

Why We Teach

Teachers who were enrolled in summer school in '56 offer their reasons. Some teach because of a sense of duty; some because it offers long vacations; some openly wonder why they teach. And one said, "I feel I have to teach."

BY BILL FRYDAY, '57

A WOMAN wearing a pink cotton dress came out of a bookstore. She was fortyish and in a hurry. Clutching a notebook in one hand and her purse in the other, she swung into a quick stride, then stopped short and turned with surprise to the man who had just spoken to her. She begged his pardon.

"Are you a teacher?" he repeated.

"Why, yes, I am," she replied.

"Why do you teach?" he asked.

Her expression of surprise reached stunning dimensions. The question, she told him, was something of a blockbuster. She'd never before paused to consider this particular Why.

"But," she said before hurrying along, "I suppose I do it because I love children."

Her answer was practically identical to those offered by the majority of dozens of other teachers attending summer classes at O. U. in 1956. Over a cup of coffee, walking along a street, leaning out of a car, relaxing on a campus bench—most had thought for a moment after hearing the question, then given the answer which seemed obviously the best: they love children.

Yet for some there were other, more complex explanations for remaining in the classroom. They ranged from the ecstatic to the downright bitter.

"Why do I teach?" an elementary school principal asked himself. He sat on a writing table, swinging his feet and staring at

the floor where he seemed to be arranging his thoughts. "I couldn't say it's for the salary. The main reason is, I like the job. No one could teach if he didn't. He couldn't stay in this sort of work."

A silver-haired woman dressed in white told of how a "firm belief in young people" steered her to employment in Oklahoma's public schools. She talked slowly and her eyes never stopped smiling. "I like a steady contact with young folks," she said, glancing at her teen-age daughter who stood beside her. "But actually I went into the field because it simply seemed the right thing to do."

One man just didn't know the answer. "The work is too confining for me," he said, shaking his head, "but I keep at it."

"I feel I have to teach," explained a young, pretty woman from a New Mexico Apache reservation. She had been studying a bulletin board when the question came over her shoulder, and swung around quickly to meet it with a cool competency which must have been born in the classroom. Now there was an element of desperation in her voice. "I have to," she stressed, "and I'd rather do it than anything else. There's nothing like working with children. If you don't love children, you don't have any place in the schools."

"This will sound unusual," warned another woman, "but I like the long vacations that go with the job. My own three children will get long vacations from school,

and we'll be able to spend them together." She took a look at her children with her mind's eye. "That's what I want, more time with my kids. Of course, I do have other income. If I didn't, I couldn't support my family on a teacher's salary. I'm a widow, you see."

Another teacher, arms folded, rocked back and forth on his feet as he complained about the "vacations" of the profession. "We seldom have time or money for a vacation. Instead, we spend the summers going to school, and often we have to borrow money to do that. Sometimes I wonder why I continue to teach. It doesn't offer me any great satisfactions. The work's getting heavier, harder all the time. We have to put in more and more hours and effort. But"—his voice took on resignation—"it's a job I can handle, and since we need the money, I do it."

"It's fun," exclaimed a middle-aged woman between sips of coffee. She had described some of her "problem" students; one girl had even been in the habit of throwing books at teachers who refused to let her have her own way. But the woman shrugged away the dark moments of the job as being less than important. "If you enjoy the work, then you have fun doing it because of the kids. It's most fascinating to watch their little minds work, to watch their ideas and opinions change day by day."

STANDING BENEATH A TREE ON O. U.'s south campus, a man dug into the pocket of his sport shirt and pulled out a cigarette. He looked about him, at the students and buildings, and one of his eyebrows raised itself as he carefully considered his answer.

"The economic gain," he said, "has little bearing. In recent years I've learned that what really matters is this: I have an education, and now it's one of my duties to transfer it to someone else." He lit his cigarette and blew some smoke at a cloud. "It inspires me to see that transfer take place, and it amazes me to see just how much of it I'm able to transfer and to watch it put to use. That keeps me teaching."

Point-blank, a young woman said that she believes when people feel they've something special to offer children, then they should become teachers. Her face was very sober, and her answer came so quickly that one was inclined to feel she reminds herself of it every hour on the hour. "Previously I've worked for a natural gas company," she said. "It paid a better salary than I'll ever make as a teacher. But I'm going to teach."

