



IS OKLAHOMA A FOOTBALL UNIVERSITY?

When a team wins consistently, as O. U. does, there is a tendency for the onlooker to assume that Pigskins are more important than Sheepskins.

By ROBERT TALLEY, '55

OUT in the Montana prairieland last summer an O.U. alumnus pulled up at a service station for gas. The attendant moved around, getting his pump running.

"Say, you from Oklahoma?" he asked, noting license tag and finding a self-evident conversation opener.

To a nod, he ran with the ball.

"You folks sure can play football down there."

The alumnus smiled as modest a smile as he could muster and allowed as how the folks had tossed a ball or two around . . . Forty-five minutes later he drove away.

Similar incidents have been reported from Maine to California, wherever an Oklahoman is readily identifiable.

It is gratifying to have "Sooners" discussed with respect in lieu of the stinger, "Okies," but after such a discussion the impression lingers that the University of Oklahoma is a gigantic stadium filled with brawny gladiators rooted on by a blood-

hungry and die-for-dear-old student body, where a respectable distance outside the city limits, something called classes meet as breathers between battles.

Many O.U. alumni, who should know better, have a tendency to share this impression. After all, they reason, you don't wind up in the nation's top ten for six years in a row, hold the nation's modern record for consecutive wins (31), own 8 Big Seven titles in a row, etc., unless you place emphasis on a sports program.

But does emphasis on one aspect of a university's activities mean exclusion of emphasis on other aspects?

The University of Oklahoma is one of the dozen or so schools in the nation whose winning ways have earned them the title, "Football Schools." And no one denies that Oklahoma should be included in such a grouping.

But!

And this is important. Oklahoma is not

just a football school. Oklahoma is considerably more than an institution devoted solely to fielding a hot football team. Sheepskins are more important than Pigskins and always will be. This is where fact must be separated from fantasy.

Coach Bud Wilkinson, the nation's top coach, declared, "If a boy just wants to come to college to play football, there isn't enough (football) to keep him interested."

Specific cases in point could be used for an argument, but as a whole, this sticks. The three months of the year that he is part of the Sooners, one of the team, just isn't long enough to outweigh the sweat over books, the hours in class, the college grind.

All right then, what is O.U.? What does it do and what does it have besides a winning football team? How does it stack up? Take a look at a Football School, a real one.

This University is a tradition, a way of life, a spawning ground for strong minds,

a city of more than 10,000 persons, only a hundred or so of whom ever touch a varsity football.

This city of 10,000 has three essential classes—the students, numbering in the neighborhood of 9,000, who are here to prepare for the good life and the good job through some 2,300 different courses provided by the second group, the faculty, numbering slightly more than 500, who give of their years to those without them, and the administrative personnel, nearly 900 who perform the jobs that keep teacher and pupil together.

The University is a city, with property ranging well over \$30,000,000, and a payroll of nearly \$6,000,000. Every day classes are in session, the University feeds nearly 11,000 hungry stomachs, and even more metropolitan, it has a police force of 17 and more than 300 parking meters.

The University's airport, one of the world's largest devoted to instruction, would do many a small city proud. And O.U. is a place of leisurely outward pace, where, however, literally thousands of fertile brains sweat to catch up with the world and race to find niches in life they hope will expand with time. O.U. is a gathering place for some of the finest mature minds the world has seen, minds dedicated to bolstering civilization on its albeit staggering feet.

These minds merge, and the sum appears greater than its parts:

The School of Petroleum Engineering, is the largest in the world. The Geology School has more practicing graduates than all the other universities and colleges put together!

The Pharmacy School, pulled up by its bootstraps, holds the highest rating a school of its kind can receive. The College of Business Administration, is ranked as one of this country's best. The Professional Writing Department, unofficially the nation's leader, had three students who sold in one year to the *Saturday Evening Post*, the market most sought after by the old pros.

