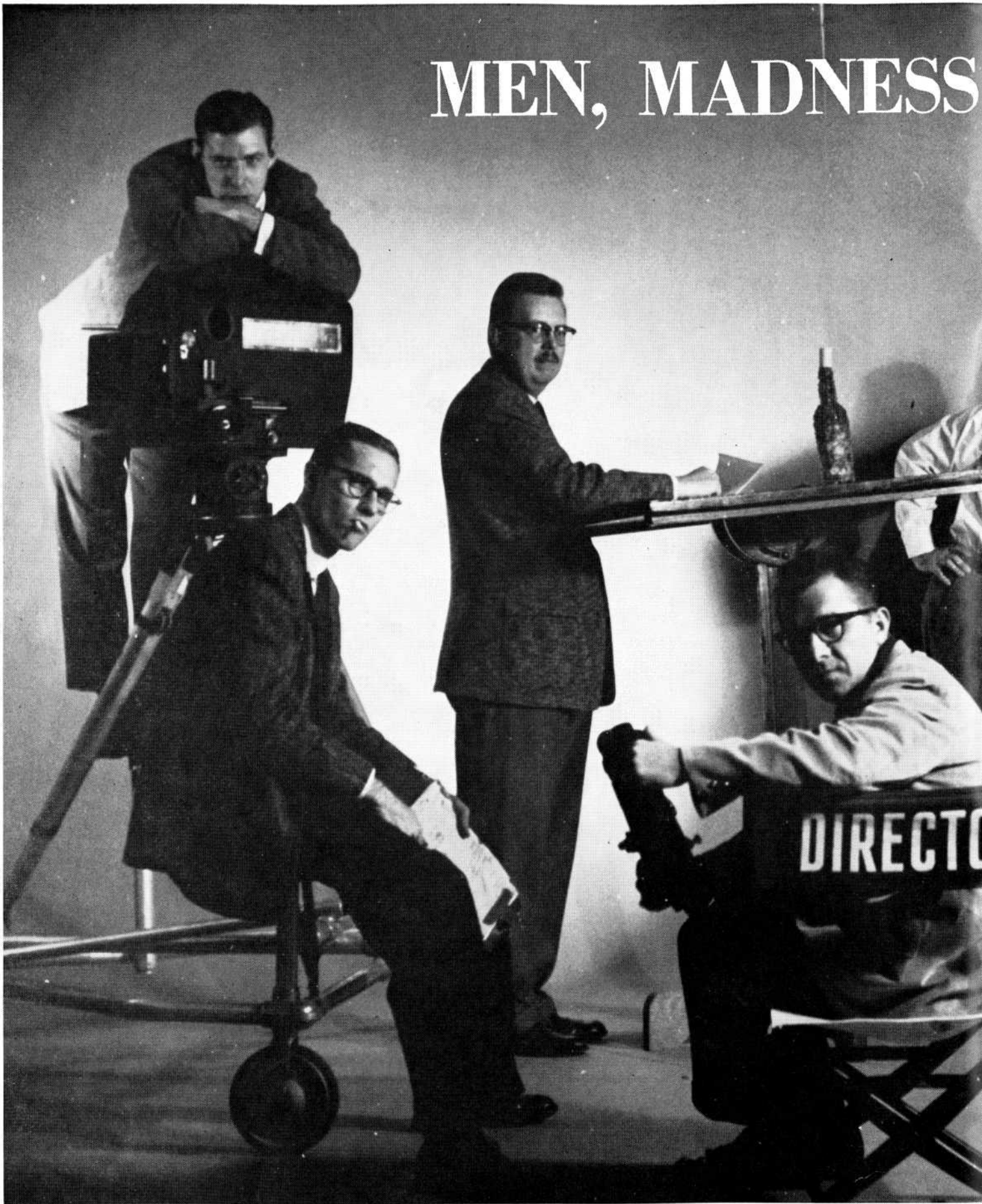


MEN, MADNESS



This impatient crew—impatient to be getting back to their esoteric business of making movies for O.U.'s Extension Division—consists of (left to right) cameraman Ed Turner; script writ-

... AND

MOVIEMAKING

OR . . .

HOW TO WIN FAME AND FORTUNE AND LOTS OF LAUGHS AND AT THE SAME TIME KEEP YOUR HEAD WHILE YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE IS GOING NUTS SHOOTING FLICKS AND POSING BATHING BEAUTIES, SENATORS, AND DOGS.