Continued page 31

Marriage News Pours in From Class of 1956

MARRIAGES: Miss Ramona Annette Conley, Oklahoma City, and Richard Edward Waddell, '56eng, Kansas City, Missouri, were married September 1 in Lexington. Mrs. Waddell attended Lexington High School, Oklahoma College for Women, Oklahoma A&M, and O. U. Waddell graduated from Westport High School in Kansas City before receiving his degree in electrical engineering at O. U.

Miss Carole Jean Gungoll, '56geol, Enid, and Dr. John W. Drake, Oklahoma City, were married recently in Enid. Mrs. Drake was a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority at O. U. and attended Monticello College in Godfrey, Illinois, for two years. Dr. Drake attended O. U. and George Washington University in St. Louis. The couple is living in New Haven, Connecticut, where Drake is interning at Yale Grace Community Hospital and she is employed in the laboratory of pharmacology and toxicology.

Miss Inabeth Lane, '56, Shawnee, and Ensign Victor R. Schuelein, '56eng, Oklahoma City, were married June 10 in Shawnee. Though recently living in Oakland, California, their permanent home is Oklahoma City.

Miss Beverly Imogene Ezzell, '56, Oklahoma City, and Joe Perry Sanders, '56ba, Stilwell, were married June 4 in Norman. He is a Marine lieutenant. They live in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Miss Patricia Ann Pastusek, '56bus, and Ensign Grey Wilson Satterfield, Jr., '55ba, both of Oklahoma City, were married August 3 in Oklahoma City. They live in San Diego, California, where he is stationed with the Navy.

Miss Mary Jane Whistler, '56ba, Norman, and Charles B. Williams, '56, Wetumka, were married August 11 in Norman, where they will live while he works toward a degree at O. U.

Miss Sheila Louise Harmon, Tulsa, and James Polk Luton, Jr., '56bus, Oklahoma City, were married August 26 in Oklahoma City. They live in Norman, where both attend O. U.

Miss Mona Lou Griffin, '56pharm, Maysville, and Philip Earl Albertson, Norman, were married August 18 in Maysville. They live in Stillwater, where he attends Oklahoma A&M College.

Miss Mary Ellen Hipp, '56journal, Bartlesville, and Charles Thomas Doyle, '56bus, Mangum, were married August 25 in Bartlesville. They are living in Texas City, Texas, until November when he will enter the Army.

Miss Sarah Lou Matlock and Dr. Clarence R. Roberts, '56med, both of Oklahoma City, were married August 23 in Oklahoma City. They live in Chicago, Illinois, where he is interning at St. Luke's Hospital.

Miss Arda Louise Penny, '56, Oklahoma City, and Walter Benson Reif, '53bus, Norman, were married August 24 in Oklahoma City. They live in Norman, where both attend O. U.

Miss Suzanne H. Riley, '56ba, and Lieut. (jg) Charles Edward Rambo, '54eng, both of Oklahoma City, were married August 8. He is serving with the Navy aboard the U.S.S. Helena in the Pacific.

Miss Mary Lou Narmore, '56ed, Lawton, and Richard E. O'Toole, '56ba, Oklahoma City, were married August 4 in Fort Sill's Old Post Chapel, Lawton. They live in Norman, where he is work-

ing toward a master's degree at O. U. She is a teacher in the Noble public schools.

Miss Winifred Theresa McCaffrey and Robert J. McCall, '56geol, both of Oklahoma City, were married September 1 in Oklahoma City, where they now live.

Miss Mary Roberta Cole, '56ba, Muskogee, and Fred Foster Smith, '56bus, Wewoka, were married September 1 in Muskogee. They have made their home in Wewoka.

Miss Gayle Rogers and Lawrence E. Hoecker, '56Law, both of Oklahoma City, were married July 7 in Oklahoma City. They live in Hampton, Virginia. He is a lieutenant serving with the Air Force at nearby Langley Field.

Miss Beth Louise Rapp and Arlen Southern, '56journal, both of Hooker, were married September 22 in Hooker. They live in Gates Mills, Ohio, and he works for Thompson Products, Inc., Cleveland.

Miss Phyllis Ann Braswell, '54, and Carl Raymond Bartholomew, Jr., '56ba, both of Tulsa, were married June 16 in Tulsa. She is a member of Delta Delta social sorority, and he belongs to Delta Upsilon social fraternity.

