



Twenty years ago, Miss Helen Gregory introduced a nimble juggler and a Christmas tradition to the campus with . . .

"INTO THE FESTIVE CROWD comes Jean, a juggler above the square where Paris gaily dances. His paltry tricks their revelry disturbing. 'Fie on you, Juggler.'" Dot Primeau, St. Louis, Missouri, leaps into a scene with the merry makers during a rehearsal of the Juggler.

## The Juggler of Notre Dame

By BILL GOODNER, '52ba

*A motionless, crumpled figure, interrupting the space about her moved cautiously. Weaving, like a flower bobbing in a changing breeze, the movements increased in strength. In a sudden explosive gesture, the body gained freedom, rose, and triumphantly burst forth in dance.*

The figure—a member of Orchesis, women's modern dance club; the space—a gymnasium in the Women's Physical Education building; the occasion—a rehearsal of what would be another highly praised modern dance production.

In mid-November, Helen Gregory, associate professor of physical education for women and sponsor of the dance group, was polishing the dances for the yearly Christmas Festival. Capturing the feature spot in the program as well as the silent approval of its 21 audiences in as many years was

Orchesis's interpretation of the French folk legend, "The Juggler of Notre Dame."

The Juggler has become a yuletide classic on the campus. The nimble Juggler, whose dexterous tricks help him tell the Christmas story, has danced into the hearts of all who have watched him, and into a tradition on the Sooner campus.

Since Helen Gregory's first appearance on the faculty in 1932—also the debut date of *The Juggler*—the department of dance has assumed its deserving place in the realm of collegiate activities. Skeptical of southwestern reaction to modern dance trends, Miss Gregory chose *The Juggler* for her first production. It caught on. Ever since, University audiences have voiced approval.

*The Juggler* was first adapted for dance at the University of Wisconsin. Miss Gregory learned of it there while working on her master's degree. And so, the Juggler

found his merry way to Oklahoma. He has been adopted by many areas in the state since that time. The dancers in those first productions, radiating out into the state, have carried with them memories of the marvelous Juggler and productions have blossomed forth. In some cases the Juggler has cemented himself again into the community and has become a Christmas tradition.

By contributing vivid pageantry and meaningful recitals for campus entertainment, respect for Helen Gregory's talent as a choreographer and teacher of dance has widened in scope. A scintillating wit, Miss Gregory's deadpan pantomime and mimicry makes her personality as popular as her talent.

Several Sooners, who had worked with *The Juggler* and are now with the Fred

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Waring glee club, persuaded the orchestra leader to televise *The Juggler*. Two years ago, Waring consulted Miss Gregory before staging his version. She readily complied and worked out the timing for the Waring production. She made one stipulation however. Waring wasn't to televise his show before Miss Gregory had televised hers. So at one o'clock on a December Sunday in 1950, Orchestis presented the first televised production of *The Juggler* and at eight o'clock that evening Waring and company gave the second.

Although Gregory does the choreography for all the scenes, since *The Juggler's* role is so individualistic, she lets the girl dancing that role each year adapt it to her own personality.

Helen Gregory is prouder of her audiences than of her dancers. "It's harder to

educate an audience to the dance than to train dancers," she remarked. When Martha Graham gave her concert on the Sooner campus a few years back, she told Miss Gregory, "This is the first time on the tour that I have felt the audience was on the stage with me." Martha Graham praised Miss Gregory by saying, "There's one person behind each audience."

When Helen Gregory introduced herself to the University of Oklahoma in 1932, she introduced Soonerland to the era of modern dance.

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"THEN FALLS exhausted, dying, at her feet. Radiant her hand lifts in benediction." And the legend is told once more.

# Covering the Campus

By BILL SPOHRER, '53  
(Student Guest Columnist)

## Students star on both sides of the camera and where's rah-rah?

The University of Oklahoma's leggy, blonde, band twirler, Monta Smith, was featured in the October 24 issue of *Life* magazine in her fiery baton act.

Monta, sophomore education major from Seminole, had been experimenting with the spectacular act as a novelty for night pep rallies. *Life* became interested and pictured her on a page in full color, twirling fire against a black background of the night sky.

It took some experimenting on the part of Dr. Leon S. Ciereszko, assistant professor of chemistry, in order to get the fire to show up in its natural brilliant orange. Photographers had found that the high-speed film used revealed ordinary flames as blue in the finished picture. After a little mixing and testing, the chemistry prof prepared a special inflammable fluid which produced flames that would photograph as fire should.

The resulting picture shows Monta, clad in her red and white twirler's costume, encircled with the baton's flaming pattern of orange light.

The color shot, along with half a dozen black and white pictures used in the layout, was made by photographer A. Y. Owen of Oklahoma City.

One of the pictures discloses a new twist to Monta's routine. Petite Monta herself is shown being twirled by 260-pound tackle Hilary Iglehart of Wewoka.

And speaking of pictures, another O.U. student has found himself involved with them—but from the other side of the lens.

Joe Price, engineering senior from Oklahoma City, has put on display the fruits of his four-month photo making tour of Bali, Siam and China. Joe, always on the lookout for the unusual, manages to make his pictures tell a story.

One of his favorites was taken under somewhat difficult circumstances. It shows a Balinese cremation ceremony, something