

Joseph A. Brandt, '21journ

The Founding Man

By Carolyn G. Hart, '58journ

IF a search were begun for the O.U. graduate who has left the greatest imprint on his alma mater, one man's name would surely be on everyone's list. The man is Joseph August Brandt, '21journ.

Joe Brandt, as his classmates and University friends call him, takes his place on such a list for solid reasons.

1. He was the first and only alumnus to serve as president of the University.

2. As president he instituted the first in a series of changes that have resulted in O.U.'s renown as a democratically run institution featuring faculty participation in policy-making.

3. He founded and was first director of the University of Oklahoma Press.

4. He founded and was first editor of the *Sooner Magazine*.

5. He founded the O.U. chapter of Delta Tau Delta, a vigorous social fraternity.

This should be enough for the credit side of anyone's ledger, but with Joe Brandt there is more.

He was a three-year Rhodes scholar, a newspaperman, a publisher, a Fulbright scholar and is now professor of journalism in the graduate department of journalism which he founded at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Brandt was born July 26, 1899, on a farm near Seymour, Ind. His family moved to

Arkansas in 1902 and to Tulsa to settle permanently in 1911. The rangy red-head, even then showing his enthusiasm and ability, was graduated in 1917 from Tulsa High School as valedictorian of his class. He edited the school newspaper, *The Tom-Tom*, then a monthly.

He came to the O.U. campus with \$50 in his pocket and the capacity for hard work, earning his room and board by stoking furnaces and washing dishes.

The promise he showed in high school flowered at O.U. He edited *The Oklahoma Daily* in 1921, was elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa and received a Letzeiser. He belonged to Pe-et, senior men's honor group; Sigma Delta Chi, men's professional journalism fraternity; Blue Pencil literary fraternity, and the Websterian debate society.

Brandt also set up Delta Sigma Delta, the local fraternity which subsequently became Delta Alpha chapter of Delta Tau Delta social fraternity. It was the first western chapter in 30 years to receive unanimous approval from the national headquarters. Joe Brandt served as the group's first president.

Brandt went to England as a Rhodes scholar in the fall of 1921 and attended Lincoln College at Oxford University until the spring of 1924, receiving the bachelor of arts, bachelor of literature and master of arts degrees.

Brandt returned home to work as re-

porter then city editor of the *Ponca City News*. His first taste of practical newspapering had come during his college days. He worked as a reporter on *The Sapulpa Herald* during the summers of 1919 and 1920.

Joining *The Tulsa Tribune* in 1925 as a reporter, Brandt was soon city editor. In the newsroom he met a feature writer-reporter named Sallye Little, a native of Perry and a graduate of DePauw University. They were married in 1927.

Brandt quit *The Tribune* in 1928 to return to Norman and found the O.U. Press, which has brought international acclaim to the University as a publishing center.

He began the Civilization of the American Indian Series, which as a group of books has probably had more impact than any other series of books issued by the Press. During his 10 years as director, 18 books in the series were published. The total is now 55.

He also managed to fit the managing editorship of *Books Abroad*, O.U.'s literary quarterly, into his busy schedule from 1932 to 1938. Brandt is well-versed in German, Spanish, French and English literatures.

Brandt left in 1938 to direct the Princeton University Press but in 1940, after twice turning them down, he answered the call of the O.U. Regents and came back to take over the reins as president.

He became the first alumni to serve as president when he assumed the post Au-



The pipe, the papers, the professor—The remarkable Joe Brandt, '21journ, at U.C.L.A.

gust 1, 1941, at the age of 42. Brandt spent only two years in the president's chair, but in that short time he instituted basic needed changes that have withstood time's test and stand as monuments to his foresight.

His work:

1. The University College.
2. The Research Institute.
3. Reconstitution of the general faculty as an administrative arm of the University, implemented by the creation of the Faculty Senate.
4. Rotating departmental chairmanships.

Before Brandt set up the University College, freshmen entered directly into their major college. Under the University College program, freshmen complete a common curriculum embracing the basics of a liberal arts education before selecting and entering a major field.

Brandt started the college as a two-year program which has since been modified to one, but the function is still as he conceived it.

One of Brandt's greatest contributions was his work in founding the Research Institute. He believed it should become a

million-dollar business—and today it is. The Institute co-ordinates campus research and provides faculty members with a means of finding research support. The Institute will undertake research for local, state and federal governments and for business and industry.

Brandt was all for faculty participation in decision-making, and it was in this area that he made some of his most basic and controversial changes in the University structure.

The Faculty Senate, composed of elected representatives apportioned among segments of the University, took the place of the Administrative Council, composed of college deans, as a body concerned with policy, changes, and improvements.

This was the first time that the general faculty, through its representatives could make its own wishes felt in matters of policy.

Another meaningful and controversial change came when Brandt substituted the department-chairman for the department-head system. This was not just an exercise in semantics. "Heads" had complete, autocratic control of their departments. Their

decisions went unchallenged from below. "Chairmen," on the other hand, are appointed for four-year terms merely to preside over staff meetings.

He also began a policy of appointing deans for five-year terms. Their work was to be surveyed before reappointment would be approved. This policy has been modified, and now deans are appointed by the president with the approval of other deans and administrators and, of course, the Regents. No specific term of office is involved.

Controversy swirled over the campus as these changes went into effect. But today, almost 16 years later, the controversy is forgotten while the accomplishments are remembered.

The democratic procedures for which Brandt fought pitched battles are now taken for granted by a faculty thoroughly pleased to be one of the very few in the United States to have a say-so in the running of its university.

