

Above and on the following page are pictured the Will Rogers murals for the new Union cafeteria. Omitting panel one, the rest of the murals are reproduced. Above at left is a canvas described by the artist as "schooling, included among other stopovers." At the right is depicted Rogers' world travel and his debut in show business. The paintings have been done by Mrs. Mary Scofield.

A Room for Will

When the renovated Union opens, visitors will find the cafeteria walls covered with murals of Will Rogers. He was an Oklahoman whose life was a natural for memorials.

By John Wagoner, '51

Will Rogers, an exuberant youngster who left school to globe trot, finally has been corralled by the University. The late tickler of funnybones will become as much a part of the remodeled Union as the clock tower when the doors to the new north wing of the building are thrown open next September.

The Claremore cowboy who became a self-appointed ambassador of good will was selected by Robert D. Harral as the subject for murals in the new Union cafeteria. Los Angeles designer who is supervising

the interior decoration of the Union, Harral chose Rogers because he considers him an outstanding Oklahoman worthy of being memorialized in a permanent mural.

Mrs. Mary Scofield, who did the murals for the Shamrock Hotel in Houston, Texas, has painted the murals, and they are awaiting completion of the building for hanging. Mrs. Scofield contacted the Rogers family and did research to lend authenticity to her paintings. Hollywood studios co-operated with her in her research and allowed their files to be combed for background material.

The murals will span a six by ninety-foot section of the east wall of the cafeteria, taking Rogers from a family pose as an infant through his cowboy days to the world of show business. Depicting the humor which made him famous, the paintings have only one touch of pathos—an airplane flying across the frozen stretches of Alaska where he died. Special lights, designed by Harral, will illuminate the mural wall.

One section of the murals depicts Rogers during his school days at Drumgoul school

Returning home from his world tour, Rogers soon stepped into vaudeville through further wild west shows. The large mural above depicts his stage career. Will brought his horse directly on the stage and began the ad libs which were to make him world famous.





Rogers is shown here in a star's chair on a Hollywood movie lot. Movies brought him to all the people in the world, and he was the number one money-maker for Fox Studios.

and Kemper Military Academy. As a boy Rogers disliked school so intensely that he frequently ran away. So it is significant that his name is linked with one of the largest scholarship programs at the University. However, the nature of the Will Rogers Scholarship Fund is very much in line with his philosophy.

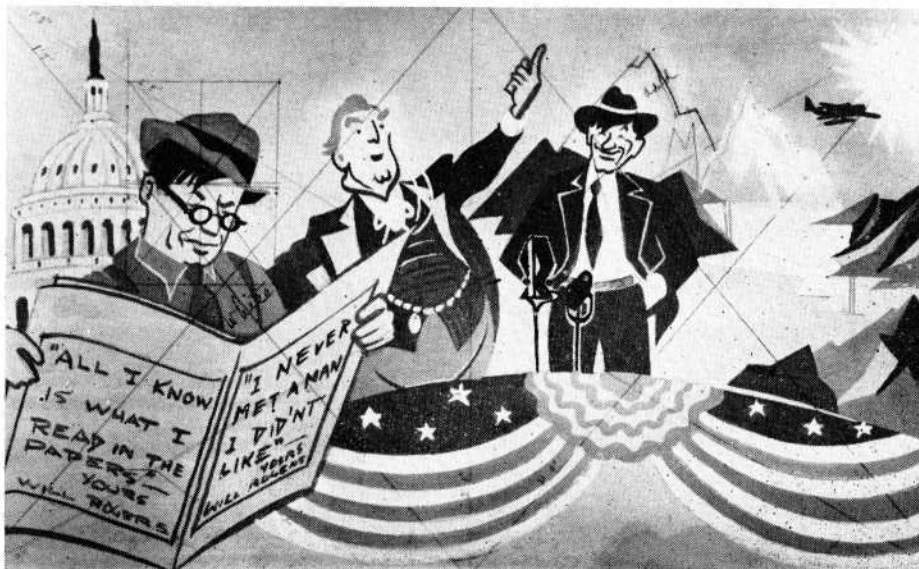
His charitable spirit, which touched all levels of humanity, is a continuing hope for the handicapped. Since 1939 when a scholarship fund was established in his memory at the University, more than 175 handicapped students have been given financial assistance.

And the handicapped have gone on to become active citizens. One youth, crippled since birth, received his O.U. law degree, thanks to a scholarship. Another is an



The fireplace of the Rogers home in Santa Monica emphasizes Will's home life. The stuffed calf was a much prized possession on which Rogers kept in roping practice.

In this panel the artist has depicted Rogers as a famous figure and newspaper columnist. His sagacity and wit made him a sought-after convention and after dinner speaker.



outstanding magazine writer. Another is a teacher. Those are just a few of the success stories. Others are pharmacists, engineers, librarians, doctors, ministers and salesmen.

The scholarships are granted on a semester or yearly basis, and there is no time limit so long as the student has an educational objective and meets University requirements.

An important phase of the Will Rogers program is assisting O.U. students who wish to prepare themselves for work in educating, training or rehabilitating handicapped children. The University has installed a special program in the College of Education to train workers in the handicapped field. In this aspect of the program the Vocational Rehabilitation Divisions of

state and federal governments co-operate with the fund.

Scholarships carry a stipend varying in amounts from \$10 to \$50 monthly, depending on needs of the student. Books, fees and incidental expenses are paid by the government division. Blind students are given funds to cover employing a reader.

Generally applicants aren't asked to assume responsibility for repayment; it is considered that the handicapped student is doing well to get a degree. The committee which administrates the scholarship has stated that it does not want to overload them with debts after they finish school because many have employment limitations. However, a few of them insist on paying

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Yet the obvious truism that what he wrote 20 years ago is as good today as it was yesterday holds firm.

Few Oklahomans in our era have wielded such a tremendous national influence as Parker. He was editor of the largest chain of newspapers in America, the Scripps-Howard chain, for many years.

The secret of "Deke" Parker's success was hard, intelligent work. His first job paid him fifty cents a day, carrying water for a gang hoeing beets on a farm in Michigan. He decided to go west for his education and enrolled in the University of Oklahoma when it was yet a small school with two buildings on its campus.

From that small start of fifty cents a day carrying water, his achievements rank among the finest in the annals of American journalism. After tiring of work in a tax office, he applied for a position on the *Daily Oklahoman* at Oklahoma City. He wasn't accepted. Undiscouraged, he applied next to the *Oklaoma News* and began work at ten dollars a week. From that beginning in the Scripps-Howard chain, he worked his way up to the position of editorial overseer of the entire network of newspapers.

When Parker died, editors everywhere searched for the right words to summarize his life. Perhaps the Washington, D. C. *Evening Star* came as close to finding the right phrases as anyone. The paper said: "American journalism is the better for having felt the influence of George B. Parker."

Rogers' Murals . . .

back the scholarships when they become established in jobs.

The University of Texas and the University of California also share in the handicapped scholarship fund which amounts to \$150,000, consisting of contributions by Will Rogers' friends.

Friends of Will Rogers also are responsible for another campus program. They have contributed items to the University archives which is building a Will Rogers collection.

Important items in the collection so far are letters written by Will and Mrs. Rogers, newspaper clippings and scrapbooks.

Reliable sources indicate that Rogers was not a very good student and devoted much of his scholarly career to roping fellow students and teachers. But he left ripples of laughter in the sands of time and for that reason the University has thrown a rope around his memory and memorialized him for posterity.