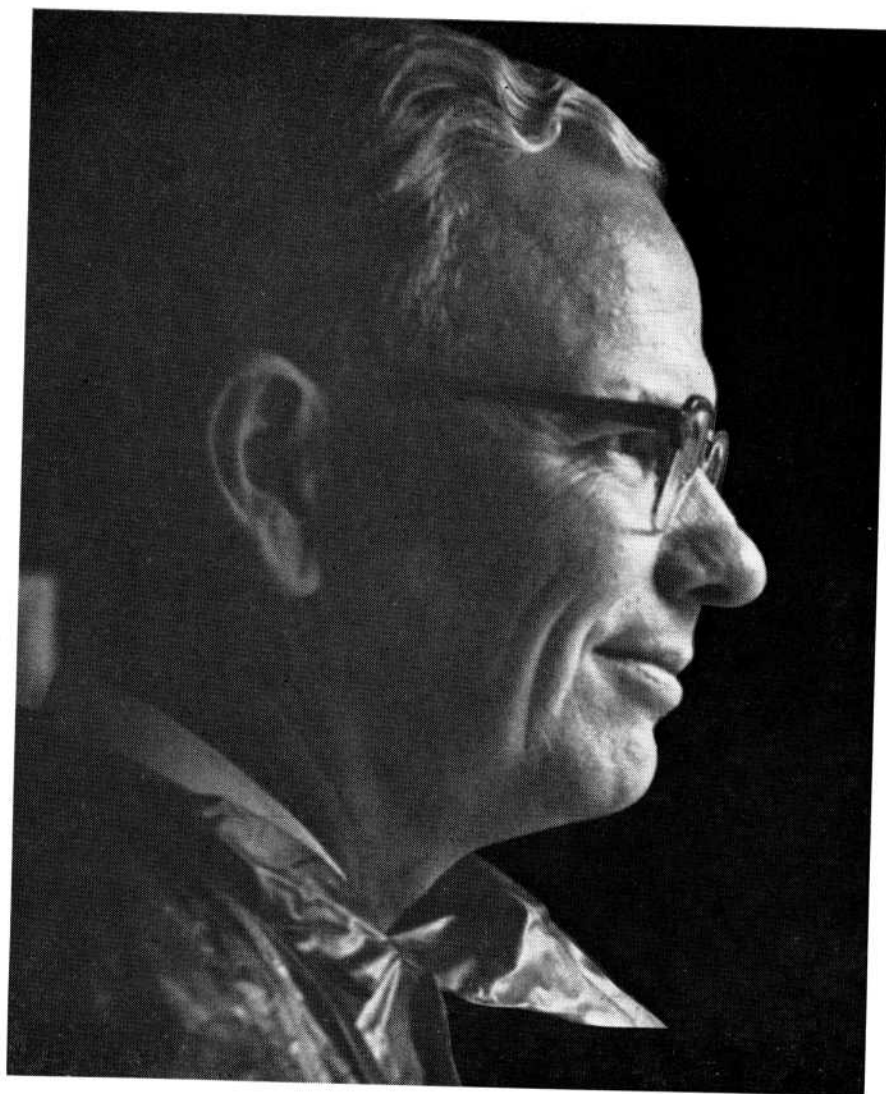


The University's Loss

ROSCOE CATE

Shortly before his death, Roscoe Cate, '26ba, O.U. vice president for business and finance, became the unanimous choice of the selection committee to receive the Distinguished Service Citation at commencement, 1960. The University can bestow no higher honor; no recipient could have been found who qualified for the University's gratitude as did Roscoe Cate. His vision, his planning, his devotion to the institution he served gives him a unique place among the holders of the Citation.



NEW decade, with all its promise of growth and improvement, began in sorrow at the University of Oklahoma. On May 19, 1960, death came to Roscoe Cate, vice president for business and finance.

Cate, a man without pretension or a sense of self-importance, was a very important man indeed to the University. His vision and spirit which directed the financing of a large portion of the present campus. His financial acumen charted the path of the University when money was scarce and financing insufficient. The far-reaching effects of his work for the University cannot be measured as easily as a column of figures. Neither can his grasp of the University aims, ideals and difficulties be described with mathematical certainty. Roscoe Cate gave far more to the University than his financial ability. One phrase, perhaps, can best express his contribution—he was a dedicated man.