By

Dwight V. Swain, '54ma

NED HOCKMAN (he's the director of motion pictures for the University) tells me this should be a very serious-minded piece, all about the higher values of educational film production and their integration into O.U.'s expanding program of service.

Somehow, though, the words don't quite seem to fit that way. Maybe it's because—after nearly ten years of writing scripts for Ned and the boys to produce—I have so many other, more intriguing fragments to remember.

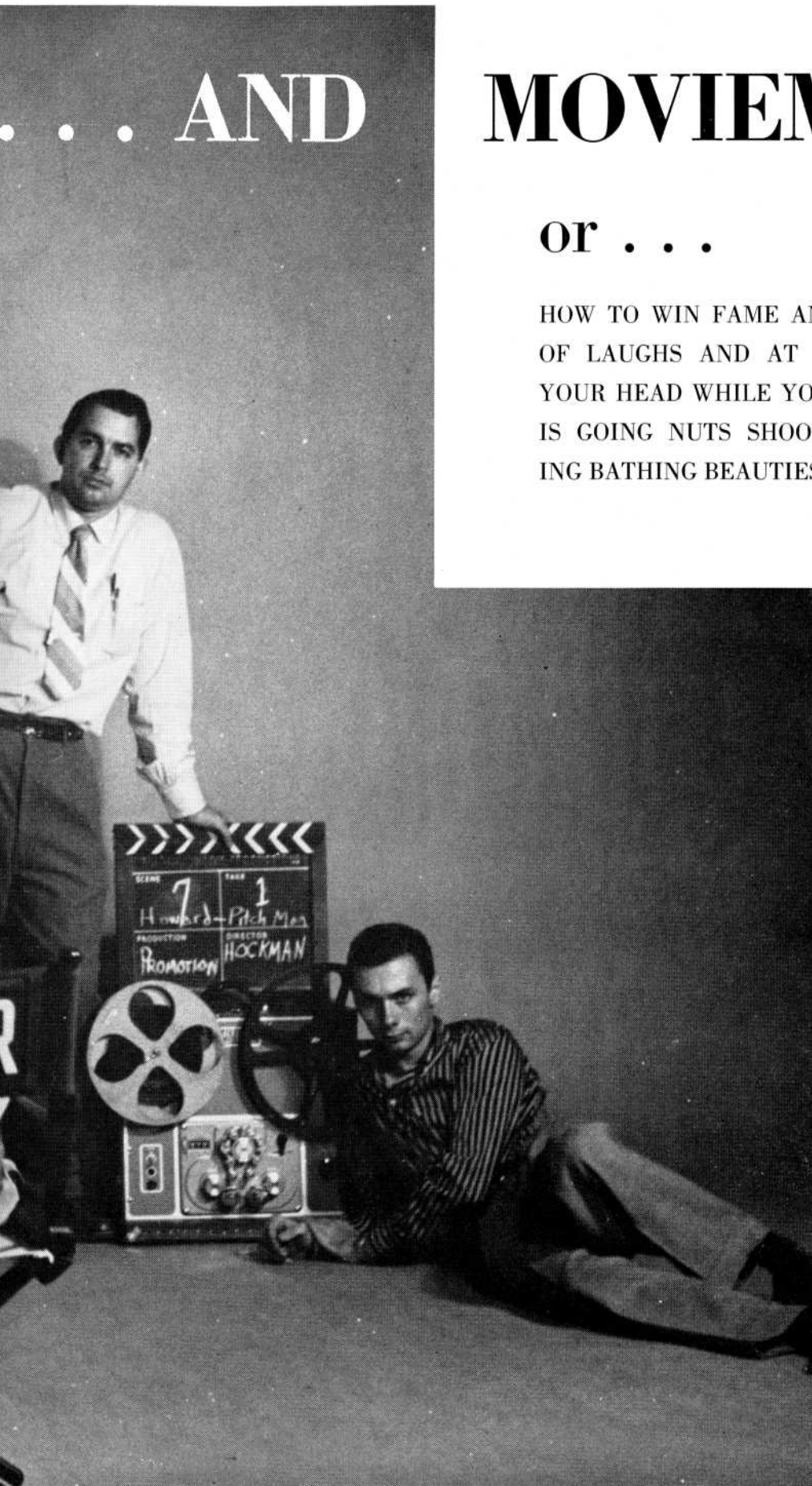
Like the lady whose husband was being featured in one of our pictures. She just couldn't let the director do the directing. Every time the sound would come up and the cameras start to roll, she'd suddenly scurry out onto the set to give Hubby her own private decalogue of instructions.

