

Say I Taught Thee

Five distinguished O.U. professors retired from the faculty at the end of the 1955-56 school year. Thousands of alumni will remember them and their contributions to the University.

By BILL FRYDAY, '57

MORE THAN three centuries ago an English playwright wrote these words for the retiring teacher: "When I am forgotten . . . say I taught thee."

Many will be able to say they were taught by one or more of five teachers leaving the University at the close of the last term. Retired were Dr. Frank A. Balyeat, Professor of Education; James E. Belcher, Professor of Chemistry; Dr. Asa K. Christian, Professor of History; Dr. Lowry A. Doran, Professor of Government, and Dr. Stuart R. Tompkins, Research Professor of History.

Together these gentlemen accumulated a total of better than 140 O. U. teaching years, and tens of thousands of students hurried across the campus to take notes on their class lectures. Each is about the same age as the others, being born in either 1885 or '86. Each distinguished himself and became a specialist in his particular field. All began their education in rural schools, then went on to become public school administrators before taking up the instruction of higher education.

Yet the similarity of their individual careers does not follow through. In many ways the five have differed conspicuously. One is no more patterned to the others' lines than a Russian purge is to Texas history, or the city of Istanbul to the Yukon Territory.

Frank Balyeat came from Kansas to finish his high school studies in O. U.'s Preparatory Department. After teaching in a rural school for a couple of years, he went on to become a high school teacher, principal and superintendent in five different Oklahoma schools. Both his bachelor's and master's degrees came from O.U., his doctorate from Leland Stanford University in California. He returned to O.U. in 1927 as Assistant Professor of Education.

Some like to refer to him as the state's "Mr. Education," and the reason is not dif-

ficult to determine. Before coming to the campus he had been affiliated with teaching in Oklahoma for some 17 years. Still, the connection reaches back even further.

"I entered a rural school in Oklahoma Territory in 1890," he said, "and for part or all of every school year since, I've been part of the state's public schools. That's two-thirds of a century."

Through the years a good deal of publicity has followed Balyeat. He has been a member of any number of committees studying and seeking to improve educational methods and standards. Improvement of such methods took a new twist when World War II found him organizing classes designed to speed up production and heighten workers' efficiency.

Probably few remember, however, that he was once Editor-in-Chief of the *Sooner Yearbook* and Assistant Editor of the *Empire*, the latter publication being the forerunner of today's *Oklahoma Daily* student newspaper.

Though Balyeat first majored in sociology and economics, there never seemed much doubt as to his future in the education field. His parents were teachers, and naturally they impressed him. They seem to have impressed him religious-wise as well: he's taught Sunday School classes now for more than 40 years, something which he terms "a pretty good endurance record, I think."

For the immediate future Balyeat intends to help prepare a historical record of education in Oklahoma.

Another field—that of general organic chemistry—claims James Belcher. Several chemistry texts were written by him in collaboration with other O. U. professors, and the books have been used extensively in many parts of the nation.

Belcher joined O. U.'s teaching staff as Graduate Assistant in 1922. Two years later



STUART R. TOMPKINS

. . . His Native Canada Calls

he received his master's degree from the University and, aside from a couple of summers spent at the University of Chicago, settled down for a long stay. Like Balyeat, Belcher was not a native Oklahoman; born in Missouri, he attended rural schools there before coming to the Sooner State for continuation of his studies. He was Superintendent of Schools at Harrah, then at Jones, and finally Principal at Sulphur High

When the University beckoned and Belcher responded, there began an association which was to last 34 years. During those years he found himself not content with simply repeating known facts, and he kept up an exploration of the field, doing personal research on various problems. Nor did classroom lecturing keep him satisfied; he spoke at rural churches on Sundays.

Belcher knows exactly why chemistry became his life's work. A high school teacher influenced him.

The Lone Star State influenced A. K. Christian. He originally hails from Georgia but is more closely associated with Texas, having moved to the latter state while still a youngster. After graduating from high school he taught for a while in a country school, but desire for a college degree soon lured him to the University of Texas. He played some football, served as reporter for the student newspaper, and departed with a master's degree.