University President Dr. George L. Cross said this of Roscoe Cate:

"I have worked with Mr. Cate during most of the years that I have been president of the University of Oklahoma. He was one of the most loyal and efficient servants the institution has had. His financial genius was largely responsible for the expansion of the physical plant during the past 15 years (since Cate's death, the Women's Quadrangle, opened in 1949, has been renamed the Cate Center for Women in his honor), and his effective budgeting enabled us to provide a much better academic program than would have been possible without him.

"I remember many occasions in the past when he received offers of positions in business and industry. After the careful thought which characterized all of his deliberations, he would decide that he preferred to use whatever talents he possessed in the service of young people rather than in the search for profit. These decisions were fortunate for the University of Oklahoma and for me.

"Mr. Cate was one of the finest men I have ever known. Apart from his great financial and professional competence, he was a kindly, sympathetic and completely ethical gentleman. I mourn his loss, not only as a colleague, but as one of the best personal friends I have had."

A man with a wide range of interests and abilities, Roscoe Cate was attracted by the challenges offered in a variety of careers—engineering, law, newspapering. That he spent the most productive years of his life managing the finances of O.U. was the University's good fortune. He arrived at this all-important post by a circuitous route.

Cate was born January 16, 1906, in McAlester, Indian Territory. He spent his childhood and formative years in Muskogee, where he was graduated from high school in 1922. His boyhood ambition was to become an electrical engineer—at least until one of his high school teachers made the off-hand suggestion that he work on the school paper. Visions of slide rules were swamped by printer's ink.

However, after a year at Muskogee Junior College, young Cate came to O.U. determined to study law, but found he could not turn his back on the world of newspapers. In his junior year he became managing editor of the *Oklahoma Daily*. Campaigning for the editorship, then won by triumph in a student election, he made an election promise which he kept. He promised to work toward a merit system for selection of editors, replacing the elective system. He was the last elected editor of the *Daily*.

Receiving his BA in 1926, Cate plunged right into the newspaper business. After a short stint on *The Norman Transcript*, he went home to Muskogee where he was a reporter on *The Times Democrat*. He moved over to the Muskogee morning paper, *The Daily Phoenix*, as city editor.

In 1927, he worked as a reporter and deskman on *The Ponca City News* and then went to *The Daily Oklahoman* as assistant city editor and make-up editor. In 1929, Cate returned to Norman as city editor of *The Transcript*.

Cate and Frances Mitchell, '30ba, were married in 1934. The Cates had three sons, Thomas, '59bs, Lee and John.

In 1936, Cate was enticed from *The Transcript* by the possibilities he foresaw in working on the *Sooner Magazine*. Even in his first articles as new *Sooner* editor, his interest in finance and concern for University needs were apparent. Cate became acting executive secretary of the Alumni Association and acting manager of the Oklahoma Memorial Union in 1942, filling in for the late Ted M. Beard, '21ba, who took a leave of absence to serve in the Army Air Force during World War II. Cate continued to serve as editor and business manager of the *Sooner*.

Cate's administrative ability caught the eye of University President Cross, who named him financial assistant to the President on July 1, 1944. Cate resigned his post as acting executive secretary to turn his energies full-time to University finances. His successes resulted in his appointment in October, 1947, as financial vice president. His duties were increased in 1950 when he became University vice president and business manager, a post which increased in responsibility as O.U. continued its expansion in the face of growing enrolments.

Every day Cate faced the problems involved in carrying on the varied business activities of a multi-million dollar institution. He directed the financing of all auxiliary enterprises, such as student housing; represented the University in its financial relations with the state and federal governments; negotiated contracts; planned building bond issues, and was responsible to the President in such areas as budget control, purchasing and preparation of financial data on future development of the University. He was ex officio chairman of the Budget Council, which makes detailed recommendations to the President for each annual budget.

Under his wing was the financial direction of the University's three campuses, the Main and North Campuses in Norman, and the School of Medicine Campus in Oklahoma City. On its various campuses the University operates many enterprises, including an airport and flight school, permanent housing units, a self-service laundry, an infirmary and two hospitals, a commissary charged with buying food in mass quantities, a self-supporting publishing house, two contract post offices, three swimming pools and numerous other smaller enterprises. All these were his to plan for financially.

Last summer, following his initial illness, Cate was relieved of part of the demands of his job. However, he continued to administer most of the University's financial affairs and remained on duty at his office until early December.

The loss of Roscoe Cate to the University is a great one, but what he has given to the University can never be taken away. The impression he made upon others through his dedication and service is not to be measured in dollars and bricks, but in the impact of spirit upon spirit.