



Creative work of Edith Mahier has made the fashion arts a fixture at O.U.

Why, It Seems closing their books on careers, four professors

THE final days of classroom lectures and coffee table anecdotes have ended . . . Stacks and stacks of office gear are hurriedly packed away and moved out . . . Friends and associates extend more congratulations for services rendered and best wishes for the years ahead . . . Suddenly, the faces that have been familiar to Sooner students for decades disappear from the daily campus scene.

So it is with a quartet of retiring professors who leave behind them a batch of memories accumulated over a total of more than a century and a half of O.U. teaching.

The four are Miss Edith Mahier, professor of design in the fashion arts; Dr. Bruce Houston, professor of chemistry; Harry E. Smith, assistant professor of English, and Miss Rose K. Leske, associate professor of office administration.

For Miss Mahier, retirement just means a change of scene and no slackening of activities. In her 46 years at O.U., the ageless "Eli" Mahier has become almost a campus legend.

Shadowbox, Indian fashion designs and mural art are only a few of the phases of her many enterprises. After earning a bachelor of design degree from Sophie Newcomb College of Tulane University, New Orleans, the native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, joined the O.U. faculty in 1917

as an art instructor at the salary of \$80 a month.

Before coming to Oklahoma, Miss Mahier's mother, while helping her daughter pack, asked, "Do you want me to put the army rifle in your trunk?" "No," was the reply. "I'd rather make friends with the Indians." This she did by becoming the teacher of the now famous Kiowa Indian artists who brought fame to the state through their paintings of native subjects, and who developed murals for public buildings in Washington, D.C.

While studying in Europe in 1925, Miss Mahier was invited to exhibit paintings in Paris, France, and she was the first American and first woman to study fresco painting in the Royal School of Art in Florence.

Later, it was her encouragement and guidance that brought about the introduction in the United States of the Indian motif to the world of fashion. Collected documents, prepared by Miss Mahier and her sister, Mrs. James M. Brandon, were taken to H. Stanley Marcus of Nieman-Marcus, and from this research came the first showing in America of Indian-inspired fashions. They were later featured in Vogue magazine.

This is what led Miss Mahier into the fashion world and the inspiration toward student designers and production of cos-

tumes to be modeled by Indians. In 1941, with Miss Mahier as advisor, the fashion arts became a full curriculum in the art school. Eight years later, the curriculum—and Miss Mahier—transferred to the school of home economics.

She became the founder and faculty sponsor of Shadowbox, a small frame building in the heart of the main campus. This beehive-type laboratory allows students interested in fashion and merchandising to develop their creative abilities. Manufacturers from all over the nation have been attracted to Shadowbox, and it, in turn, has produced its own scattering of successful designers throughout the country.

Despite her many varied interests, including membership in several civic and professional societies, Mrs. Mahier still finds time each summer to plan and conduct fashion shows at Nakanawa Camp for girls near Mayland, Tennessee, the highest point in the Cumberland Mountains. In addition to organizing an art department at the camp, she has written, cast, costumed and directed many pageants, some of which have been made into movies.

"This fashion world is big business, our third largest industry," Miss Mahier explains. "There are so many different things that touch it. I feel as if I have been in the middle of a whirlpool with all of the

Like Only Yesterday

Long, memory-filled teaching day goodby in June

By CHARLES LONG

activities that have been going on about me—it is just astounding! But, this has been a real challenge to me, and I have received much satisfaction and appreciation in return.”

On her career at O.U., Miss Mahier claims, “It’s the students around here that keep things moving. As a teacher, I believe that I have been just the hub of the wheel, so to speak.”

Dr. G. L. Cross, O.U. president, recently commended Miss Mahier for a “splendid record of service and accomplishment. It is an enviable record of effective teaching and fine relations with your students and your colleagues.”

After another camp session this summer, Miss Mahier plans to return to Baton Rouge to live with her mother. Then will come the “personal accumulations of a lifetime.”

“I hope to some day organize all of the material I have as a document of my activities,” she says. “Also, I have long been interested in starting a children’s museum, and I want to continue to promote and develop free-lance art design . . . at any rate, I want to remain active at all times.”

Dr. Houston, who came to O.U. in 1924 as an assistant professor of chemistry, spent much of his childhood on a ranch outside of San Antonio, Texas, where he was born.

He received a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering at the University of Texas, Austin, in 1919. It was there while doing graduate work that his career in chemistry began.