It was quite annoying. Might still be going on, too, except that somehow the director found out that cigar smoke made the lady sick. —First crew I ever saw with *everybody* smoking big black cigars.

We had particularly high hopes for another picture. That is, we did till the manager of the sponsoring organization turned up with a batch of home movies of the group's various officials and their families. Naturally, he wouldn't take no for an answer when it came to his demand that we incorporate the footage.

Oh, well, who wants to win awards anyhow?

There was the time we made a film on Central State Hospital, an institution for the mentally and emotionally disturbed. The law wouldn't let us use patients as ac-



ers Hugh Mix and Dwight Swain; director Ned Hockman; and floormen Milt Roberts and Jeff Griffin. The bottle and candle are strictly for illumination — and not for inspiration.

— MOVIES FROM O.U. —



SPORTS FOR THE FAMILY



ULCERS AT WORK



TALKING HANDS



THE SAXOPHONE

tors if they could be identified in the pictures, so we had to round up non-patients to play such roles.

By swearing that no one could possibly recognize her through the makeup, I talked my wife into doing one of these bits. So of course, for the next five years, everyone she met said, "Oh, yes, Mrs. Swain; I saw you in—well, in that film. And I—I do so hope you're feeling better, now that you've been released!"

Have you ever wondered what happens when an actor breaks a leg in the middle of a production? I can tell you: You wait six weeks till the leg's healed so you can finish the picture.

Only by that time the foliage has changed completely, so you have to put off the whole business till the next year (much to the delight of the sponsor, of course), by which time the two youngsters in the film have grown so much you've no choice but to re-shoot all the footage that includes them, with appropriate warpings of the budget.

There was the new hand who came down with buck fever in the middle of shooting a sequence at the state legislature. And well, after all, there stood Senator Robert S. Kerr and thirty or forty legislators beginning to grumble, and that's how I became a working motion picture director for all of a most uncomfortable half hour.

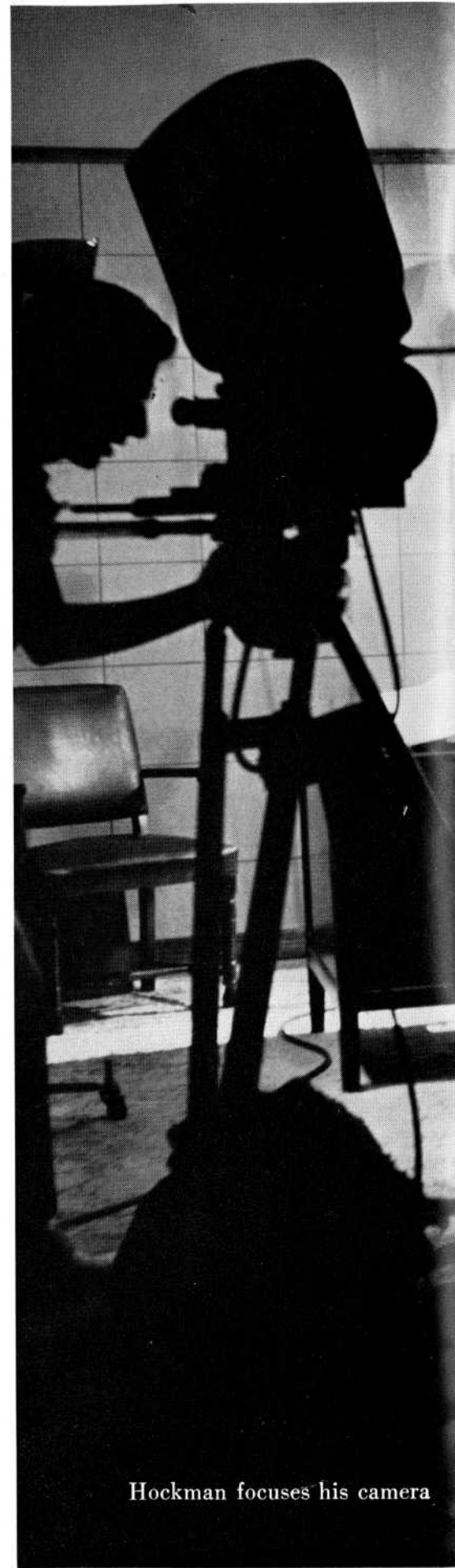
I never thought there was anything very disturbing about coffins till I wrote one into a picture. But it took the comments of just one preview audience to take it out again.