Christian was intrigued by history. Following a three years' superintendency at the Bartlett, Texas, schools, he tried his hand at biography. *Mirabeau B. Lamar*, the story of a late, great Texan, was the result. The book published, he went on to win a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania and to join O. U. as Assistant Professor of History.

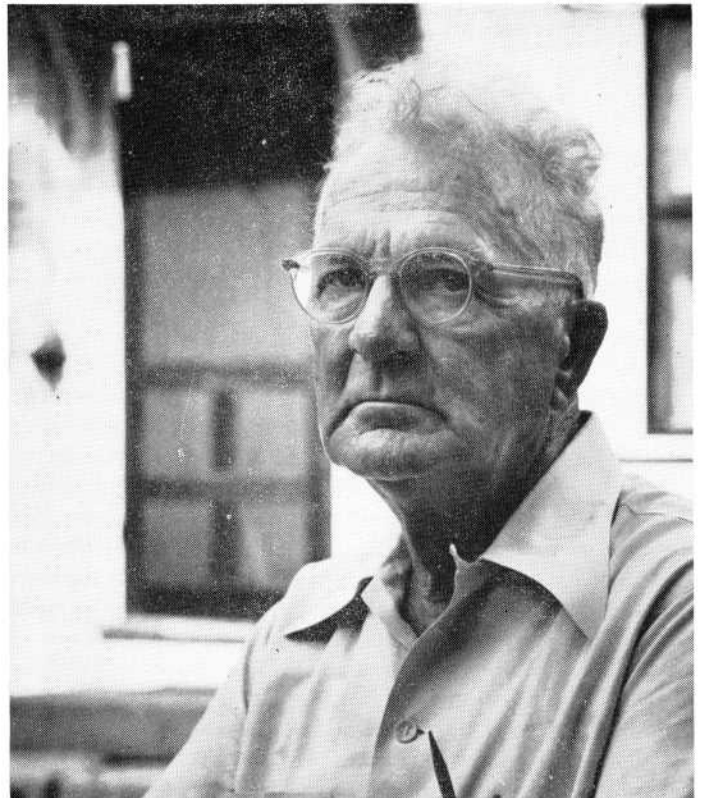
"When I came to O. U.," he said, "the campus was on the North Oval. The South Oval was just a pasture."



