

Under Cover

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

Ten years ago I received my diploma from a small, rural highschool in Riverton, Kansas. In the following years, I have attended three highschool events as a spectator. Two of the three were football games of my alma mater. I added the third event in March and it left a mark on me.

Last month Ardmore highschool held its 49th annual interclass oratorical contest. I was asked to serve with Miss Brunette Shanklin, '30ba, Extension Division specialist, and Dr. Loren N. Brown, '28ma, '37ph.d, specialist in school services, as a judge.

With some combat experience as a speech contestant, I suspected that I was ready for anything to happen—but I was wrong.

Perhaps, if I described the occasion, it would indicate what a fine afternoon the Ardmore students and teachers gave Miss Shanklin, Dr. Brown and me.

The highschool auditorium was sparsely settled when the judges took their places at various points in the room. A few parents had already found seats but the students were still in class.

I found myself seated in the junior class section. A large crepe paper banner had been constructed to inform me of my transgression. Across the room the seniors had placed a similar notation of their sovereignty.

The lowly sophomores had to be content with balcony seats, but placards indicated that they were unselfconscious about their peonage.

The school bell system worked wonders at 2:30 p.m. What had been a quiet auditorium erupted with sound as the classes filled their sections.

A junior, whose section I was usurping, turned from his seat in front of me and said, "Mr. Judge, where are you from?" "O.U.," I replied. After a brief discussion about how I was associated with O.U., I asked him if he had done any speech work.

"My colleague and I have qualified for the state debate tournament," he told me with a reasonable amount of pride in the telling.

The three contestants took seats on the stage. Cheer leaders dressed in their own class colors presented the orator representing their class with baskets of flowers and led class cheers. The juniors sang a song

to let their entry know he should be a front runner.

The enthusiasm was real. There was a spontaneity about it that could not help but pierce the false sophistication that I have a tendency to adopt towards those in a younger age group.

George Hann, '36m.ed, superintendent of Ardmore schools, presided and introduced the contestants as they moved to the front of the stage to bring credit to themselves and to their classes.

Each of the contestants had chosen a subject for his oration that fitted the times and either concerned wars or rumors of wars.

The seniors and juniors were represented by young men and the sophomores by a young lady.

Their style of delivery differed sharply. Each did a good job. They seemed to feel a responsibility towards their classmates, and were making their finest effort to win.

The suspense in the auditorium would have done credit to an Alfred Hitchcock movie as the judges left the room to reach their decision.

Murl Price, principal of the highschool, waited as anxiously as the orators. We gave him our placements and returned to a vantage point to witness the announcement.

When the seniors heard the outcome, they whooped it up. Their entry had taken first and the juniors and sophomores followed in that order.

The three judges piled into the car and headed back to Norman. All three were impressed with the speeches, the contestants and the highschool that had channeled student enthusiasm into such a worthwhile venture. Next year Ardmore will hold its 50th contest. It should be another fine occasion.

Deadlines for the magazine are relentless editors of what appears within the *Sooner's* covers. But two events that occurred in January and February, that were too late to classify for the March issue, are of enough consequence to deserve belated treatment.

The first event was an inaugural luncheon that the Alumni Association and the

Washington, D. C., Alumni club sponsored for alumni visiting the nation's capital to see Eisenhower's inauguration. Held January 19 in the Annapolis Hotel, the luncheon was attended by every member of Oklahoma's congressional delegation except Congressman Ed Edmondson, '40ba, Muskogee, who was ill with the flu. Governor Johnston Murray and other visitors from Oklahoma attended.

Washington club president Russell Chapin, '48Law, opened and closed the luncheon. Congressman Page Belcher, '18, Enid, served as master of ceremonies. Senator Robert S. Kerr, '16, offered the invocation. Each member of the congressional delegation present and Governor Murray made short speeches.

The second event was a reception that the Oklahoma University Club of Dallas held for Coach Bud Wilkinson in Dallas February 23. Bud was in Dallas for a after-sports-dinner speech.

The reception was attended by approximately 50 alumni of the University who belong to the O.U.C.D. The club is not affiliated with the Dallas Alumni Club but works closely with it.

At a January meeting of the group, Isham "Push" Nelson, '43bus, was elected to serve as president for the year. Nelson heads a slate of officers that reads: Nick Tinker, '40eng, Irving Higbee, '42bus, and Abbott Sparks, '41mus, '43ba, vice presidents; Harold Shank, '34-'38, secretary-treasurer; Arno C. "Dick" Adams, '33-'37, publicity, and Earl Holden, '39bus, Doyle Crain, '31bus, Leo Baker, '38eng, Jim Langham, '35eng, and Jim Stevens, '40bs, directors. Stevens is immediate past president.

The club holds monthly luncheon meetings and sponsors the "Beat Texas" dinner-dance before the O.U.-Texas game.

Special Days

Three professional schools will hold special days in April. Alumni of each of the celebrating schools and colleges are invited to attend. Those celebrating are—

Journalism Day, April 10, no speaker announced.

Business Day, April 15, (inauguration of an annual day), principal speaker, James Q. DuPont, DuPont Company, Wilmington, Delaware.

Law Day, April 30, principal speaker, Oriel Phillips, Chief Judge, U. S. Court of Appeals, 10th District. Retired Law School professors will be honored.