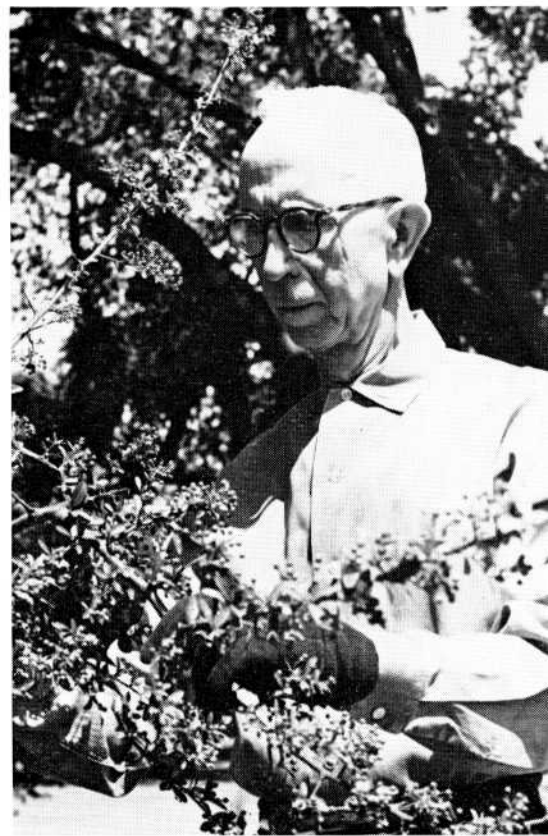
“I found myself more interested in my minor than my major,” Dr. Houston said. “So, I made the switch, which in those days was not very difficult to do.”

After receiving his Ph.D. degree in chemistry at Yale University in 1923, Dr. Houston joined the research division of Parke, Davis and Company, a pharmaceutical firm in Detroit, Michigan. There he was a research chemist in the field of synthetic drugs.

While at O.U., Dr. Houston, a specialist in organic chemistry, was chairman of the chemistry department from 1942 to 1947, a member of the freshman advisory committee of the college of arts and sciences and a member of the faculty research committee. In 1955, he was named a recipient of a \$500 award for “extraordinary excellence in student counseling and teaching of freshmen and sophomores.”

Dr. Houston’s organizational memberships and activities are numerous. He is a member of the American Chemical Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Oklahoma Academy

continued



Harry Smith stays active with home gardening.

the four have contributed a total of 179 years to the University

of Science and several scholastic societies, including Sigma Xi, Phi Lambda Upsilon, Alpha Chi Sigma and Tau Beta Pi. He has authored and co-authored many chemical publications. Away from the University, he is active in Norman's First Presbyterian Church where he has been a member of the board of trustees.

Although he has been retired from teaching since January, Houston intends to continue library research in chemistry at O.U., in addition to taking some extensive trips throughout the nation.

Smith has been an O.U. faculty member since 1927 when he joined the staff as an instructor in English. Born at Lockridge, Canadian County, Smith, who was raised on a farm, began teaching at a country school at the age of 18—before he had received his high school diploma.

Several years after obtaining his teacher's certificate, he received a bachelor of

arts degree from Central State College in Edmond, and his master of arts degree from the University in 1927. He did additional graduate work at the University of Chicago.

Before coming to O.U. as a faculty member, Smith taught at two Oklahoma high schools (Loyal, outside of Kingfisher, and Navina, near Guthrie) and at Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky. He has also been a summer term instructor at East Texas State College in Commerce, Texas. For a number of years, he was on the English Proficiency Examination Committee at O.U., and a member of the Oklahoma Council of English Teachers and the South Central Modern Languages Association. He remains an active worker in the McFarlin Memorial Methodist Church of Norman.

Associates in the English department showed their appreciation for long and devoted service to the University by presenting Smith with a beautiful set of luggage upon his retirement.

"When I came here, the population of Norman was about 8,000 and the school's enrolment was 3,000, and all graduate students knew each other no matter what department they might have been in," Smith says. "So, I've really been an eyewitness to the growth of the University and the town.

"I have had some really fine students who appreciated what I try to teach in class," he adds. "Their appreciation has been one of my greatest rewards as a teacher."

Smith will be able to devote more time to home gardening, music appreciation and taking walks in the country now that he has retired from teaching.

"As of yet, my plans are not definite," he says. "Later, I may consider taking a part-time teaching position at a private school. But, for the time being, I'm going to take a long rest."

Miss Leske, a native of Bellevue, Iowa, joined the University faculty in 1924 as an instructor in office administration. She has



Extensive travels and library research will keep Dr. Bruce Houston busy in the days ahead.

a bachelor of arts degree from O.U. and a master of arts degree from Columbia Teachers College, New York City.

Miss Leske taught general business, shorthand and typing at El Reno and Holdenville high schools and was an office employee of the Rock Island Railroad in El Reno before coming to O.U. After being in Norman almost continuously for 38 years, she looks back on what she calls "enormous" changes in the University.

"This is especially true with its growth in students and personnel," she says. "It used to be possible to know everyone on campus personally."

In recent years, Miss Leske has taught large classes of students, made up mostly of freshman girls interested in learning typing, shorthand and filing. But, in addition to her teaching experience, Miss Leske is a member of two education societies, Delta Pi Epsilon for graduates and Pi Omega Pi for undergraduates, and one business society, Beta Gamma Sigma, the business administration equivalent of arts and sciences' Phi Beta Kappa.

Following approval of their retirements by the O.U. Board of Regents, the title of emeritus was granted to all four of these faculty members who have contributed a combined total of 179 years of service to the University.



Relaxation is in store for Rose Leske following her long tenure of teaching office work at O.U.