondson of the accounting department, Leslie H. Rice of the journalism school and Bill Morgan of radio station WNAD.

Highlighting the Sig Ep social year is the Golden Heart dance at which time the fraternity's "Girl of the Golden Heart" is presented. Other social functions include the Halloween dance, fall formal, Sigma Phi Ep-Saloon dance, picnics and record dances.

The Purdue University chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon originated the Sig Ep plan of finance, which has been adopted by several other Greek organizations. Under the plan, no special assessments are levied and all charges are included in the monthly housebill.

tion must receive passing attention here. On September 15, 1942, occurred the 50th anniversary of the opening of the University. It had once been planned to have a celebration with invited guests from over the United States but war conditions made a real celebration impossible and the formal exercises held to commemorate the date were modest indeed. President Brandt had hoped that in spite of war conditions the anniversary would have some publicity throughout the United States. He tried to arrange with a national news magazine to give the University special attention and he selected a Tulsa friend, a newspaperman, to prepare an account which would include a statement somewhat like this: The University at the end of its 50th year had demonstrated its worth and effectiveness in many ways. Its graduates and former students fill positions of importance throughout the world. Among its distinguished alumni are the governor of Oklahoma; two United States senators, one from Oklahoma and one from another state; five members of the national House of Representatives; five members of the state supreme court, and many other state officials, in par-

ticular 52 members of the 18th legislature, as well as the president of the University, the president of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and the presidents of five other senior colleges of Oklahoma.

The Tulsa newspaperman presently received a telegram from the famous magazine saying: "We have your article and it is not as satisfactory to us as a report we received unsolicited from one of your University students whose home is in New York City. This student has succeeded admirably in catching the style and spirit of our publication. Accordingly, we are using his article instead of yours." When the magazine appeared it was noted that the 50th anniversary was barely mentioned. The development of the University was passed over briefly and facetiously. The new president, however, now beginning his second year, received considerable favorable attention, and President Brandt also had the satisfaction of seeing his picture in the magazine.

On January 1, 1944, a new president of the University whose title at first was acting president assumed office. President George Lynn Cross, who

had been at the University since September, 1934, took over and has undertaken to retain the good points in President Brandt's program. It is not necessary or expected that more be said here about President Cross. All friends and alumni of the University are wishing for him a long and successful career. President Cross conferred 477 degrees in 1944, his first year, distributed as follows: arts and sciences, 141; business, 28; education, 35; engineering, 77; fine arts, 44; law, 7; medicine, 56; nursing, 23; pharmacy, 7; advanced degrees, 59. A very large proportion of the men especially those graduating in engineering or medicine went directly from the campus to active military or naval service. It is not possible to mention names.

This is the ninth and final article in the series. I trust that some have read these articles and have found the facts and observations not uninteresting.

► Dr. Alice Sowers, director of family life institute, is going to Cleveland, Ohio, to participate in the 25th Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult Education, May 1-9.