Dr. George L. Cross, Brandt's successor, credits Brandt with the change-over from the autocratic to the democratic. Cross has followed in Brandt's footsteps, expanding

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and enlarging this theme. Under Cross, faculty members participate in working out the budget, making plans for future growth and planning the curriculum.

Cross is quick to give credit, for he believes full credit is Brandt's due.

"Considering the time that he spent here as president," Dr. Cross said, "I firmly believe that no administration has had a greater good impact on the University. Actually, he did a great job."

Finally, although he had returned to O.U. full of hopes and plans, Brandt became discouraged with the reception his ideas received. The crowning blow was a paltry appropriation by the Legislature the spring before he left. He stressed in his resignation that such appropriations made it impossible to provide faculty salaries anywhere near adequate.

Brandt's resignation became effective December 30, 1943, and he returned to the world of publishing as director of the University of Chicago Press. In 1945 he was wooed from Chicago to take over as president of Henry Holt and Co., a publishing firm in New York City.

This venture absorbed his interest until the "founding man" saw a new horizon and went to U.C.L.A. in 1949 to found and head its graduate department of journalism.

Brandt spent a year in Germany in 1955-56 on a Fulbright, doing research on the lack of social sciences in the curriculums of German universities. Since his return, he has been enthusiastic over his research into the influence of community newspapers in the Los Angeles area as compared with the behemoths, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *News* or *Examiner*.

THIS year is the 10th anniversary year of Brandt's founding of the graduate department of journalism at U.C.L.A., and his co-workers, friends and former students planned a surprise testimonial dinner in March. Brandt's sudden illness and emergency abdominal surgery delayed the dinner, but it was held in April as soon as Brandt was recovered.

A representative of each class gave a tribute to Brandt, and the Greater Los Angeles Press Club, where the dinner was held, awarded Brandt its highest honor, an Eight-Ball Award.

The alumni and faculty presented him with a gold wrist watch and letters of tribute from former associates at O.U., Princeton, Chicago and New York. These tributes were gathered in a scrapbook which was given to him.

Brandt fell ill again a week after the dinner. Hepatitis, which had followed the operation, reoccurred. He was convalescing this summer and suffered another relapse. However, he feels certain he will be able to return to his teaching and research duties later this month.

As Brandt looks back now on a long and successful career that has embraced so many aspects of teaching—from the publishing of scholarly works to actual classroom instruction—he finds he has wrested great satisfaction from all his jobs because they have dealt with ideas.

"I tried to put some of the ideas which had been agitating in the minds of the O.U. faculty for years into reality while I was president there," Brandt said. "Long before the advent of Sputnik, I knew there was something wrong with American education, and I had pointed this out in a number of articles in *The Saturday Review* and *Harper's*.

"THE O.U. Press was a fertile field for ideas, many of them new to the world of publishing at that time but now commonplace. In the early days when I founded the Press, it was actually little more than ideas—there was no staff and no special building or equipment. With Betty Kirk, an early author, and Savoie Lottinville ('29ba, now Press director), the Press in those creative early years was an idea factory as it continues to be today."

Brandt's main enthusiasm now, of course, is the journalism department at U.C.L.A.

"The University of California had debated for 15 years whether to introduce journalism and ultimately came to the conclusion that it would be established on the graduate level," Brandt said.

"Clarence Dykstra, who was then provost of the Los Angeles campus, had always been a firm believer in a solid four-year liberal arts approach before entering professional work. This was a program I had tried to introduce when I was president at O.U., so when he invited me to come here to establish a graduate professional department for journalism, I looked upon it as an opportunity.

"It was an opportunity again to work with ideas. I look upon journalism as a discipline rather than a technique or a means to an end. I consider essential equal parts of history, as a humanity, and sociology.

"Our basic seminar is a course called 'Ideas that Changed History.' This is concerned with the impact of ideas on man's evolution and consists of reading original documents and reporting on them as well

as analyzing them. Ideas make news, and news makes history.

"OTHER seminars introduced are 'Ethics' and 'Reporter and Society,' and we are adding others as we develop the program. The news part of our program is modeled very much on the Columbia University plan, and curiously enough in this past year Columbia has borrowed our 'Ideas' approach and has introduced a similar course there.

"It was natural for me to seize this final opportunity for adventure into the world of ideas by combining liberal arts with true professional training for future journalists.

"Communication is the greatest single need of the world today and never has there been a time in history when the role of the reporter as communicator for preserving civilization has been as important as it is today.

"We once thought we were training reporters adequately when we taught them how to write a story, how to write a headline for it, and where to place it in the paper. When F.D.R. became president reporters found they suddenly knew nothing about economics—they knew 'how to' but they did not know 'content.'

"And of course now we are confronted with a whole series of intellectual concepts on which our survival depends without enough communicators to keep abreast. This is the challenge for the journalistic educator. At U.C.L.A. we have made a slight dent in tackling this problem, which is one of the most vital facing any single discipline in the changing university."

Brandt and his wife make their home at 1322 Warner Avenue in Los Angeles. Their journalistic bent has been transferred to one member of their family and indirectly to another.

Their son Ted, 29, who was born in Norman, is an account manager with the advertising firm of Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn, Inc., in Los Angeles. A business graduate of U.C.L.A., he went on to complete the graduate journalism program. Ted is a purple heart veteran of the Heartbreak Ridge action in Korea.

Brenda, 30, another Norman native, is now Mrs. Peter B. Mann. Both she and her husband are graduates of U.C.L.A. Mann is on the women's desk at the *Los Angeles Examiner*. They have a 15-month-old son, Kevin.

The third of the Brandt children, Derek, 16, is a junior in U.C.L.A.'s University High School, and he alone shows little interest in the publications field. Derek is interested in the sciences and tentatively plans a career as a biologist.