O.U.'s library, with more than a half-million books, is second largest in the southwest. The E. DeGolyer collection of science and technological books quartered there is considered conservatively as one of the most important of its kind in the world. And the library is one of only 15 in the country providing as a research tool the Human Relations Area Files, bringing together detailed information on nearly 200 societies.

The Medical School, two hospitals and two schools, is plenty good, and the Extension Division racks up fabulous totals on

its enrolment books—8,240 persons attending short courses during one six-month period—3,500 persons catching credits by correspondence at almost any given time.

Oklahoma's renowned Journalism School, gets mentioned usually when newspapermen talk of schools and cub reporters . . . and on and on and on. Out of these schools and departments, however, some individuals have become known because of their work. A few at random can be mentioned.

Dr. Laurence Snyder, dean of the graduate college, was the first man to teach medical genetics in the United States and is introduced at banquets as the foremost authority in that field. To see him from another angle, he's a mean man with a piano boogie beat.

Eva Turner, visiting professor of music, this summer for the second time was asked to present the annual awards at the Royal Academy of Music in London, an honor that in some past years has gone to members of the ruling family. A graduate of the academy, Miss Turner is a world-acclaimed dramatic soprano.

And there's the man, Bruce Goff, architect. He has brought the Architecture School up to a challenge for any the U.S. can offer, a school whose setup has been copied by such institutions as the University of Melbourne, Australia. One of Goff's students won the international Prix de Rome this year.

Dr. J. Rud Nielsen, research professor of physics, is an international authority in the field of Rama Spectra, and Dr. George M. Sutton is one of the world's most widely-known ornithologists.

Dr. Joseph Marshburn, chairman of the Department of English, was asked to speak on 17th Century English literature before the Royal Society of London. This is not altogether unlike a man from Oklahoma being invited to Tibet to deliver a dissertation before the High Llama on carving yak meat. And Dr. Nathan A. Court, mathematics professor emeritus, has written a text printed now in a number of foreign languages including Chinese.

So O.U., as a Football School, is a stadium surrounded by two classes of footballers, the players and the cheerers? Of course not, even though the school may be the only one ever to have a football coach that later won a Nobel Prize in literature (Vernon L. Parrington, who led the team during the raw meat days of 1897 to 1900).

Perhaps a true perspective of football and the University can be gained by glancing at

the place where most of O.U.'s games are staged. The stadium, coliseum to the steady boys, altar to the fast boys, to the cheers and the game, is being used for at least 15 other purposes than to give crowds a hard seat. It houses the Lower Division Library, the School of Architecture, band offices and practice rooms and storerooms, an indoor track, the "O" Club lounge, intramural storerooms, four handball courts, the university archives, wrestling and boxing workout rooms, the athletic business office, a rifle range and storerooms for the University Press.

Yet it is a fine stadium, and still Oklahoma at a distance is known primarily for football. This fact discourages many people, not included among them however is President George Lynn Cross, who made this statement:

"I do not think that this is particularly detrimental to the University because most of those who are able to influence the development of the institution know about the excellent academic programs here . . ."

"I do not think," he continued, "that football has hurt the university—that is to any great extent. There may be a feeling in some academic circles that the institution has over-emphasized football and therefore must be under-emphasizing or neglecting, to some extent, its academic program. Such thinking or belief is unjustified, in my opinion, because the academic phases of the University have been developed and emphasized along with our sports program."

Dr. Cross, once a player himself, said he doesn't believe that O.U. has been helped academically by football either, but said "it has made more people aware that the University of Oklahoma does exist . . ."

"I think, however," he continued, "that our record in football has added to the prestige of the State of Oklahoma because of the substantial publicity concerning the team which has appeared in papers throughout the nation."

In line with this discussion might come questions about the fate of football at O.U. Dr. Cross, the man who should know, wound up his remarks for this story in these words:

"I believe that sports play an important role on the modern campus, and I intend to do all that I can to promote the development of a well balanced and successful sports program at the University of Oklahoma."

. . . Which all boils down to the fact that just because you love your mother doesn't mean you can't love your wife.