Miss Linda Harback and Theodore R. Thompson, Jr., '56bus, both of Oklahoma City, were married June 14 in Oklahoma City. They have established a residence in Bartlesville.

Miss Nancy Kay Webb, '56, Williamstown, and Cyrus Earl Webb, '56bus, San Antonio, Texas, were married June 15 in Williamstown. They are making their home in Chicago, Illinois.

Miss Jeanne Teresa Renaudo, '56ba, Okmulgee, and Benjamin Franklin Grame, Jr., Lemon Grove, California, were married June 23 in Norman. He has been studying in the School of Architecture at the University of California. They make their home in Norman.

Miss Ernestine Charlotte Jones, '56ba, Oklahoma City, and Erwin Alfred Cook, '56ba, Guthrie, were married June 30 in Oklahoma City. She is a former Big Woman on Campus. He is now a second year law student at O.U.

Miss Karen Sylvia Stewart, '56, Oklahoma City, and Roy Carter Williamson, Jr., '56eng, Fort Worth, Texas, were married July 12 in Oklahoma City. They live in Dayton, Ohio, where he is to be stationed with the Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Base.

Miss Patricia Nell Mateer, '56ba, and Charles Clark Green, '56ba, both of Oklahoma City, were married June 15 in Oklahoma City and have established their home there. He is a freshman in the School of Law at O.U.

Miss Mary Jean Shamblin, '56fa, Chickasha, and Frederick L. Rice, Jr., '55eng, Bartlesville, were married June 16 in Bristow. They live in Borger, Texas.

Miss Gayle Joan Gault, '56, Hereford, Texas, and Philip Eugene Kendall, '56ba, Norman, were married June 23 in Hereford. They live at Port Lyautey, French Morocco, North Africa, where Kendall is to be stationed with the Navy.

Miss Lenore Imogene Hinson, '56ba, Prague, and Penn Vernon Rabb, Jr., '56bus, Marlow, were married June 24 in Prague. They live in Marlow.

Miss Sandra Kay Wilson, '56, Enid, and Lieut. Stewart E. Meyers, Jr., '56bus, Oklahoma City, were married June 23 in Enid. They live at Fort Sill, Lawton, where he is to be stationed with the Army.

He Can't Say No . . .

Continued from page 15

the impression of not having time to do as much reading as he would like. "You

know when you belong to as many organizations as I do and you try to keep up with each group's publications, it doesn't leave much time for leisurely reading." But his business and civic work give him a good social and mental workout.

To tackle the backbreaking load that Burns handles requires a motive. Burns says he has found his in the writing of Thomas Wolfe. Specifically he pinpoints this passage:

"If a man has talent and cannot use it he has failed. If he has a talent and uses only half of it he has partially failed. If he has a talent and, somehow, learns to use the whole of it he has gloriously succeeded and won a satisfaction and triumph few men ever know."

J. Phil Burns is attempting to use the whole of his considerable talents. Perhaps he has found the way through "Service Above Self."

Why We Teach . . .

Continued from page 8

"Probably none of us do it just for the livelihood," ventured a short, dainty woman who wore high heels and a frown of conviction. "Take me. If I can better humanity by way of this job, mold into the individual character the means for making a better world, then I'm happy." A little breathless, she kept shifting her bird-like weight from one high heel to the other.

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"When people are educated, they just naturally know how to live better. Our culture is strengthened and advanced. Racial relations come easier. A good education helps the family, it helps Oklahoma, it helps the nation."

A stocky social science teacher with a crew-cut became almost angry. He's teaching, he said in no uncertain terms, to make more responsible, thinking citizens of our youth. He deplors the fact that "too often a minority can end up controlling our country." As a whole, he said, the American people are very poor citizens. They fail to understand their government, so they fail to vote. Then, with less passion, he said, "It gives me a fine feeling to see one of my students come forward at the end of a term and say, 'You know, I've learned something this year.'"

Some hold the theory that a person is either born a teacher, or else he cannot be one. A woman from Choctaw school district talked of it. "I've never ceased to think of teaching as a calling," she said. She meant it. As she talked, she looked at the sky, narrowed her eyes and put eloquence behind her words with little meaningful nods of her head. "You get joy out of it. It's one of the most creative fields, and you can't forget that you're dealing with the most precious of all things: humanity. You're trying to meet the needs of the individual, and if you can shape one or two children for a good future, then look what you've gained! No, financial gain never seems to really count too much, but that inner satisfaction surely does. I love teaching!"

