

Hal Muldrow Agency

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Insurance of all Kinds

Bonds

117 E. Comanche

Norman

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Sooner Scene

By R. BOYD GUNNING

NEVER BEFORE HAVE so many people been interested in education. The kind of education our young people shall have has become the subject of national debate, a question inseparably connected with the quality and quantity of the college program.

The Russian sputniks brought educational problems of long standing into sharp focus. College alumni should be best qualified to join with the professional educators in finding the right answers to these problems. You are going to have a voice in reaching this decision. *The college graduate has never before occupied a position of such influence and responsibility.*

Belief in college alumni caused several alumni directors to produce the story of higher education which you will find in this issue. It was a labor of love, two years in the making, representing thousands of miles of travel, countless hours of writing and rewriting, infinite patience of the editors, and confidence of the many schools, who together ordered 1,350,000 copies of the story before it was written.

On the editorial board were the most famous names in alumni journalism. The work contributed by each member of the group is an interesting story in itself. I hope it is excusable to merely say here that we are especially proud of the prominent role played by David Burr in the creation of the story and in the fact that the University of Oklahoma was invited to be a partner in this enterprise.

I hope you will take the time to read this telling account of higher education in the United States. It is a story of strength and diversity, of problems and opportunities. No person can make an intelligent appraisal of the system without knowing essential facts about it. Education, particularly higher education, is no longer taken for granted. The ivy has been stripped from the college towers. College teachers themselves have had as much to do with the critical look at college objectives as has any other group. Higher education is a changing dynamic element of our society. But what will these changes bring?

Nothing appeals to Americans like success. That is why some are advocating we imitate Russian education, a plan that would surely lead to disaster. Marion B. Folsom, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, has warned, "We in America will

stick firmly to the central objective of our society—the fullest development of each individual as a free human spirit, and as a servant of the state.

“We must have not only scientists and technicians, but broadly educated scientists and technicians, even to do their jobs well, and we must have broadly educated people in all fields.”

Education that explores the frontiers of knowledge, like liberty, must be won by each succeeding generation.

How these problems will be solved at the University of Oklahoma does not depend upon an international conference, the United Nations or even the United States Congress. The fate of this institution depends primarily upon the people of Oklahoma, the influence exerted by the alumni and others who understand the problems facing the University, and ultimately, the state legislature, where the all-important question of adequate financing must be answered.

We have now reached a point where we should realize that even the best all-out effort for education may not be good enough.

In the story which follows there are many bright spots. American higher education has many unique characteristics which give it strength and vigor. It has written a thrilling story of achievement into the history of the twentieth century. The future, however, will depend in no small measure upon the willingness of college alumni to be informed witnesses for the institutions they represent.

Where will the alumni of O. U. stand on the issue? Where will you stand? Your active assistance in the immediate future will strengthen the economic and cultural position of Oklahoma. It will enhance the value of a degree from your school. It will enable the University to take advantage of its opportunities as well as to discharge its obligations.

Your support can lead to an ability to pay competitive salaries for outstanding teachers, the most serious single problem facing the University today. A list of scholars who have left Oklahoma for better pay reads like a “Who’s Who” in education.

Following this must come modern equipment for teaching, research and experimentation. Our rapidly changing technology requires up-to-date equipment. Although the University already has one of the great libraries of the Southwest, this is the academic heart of the institution and must have money for annual acquisitions.

Buildings for classrooms and laboratories may very well become the limiting factor on enrollment unless something is done within the next few years.

We are concerned with the quality, the

quantity and the kind of education that will be offered by the University of Oklahoma in the next ten or twenty years. Will the University be able to accept those who are qualified seeking admission? Will it be able to challenge the brightest students to maximum performance?

Will it prepare all graduates to assume the role of a responsible citizenship in a free society?

I believe the answer to these questions rests more and more with the college alumni. They will be interested. They will meet their responsibilities.

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