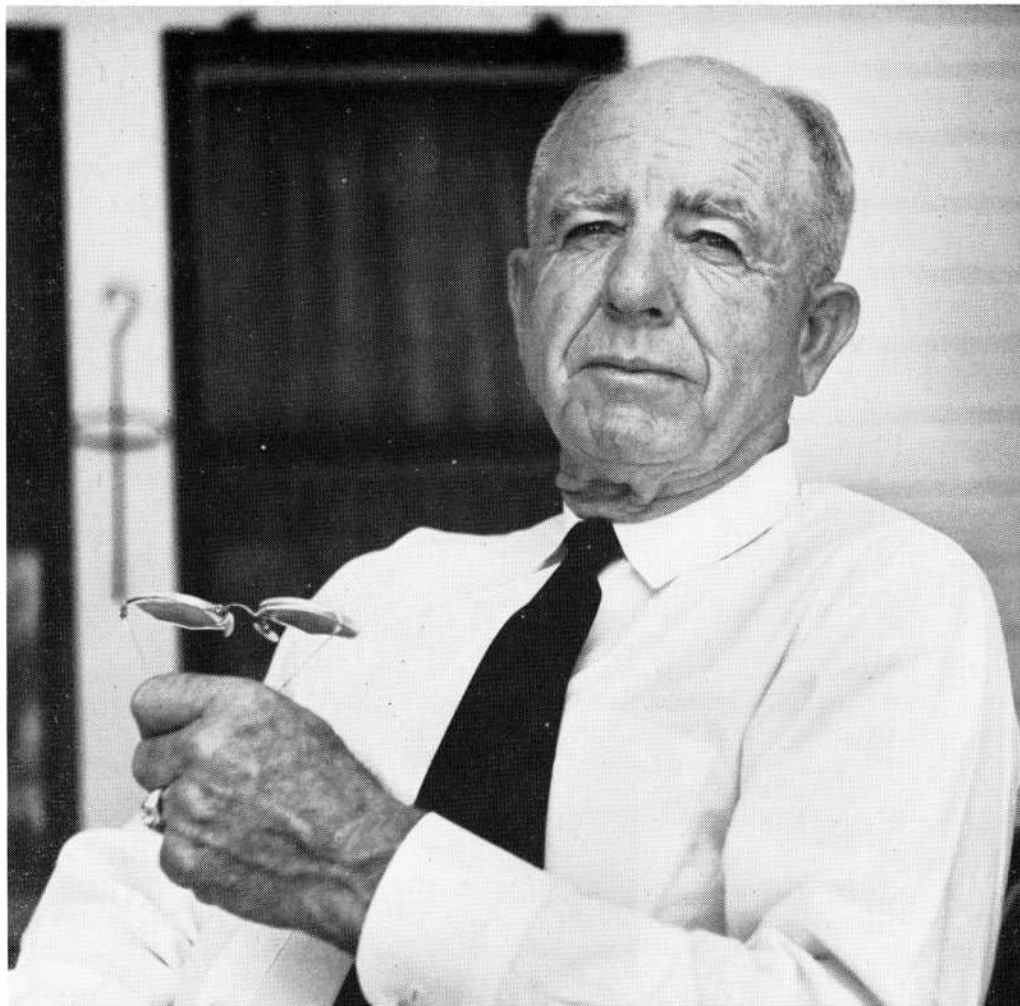
JAMES E. BELCHER
... He Kept Exploring the Field



FRANK A. BALYEAT
... Oklahoma's "Mr. Education"



LOWRY A. DORAN
... He Recalls Classroom Fights



A. K. CHRISTIAN

... South Oval Was Just a Pasture

The stream of years—34 of them in all—began to slip past. He became one of the campus' best known professors, and for years he was secretary of the general faculty. He made up his mind to retire, he said, when one day it occurred to him that he was teaching grandchildren of some of his former students. He had come a long way from the days when, as a boy, he played baseball with another young sports enthusiast named Ty Cobb.

Retirement gives Christian more time for his golf game and for the completion of a volume dealing with the constitutional history of the United States. Also, it gives the University a new scholarship, the A. K. Christian Scholarship to provide \$250 for a student working toward a master's or doctor's degree in history. Mrs. Christian and their three daughters set up the \$5,000 fund to sustain the annual scholarship.

In May a special dinner honored Christian and another retiring veteran, Stuart Tompkins.

The road to O. U. proved an exciting one for Tompkins. Born in Canada, he made one of his earlier contacts with the field of history by becoming a recorder of it: he was for a time Police Court Reporter of the *Ed-*

monton Bulletin, in Alberta. By 1909 he had a bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto, but then he became ill and had to abandon any immediate further studies.

A maximum of fresh air and exercise seemed to be what the doctor ordered, so Tompkins joined an expedition to the Peace River country in northern Alberta. It turned out to be a rugged existence. After three months he left the area by way of raft, floating down the river, but he was not to be away from the wilderness for long.

Following a teaching stint of four years and the gaining of a master's degree, he and Mrs. Tompkins struck out for Dawson City in the Yukon Territory, where he was to be Superintendent of Schools. There followed another four years, this one characterized by the lack of most modern conveniences. Few people were around to be classified as company, and there were no roads. Once the Tompkinses used a raft to follow the Yukon River for a distance of 300 miles, since travel through the countryside was next to impossible.

"It was a primitive mining community," said Tompkins, "but we had good schools, and it was the happiest time of my life."

