

A New Day for Alumni

PERHAPS we have been underestimating our alumni. During their student days, we took great pride in "opening new doors" for them, in "broadening their intellectual horizons," in "developing their thirsts for knowledge." And we marched the graduates across the platform at commencement after commencement with the prayerful wish that we were unleashing some new and fertile minds on society. In short, we looked upon them as creatures a cut above the ordinary because they came out labeled "College Graduate." But appended to the college graduate label was another; it read "Alumnus" and was too often misread. Alumni, we were told, are interested in football, Dallas weekend, appearing prosperous, other alumni, wearing red neckties, getting their children into the right Greek group, expressing unsolicited opinions. And colleges, for the most part, treated them accordingly. Then someone somewhere remembered that alumni are also college graduates—and the alumni programs have not been the same since.

The latest evidence of this expanded view of alumni at the University of Oklahoma was the first Alumni Institute, a featured attraction of the annual spring commencement weekend. The Institute was a one-day study session operating on the premise that the thoughtful college graduate wants more than a gathering of good fellows when he returns to his alma mater. The success of the Institute proved that he can have both. It also proved that not only do alumni look and act like college graduates, but they think like college graduates as well.

The 150 alumni who registered for the Institute at the new Cen-

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Businessman Carl Reistle voices his opinions in a Common Market session.

Africa and the Common Market provided a framework for the day's discussions

ter for Continuing Education were given the choice of two study topics for the Saturday sessions. One group spent the day considering the intricate problems facing The Emerging Nations of Africa with the help of a journalist, three political scientists and an economist. The second group listened, questioned and debated the subject of The United States and European Common Market. In addition to several economists and a geographer, this group enlisted the expert aid of business leaders and a representative of the British Information Agency.

If the African panel had a star, he was Clarke Thomas, editorial writer for *The Daily Oklahoman* and the *Oklahoma City Times*, who appeared wearing a native costume from Sierra Leone, his recently revisited boyhood home. The University faculty provided the balance of the panel with the government department contributing Dr. Oliver E. Benson, '32ba, '33ma, Dr. Rufus G. Hall and Richard D. Baker,

joined by Dr. Nelson W. Peach, professor of economics.

Two businessmen with widely differing views, Carl Reistle, '22eng, president of Humble Oil and Refining Company, and Jack Abernathy, '33eng, president of Big Chief Drilling Company, appeared on the Common Market panel with academic specialists Dr. Jim E. Reece, David Ross Boyd professor of economics; Dr. Paul D. Dickens, visiting professor of economics; Dr. James E. Hibdon, '48ba, '49ma, associate professor of economics; Dr. Alexander J. Kondanassis, chairman of the department of economics, and Dr. Ralph Olson, chairman of the department of geography. Supplying a completely different view of the issue was Michael Newton, director of the Kansas City branch of the British Information Agency.

Dr. J. Clayton Feaver, Kingfisher College professor of the philosophy of religion and ethics, was chairman of the faculty committee for the Institute. Mrs. J. A.



Clarke Thomas added a dash of color to the African panel with his Sierra Leone costume.

Maurer, '52ba, Duncan, was chairman of the alumni planning committee with Mrs. C. R. Rountree, '23ba, Oklahoma City, secretary; Wallace C. Kidd, '37journ, Anadarko; Mrs. John Love, '52ba, Shawnee; Donald Barnes, '49Law, Okmulgee, and Fred R. Harris, '52ba, '54Law, Lawton.

Most of the Institute enrollees had received study materials on the topics before they arrived in Norman; many had taken full advantage of the head start. They spent a busy day gathering information, yet when the day was over they had come up with no simple solutions to the problems. The future of the Common Market was still a matter for the government to settle, and the Africans were still in a turmoil. But at least a single group of Oklahoma alumni had gained a new understanding; it would be difficult for them to read the newspaper accounts with the same detachment again. Most of them felt it had been a day well spent. (See *Conversation Piece*, page 15.)



A panel of specialists provides some background information on The Emerging Nations of Africa.

Roll Call of alumni newsmakers



"Hello, Larry. You know everyone, I suppose?"

Drawing by Cobean, © 1949 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

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THE CARTOONS OF COBEAN—Each month *Sooner Magazine* brings you another of the classic cartoons of the late Sam Cobean, '37, one of the most famous cartoonists of his time. The originals of his published and unpublished work are in the Cobean Collection in the O.U. Library.

Conversation Piece

The first Alumni Institute was something new in alumni programs for the University of Oklahoma. The response during the sessions was gratifying, but we waited a few weeks before asking five of the participants whether they felt the Institute had benefited them. The alumni were chosen at random from the registration list; their comments, taken from taped telephone interviews, appear on the following pages of the Roll Call section.