Seated in a room crowded with people and riotous with noise, a young blonde stared at her shoes and kept one forefinger over her lips. She had just finished complaining of how tired she's grown of teaching—after only five years. Now she seemed afraid to say more. Nevertheless, a moment later she raised her eyes, unsealed her lips and admitted that, yes, she knows exactly why she will stay on in her small, rural elementary school: she feels a constant need to be needed.

At the close of each school year, she went on, a near-panic overtakes her. She looks at this student and that, each an individual, one who stutters, perhaps, another who learns relatively slowly. She prays their next teacher will give them the little special attentions and the big understanding they'll need. Then she realizes that she herself will, in all probability, be teaching new students who stutter, learn slowly, need her understanding.

Tired or not, she'll be back on the job next year.

We Were Frank With Each Other . . .

Continued from page 10

A new Chevrolet spun by and I was struck by the size of this brightly colored chrome monster. I was used to seeing the tiny, dull-colored German and English cars. Huge plate glass windows everywhere gave the impression of rich luxury after three months in countries where there are no plate glass windows, no long counters full of hundreds of the same item.

We had seen open stalls, and market places where whole areas are devoted to individual stalls filled with the same item. The buyer can be sure of getting the best quality available for his money if he is a wise bargainer. (We often left these bargaining sessions feeling we had been slightly "taken." I still have an impulse to try to bargain down too high prices.)

Racial segregation probably does the American people more harm than any other issue abroad. The front page of a large Chinese newspaper in Singapore showed a picture of a nine-year-old boy being initiated into a United States Ku Klux Klan chapter. The picture and its caption implied membership of all ages in such organizations is common in the South. Publicity such as this does nothing toward building international relations in a land where all people have dark skins.

These people who condemn American race prejudice forget their own strong feelings against the Chinese. Chinese are resented throughout Southeast Asia because of the feeling that they have taken over business and government which does not rightly belong to them.

The shadow of communism and Communists was everywhere we turned. But it has not invaded Thailand. This little nation has managed to stay neutral and detached from every great corrupting influence except that in her own government. But the countries surrounding Thailand are Communist dominated. The same political ring has controlled Thai government for 13 years.

In Japan we are told communism is the idealistic variety appealing only to the intelligentsia. Communist activity is concentrated in intellectual centers.

Bali was a primitive and peaceful paradise. Rice paddies there were marvelous engineering feats created with primitive wooden tools. More than 2,000 years were

required to construct these beautiful terraces of rice. There is no electricity or running water. Families bathe together in clear mountain streams. Beauty and religion are closely combined.

In Balinese simplicity there is no need and no place for communism. Not so in the rest of Indonesia. A hotel clerk in Djakarta, Indonesian capital, told me two Russians had stayed in the hotel the night before. He said communism is accepted and taken for granted in Indonesia.

In Singapore a reliable source said the Red Chinese bank does more business than any of the other large Singapore banks.

Communists are ready to move into Malaya when the British leave.

These are countries where communism is a real menace. The Communists are actual and active. They stage bandit raids. They sabotage rubber plantations and attack tin mining operations. We were shown trees the Communists had slashed so they could never again be tapped for rubber. We visited a tin mine surrounded by bald hills where the communist guerillas are heard at "target practice" every night.

The Communists, we are told, have a strong selling point in Red China. Though they have not lived up to their promises there, they have improved living conditions. The Americans have not been able to give any such aid. In some areas of Southeast Asia, Chinese communism is held above American democracy.

But everywhere we went we found the people were friendly toward us and toward America.

We had no friends to wave goodby in San Francisco. Our families had been left in Oklahoma. But at every other port there was someone to greet us cheerfully and to wave a sad goodby.

Four of us nearly stayed in Yokohama. Our bribed taxi driver brought us to the pier just as the last gang plank was being removed. We climbed onto the runway and found ourselves swinging in mid air. Two thousand people waiting to wave "sayonara" to friends and relatives aboard the President Cleveland cheered and applauded as the lowering gangplank was swung back into place and the four of us clambered aboard the Cleveland. Two thousand friends were glad we "made it."