After leaving the Yukon, he decided to go after his doctorate. England, he thought, would be a good place to get it, and he had already shipped some of his belongings to London when he decided to drop by the University of Chicago to look over that institution's setup. There he met and began to chat with the famed historian James Westfall Thompson. Within 15 minutes the two were arranging a course of study for the student, and there Tompkins remained.

Shortly after the conferring of the new degree, he came to O. U. That was in 1922, and the intervening years have proved no less fascinating than those which came before.

Tompkins held a definite interest in Russia, stemming from a 1918 visit to Siberia. Therefore, just 20 years later he paid a return visit to the U. S. S. R. This time he went to Moscow, contacted a Russian official and managed to wangle permission to study in the archives. Finished, he left only to have some of his notes confiscated "for reasons that seemed trivial." The following summer saw the purge of a number of Reds, among them the official who had al-

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Miss Marilyn Ann Christy, '55ed, Oklahoma City, and Carl Austin Smelser, '53bus, Roosevelt, were married June 22 in Oklahoma City. Smelser received his discharge from the Army, in which he served as a lieutenant, in the spring. The couple live in Roosevelt.

Miss Mary Martha Harreld, '55ed, Oklahoma City, and Howard Ward Olinger, '56eng, Wichita Falls, Texas, were married in early June in Oklahoma City. They now live in Midland, Texas.

Miss Laura Yvonne Jones, '55journ, Lawton, and Kenneth E. Holmes, Rockledge, Georgia, were married June 28 in Altus. They live in Lawton.

Miss Frances Edens, '55ed, Oklahoma City, and Lieut. Warren Summers, '55eng, Norman, were married June 27 in the Division Artillery Chapel, Fort Polk, Louisiana. He has been with the Army since June 1955. The couple lives in De Ridder, Louisiana.

BIRTH: Keith Kashwer and Mrs. Kashwer (the former Frances Fish, '55ba), Oklahoma City, have chosen the name Cinda Kay for their daughter born June 22 in Oklahoma City.

DEATH: Lieut. Scott D. Nickson, '55bus, Shawnee, was killed July 30 when his Air Force plane crashed in an Arizona desert. He was making a solo mission from Marana Air Base when the accident occurred. Survivors include his mother, Mrs. Grace Nickson, Redwood City, California, and his wife of a few weeks, Magdalena.

1956

MARRIAGES: Miss Eugenia Marie Ware, '56ba, and Kenneth Milton Jones, '55bus, both of Oklahoma City, were married July 14 in Oklahoma City. Jones reported in August to Indianapolis, Indiana, as a second lieutenant in the Army. Their home was established in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Miss Sameera Adeeba Hamra, '56h.ec, Lawton, and Mr. Joy N. Massad, '53, Tyler, Texas, were married June 24 in Lawton. They live in Austin, Texas, where he is following a pre-medical curriculum at the University of Texas.

Miss Kay Ann Fentem, '56, Ada, and H. Lanier Hickman, Jr., '56eng, Healdton, were married July 20 in Ada. They live in San Francisco, California, where he is an officer of the Public Health Service.

Miss Marilyn Jane Swift, '56ed, Marietta, Georgia, and Donald Wesley Irby, '55, Oklahoma City, were married July 28 in Oklahoma City. They live in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he is a student in the School of Medicine at Tulane University.

Miss Victoria Jane Yarberr, '56h.ec, and Jack Paul Clayton, '56, both of Mangum, were married August 14 in Mangum. He is now a junior at O.U., majoring in geology. They are living in Chickasha.

Miss Wynona Rae White and Jerry Bart Donaghey, '56ed, both of Ada, were married August 17 in Ada, where they make their home. Mrs. Donaghey is a graduate of Oklahoma A&M College.

Miss Paula Kathrina Hargraves, '56journ, Tulsa, and David Stewart Love, Cushing, were married July 15 in Cushing. Mr. and Mrs. Love are living in Cushing.

Miss Anita Marie Howard, '56ed, Waurika, and Van Norvel Nichols, '56, Houston, Texas, were married June 23 in Waurika. She is a former O.U. Independent Students Association queen. The couple is living in Dallas, Texas.

