

# Sooner Scene

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Executive Secretary

DESCRIBING college students by generalizing about them is a great temptation. The labels attached from time to time by "off-beat" pranks or springtime antics are usually amusing, often generally accepted, and provide practically no information at all about the kind of people college students are. The "bed-pushers" of this spring remind us of other springs when we read about "telephone-booth-packers," "panty-raiders," "gold-fish-swallowers," or even that ancient image of grandpa in his raccoon coat, driving a Stutz Bearcat and chasing a flapper.

This *Sooner Magazine* contains another issue of the "Moonshooter," an annual feature prepared by a national group of alumni editors. The material is devoted to a look at college students. I am especially impressed by the insight shown by our own alumni who have stated their views on college students of today in this issue, and I hope you, as a reader, will share my enthusiasm for the good taste demonstrated by *Sooner* editor Carol Robinson in bringing these topics of national concern home to Oklahoma college students without attempting to label them. One professor has suggested that you can understand college students best by getting to know them as individuals, each with different capabilities, problems and peculiarities. All parents of large families know this, and teachers and student counselors soon develop this approach if they are to be very effective in their work.

Here are two or three examples that come to mind which may dispel some of the doubts you have heard expressed about the college students of today. There are 15 students on the campus who were chosen three years ago as freshmen for a special non-credit course to learn the language and techniques of high-speed digital computers. These students are remarkable people. They have excelled academically. They have written a backlog of basic programs for the new University high-speed computer, one of the most advanced digital computers in existence. They would be experts in any company. Although some of these students have had small part-time jobs, none

has "worked his way through school," yet any one of them could get a job today at a salary higher than a full professor's pay at O.U.

Here is another, one of the most outstanding students in the new land management curriculum in the College of Business Administration is a boy who is married, has two children and is entirely self-supporting. He and his family live in a trailer parked near Norman. They are out of debt, and he is making normal progress toward graduation while staying in the top five per cent of his class. His job for several years has been working full-time on the swing shift of various drilling rigs in the Norman area. This boy would undoubtedly be better advised to borrow some of the money that is available to protect his health, and he could pay it back after he has graduated—but he meets his problems in his own way and makes his own decisions according to his own lights. There is every reason to believe that he is headed for a successful career as a landman in the oil business.

Another boy, an orphan who lived with the superintendent of schools of a small Oklahoma community, came to the University to work his way through the College of Engineering. As soon as he had established himself as a good student and knew that his student job would last throughout his years of college, he brought his high school sweetheart to the campus, got her a full-time job so they could be married, and together they finished out his college career. They now have a family of four children, and he is one of the most successful independent oil men in northern Texas.

The stories of sacrifice and hard work are legend on any college campus. There are as many examples of this today as during any other period.

Take a few minutes to read about college students as seen by some of the people who understand them best. I believe it will convince you that students are going to do things in their own way, solve their own problems and make their own mistakes, and finally, that many are competent, dedicated people. At that point, you too will form your own generalizations.

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