
Hal Muldrow, Jr.

'28

Insurance of all Kinds

Bonds

Security National Bank Bldg.

Norman

IMAGE IS NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE DUE TO COPYRIGHT
RESTRICTIONS.

A paper copy of this issue is available at
call number LH 1 .O6S6 in
Bizzell Memorial Library.

Under Cover

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

AS THE LEAD ARTICLE in this issue, the Editor presents a story, almost an editorial, called "The Vanishing American." Its purpose is to call attention to the crisis facing our schools: there are too few teachers for too many students.

The need for more teachers is a critical matter, but it is equally necessary that we demonstrate an appreciation for those already engaged in teaching. Too many of us are too busy to say the words of appreciation that we know are due.

Every graduate of the University has experienced great teaching at some period in his school life. These four provided it for me.

My first encounter with a great teacher came in the third grade. The one-room school house with its huge stove set squarely in the center of the room was an unlikely place to expect great teaching, but the lady who presided over the eight grades ignored the physical handicaps.

She was a stern disciplinarian. She displayed a remarkable lack of sympathy for poor preparation and whispering and paper wads. But her patience with those who tried to learn stretched to remarkable lengths.

And for those who were poorly equipped to learn, she offered kindness and a pace they could match. For those who demonstrated ability, she pushed and pulled until they were sure their minds would snap.

Her students were her responsibility and she accepted it as a great opportunity. She brought to her task a dedication to knowledge that left a positive impression on her charges.

Her greatest accomplishment was flooding a one-room school house with the brilliance of the world of knowledge, and making those who could, see a part of the spectrum.

A high school English class produced the second memorable encounter. On the first day of school, a tall woman, wearing dresses that were in style 20 years before, addressed the class. She was a legend by the time I met her. She was "old fashioned." The term seemed to indicate to her students that she was passe.

And everything she did seemed to bear out the contention. The class would dia-

IMAGE IS NOT AVAILABLE
ONLINE DUE TO COPYRIGHT
RESTRICTIONS.

A paper copy of this
issue is available at
call number LH 1 .06S6
in Bizzell Memorial
Library.

gram sentences. The class would produce a vast quantity of themes. The class would read Shakespeare. And the class would take a state-wide examination to determine how well the lessons had been learned.

She was, in many ways, the Miss Dove of my experience except she lacked the outer sternness.

I must confess that I joined the general attitude that she was living in the past. Only when I reached college did I understand her contribution. As freshman themes piled on freshman themes, and I watched the other students worry with basic grammar, I began to know her worth. Her grammar lessons remained with me. It has been said that none of her students who went to college failed their English requirements. She is still teaching and she is still considered a bit "old fashioned." I hope she wears the description proudly.

The other two teachers who offered me a measure of teaching greatness are still associated with the University of Oklahoma. They impressed me for entirely different reasons. One taught me the value of human understanding in a Spanish class. The other caused a closed mind to open. I am not sure which was the greater accomplishment.

What is the point in relating such personal experiences? How does the testimony of the editor concern the reader?

What we think of our teachers is a concern for everyone. At the present time the teacher supply is not great enough to meet the teacher need. One of the principal causes for such a shortage is the lack of public esteem for our teachers. As much a contributing factor as money to the decline of the American school teacher is the general apathy patrons indicate toward those who teach their children.

By offering the teachers of yesterday the thanks they deserve, we can say to a new group of Americans who are selecting careers, "Why not teach?"

And perhaps this personal recital will stir others to write a letter or offer an expression of gratitude to those who offered them an extra measure of educational opportunity. Gratitude may not fatten the pay envelope, but it will go a long way with teachers who have dedicated themselves to an often thankless task.