Miss Nancy Hawkins, '56ba, Bartlesville, and Robert Chalmer Shank, Idaho Falls, Idaho, were married June 9 in Bartlesville.

lowed Tompkins to enter the archives.

In 1940 Tompkins' book *Russia Through the Ages* was published. Two later works, *Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough* and *The Russian Mind* were published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

A careful, patient man, he keeps one eye cocked toward the sky ("Yes, I'm a bird watcher"), but just try and get him to talk about his hobby: he'd rather talk about history. In fact, retirement from O. U. simply means more discussion of history for him, for he's returned to the University of Toronto as a Special Lecturer.

The fifth man, Lowry Doran, had rather use his retirement for writing about government. Political parties and state government constitute his preferred field, but 40 years ago he was planning something different.

"I started into law, he said, "but after one year I switched to political science. I concluded that my mind was better adapted to it than to the technicalities of the other field."

Doran taught high school in his home town of Springfield, Missouri, before pushing on to the University of Chicago for his doctorate. For two years, then, he taught at the University of Maine, and for another at State Teachers College in Tennessee.

Along about this time he decided to take a year off "for cultural purposes and fun. I'd taught courses in history for a while," he explained, "and I wanted to see the places I'd been talking about."

All in all he saw about 40 countries in Europe, North Africa and Southwestern Asia. Particularly catching his fancy were the cities of Istanbul, Rome, Jerusalem and Athens. However, the celebrated spots soon were just as far away as previously they had been, and Doran came to O. U., an Assistant Professor of Government. In the 26 years which followed, he taught an estimated 8,000 students, and he watched the collegiate type change with the calendar.

"For example," he said, "years ago students would sometimes have fights right in the classroom; it doesn't happen today. Or a cow would mysteriously turn up in a professor's room, or a buggy on top of a building. Today there's not quite so much horseplay. Extra-curricular activities are a little more refined."

Has the teaching of government become easier through the years?

"No," said Doran. "In Oklahoma the teaching of government hasn't been prop-

erly enough emphasized in high schools. But it depends a great deal on the student, too. A lot of girls and boys don't read the newspapers. An interest in current news would help."

Current events, incidentally, claim a portion of each of Doran's days. Visitors to his office remember high stacks of newspapers and journals in the corners, and the head of the department used to joke with Doran about his reading matter constituting a hazard to the passerby.

Today Doran and his four retiring colleagues have more time for the newspapers. More birds will be watched, more trains boarded, more long-overdue books written. They have reached, it seems, what Bertrand Russell called "the last product of civilization": the filling of leisure intelligently.

Colt-Action Sooners . . .

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al championship will probably be settled with this one.

Colorado at Boulder, November 3—Twenty lettermen return from a squad that won 6 and lost 4 in '55. Coach Dal Ward has added the multiple offense to what was once a straight single wing offense. Two factors keep this game from being put in the safe column for the Sooners: 1) Oklahoma has never beaten Colorado at Boulder by more than one touchdown, and 2) game comes on heels of tough Notre Dame battle. This game has the possibility of ambush written all over it.

Iowa State at Ames, November 10—Team returns 14 lettermen but is described by Coach DiFrancesca in these terms, "We have hopes this will be the best team we've had in our three-year stay."

Missouri at Norman, November 17—Missouri is being touted as the best prospect for an Orange Bowl berth in Big Seven Conference. Eight starters from last year's team are back, headed by brilliant quarterback Jim Hunter. Coach Don Faurot also will have help from an undefeated freshman team. This game will be doubly tough if Missouri is still in the running for the Orange Bowl trip.

Nebraska at Norman, November 24—Nebraska, with new coach Pete Elliott, is opening the season with a mystery team. Fifteen lettermen are back but entire team will need time to adjust to new coach's system. Speed and experience are lacking as season opens. Still, Nebraska figures to be in Big Seven battle for Orange Bowl behind Missouri and possibly Kansas.