Sponsors also can get pretty upset over inclusion of bathing beauties, card-playing, smoking in the vicinity of oil rigs, sour-faced credit managers, reference to medical care as expensive, mention of a particular breed of cattle as bad-tempered, and 999 other subjects. Whatever it is, there'll be a sponsor somewhere who won't stand for it.

The worst I really can say, though, is that the years have been enlightening. Especially if you find it fascinating in a numb sort of way to work with what may conservatively be termed individualists.

Which perhaps is why one former O.U. cameraman now is an independent producer in Hollywood. And another has his own outfit in Pittsburgh. And a third has become quite a big gun in the federal government's Civil Defense film program.

(If from the above you get the impression that there's a regrettably heavy turnover in the organization, incidentally, you're quite right. Thanks to its high standards and low pay scale, the film unit has gained a national reputation as a fine



Hockman focuses his camera

place for young graduates in cinematography to gain the experience they need to round out their educations.)

Of course, Ned puts all the hired help in the shade, for in addition to being a self-proclaimed cinematic genius, he's pure and simple crazy. Why else would a man be found stretched out flat on his back on the floor of his editing room at too many three o'clocks in the morning, trying to twist the kinks out of his shoulder muscles so that he can go on winding film back and forth for another four or five hours?

For that matter, can you think of any sane reason anyone would stay in a job that pays him less than half what he's been offered by a variety of somewheres? Personally, I reject as rationalization all his wild claims that he stays here just because he calculates to make the University the finest educational film production center in the world. Let's face it, Ned loves it here.

Ned also is one of those people who volunteer for things, which probably explains why they gave him a battlefield commission in the Air Force while he was serving in Upper Burma with the Tenth Combat Camera Unit during World War II. Then, having acquired a taste for adversity, he returned here and talked the University into entering the film production business.

Outside organizations such as the American Petroleum Institute, the Oklahoma Department of Health and the National Retail Credit Association sponsor and pay for most of the films produced. So, the University put Ned's menage in the Extension Division. Boyd Gunning (then director of Extension) and later Thurman White, the present dean, apparently found the boy good for laughs upon occasion, for they gave him a good deal of backing.

Finally the unit accumulated most of the equipment it needed. New people were added, too—the current crop includes Eddie Turner, Milt Roberts and Jeff Griffin. Hugh Mix and I and a few others write scripts as needed. And Loren Brown, coordinating director of general services for Extension, rides herd on the finances.

Even I have to admit it's a strange aggregation; and I'm probably less prejudiced than most. But somehow, films do get made—some of them pretty good films, too . . . public service films, films that inform and teach, films that need making even though the chances that they'll ever turn a profit seem far too thin for any commercial producer to gamble on them.

These films—a surprising number of people say nice things about them. Like the letter from a mental health society that reported, "Last year we showed *Retire to Life*

a total of 75 times and to an audience of 25,000. Words are inadequate to tell you how very much we have enjoyed showing this film."

Or the one from the training director of a major brewing company: "Last week we completed showing *Anger at Work* to 350 supervisors at our Milwaukee plant. The reaction was exceptional. In the next few weeks it will be shown to the supervisors at our Brooklyn and Los Angeles plants."

And this, from a credit bureau manager: "You'll be pleased to know that *The Good Things of Life—On Credit* was shown here on TV . . . and to an over-all audience of 115,000."

Come to think about it, maybe Ned was right about this approach business in the first place. Maybe I *should* be serious-minded, and talk about higher values and service and program integration.

Because the University *has* recognized the tremendous educational potential of film as a medium; and thanks to such, it is extending O.U.'s sphere of service far beyond the confines of the campus.

Those letters of praise and appreciation—from across the nation and even overseas—they came addressed to the University of Oklahoma.

It's quite a record for any organization to rack up, in one short decade.

I wonder what the next ten years will bring . . .

HOCKMAN WRITES ABOUT SWAIN

Those of us who produce, direct, and shoot motion pictures tolerate writers only because they are a necessary evil. They're always fighting progress. Like who ever heard of a movie starting out and ending with the same script!

But Swain I like. He always agrees with the rewrites I suggest (agrees like a potato exploding in an oven!). Swain is The Greatest. He's written by far the greatest number of our 40 or so films, and someday he'll write us an Academy Award winner.

These sentiments I keep secret from Swain. You never want to compliment a writer. They get bad ideas: like using the same script all the way through a movie!

... Ned Hockman

— MOVIES FROM O.U. —



ANGER AT WORK



REPORT ON TOMORROW



THE HUGO STORY



WAR DANCE