

forsaking the concert stage  
for the classroom has paid off for

# The Winningest Coach of the Console

By PAULA EVANS BAKER

Photos by John Yack

**S**PEAK of O.U.'s winning coaches and a picture comes to mind of a group of sun-bronzed, muscular fellows in grey sweat clothes. The forensic-minded might even include a couple of briefcase-carriers in staid charcoal business suits.

The picture is accurate, as far as it goes, but it is not complete without the addition of an attractive, neatly dressed woman with silvering hair and the alert self-confidence of a born winner.

The woman is Miss Mildred Andrews, '37fa, organ teacher at the University of Oklahoma for the past 25 years and coach of more winners of Fulbright scholarships in organ and of national organ contests than any other teacher in the country. In the past 13 years, her dedicated and demanding guidance has enabled seven O.U. graduates to continue their studies overseas on Fulbright grants, five to win national organ contests, two to win three-year scholarships to Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and two to win two-year scholarships to Yale University.

There is no official ranking of organ teachers in the country. If there were, it seems safe to assume that she would be a major contender for the No. 1 rating. The list of tributes paid to her by her col-

leagues is almost as long as the list of her students' accomplishments.

It is no coincidence that when the American Guild of Organists held its first meeting in the Southwest last December, Oklahoma City was chosen as meeting site and four of Miss Andrews's students were invited to perform.

Following the students' appearance at the AGO Mid-Winter Conclave, the society's publication, "The Diapason," said:

"We wonder what college music department in what country across what oceans under what director could turn out a mixed quartet to match the foursome from the University of Oklahoma who opened the conclave by playing the entire 'La Nativité du Seigneur' of Messiaen . . . a work many consider the major achievement in organ composition of our generation . . . The American Guild of Organists has long since come to expect—even to demand—winners from the studio of Mildred Andrews."

Also, at the Mid-Winter Conclave, Miss Andrews was presented with a portrait of herself against a background suggesting organ pipes and a lamp of learning. The artist, Eugene O. Clay, a Los Angeles portrait painter and amateur organist, ex-

plained that he chose her as the subject because he felt she "exemplified American organists."

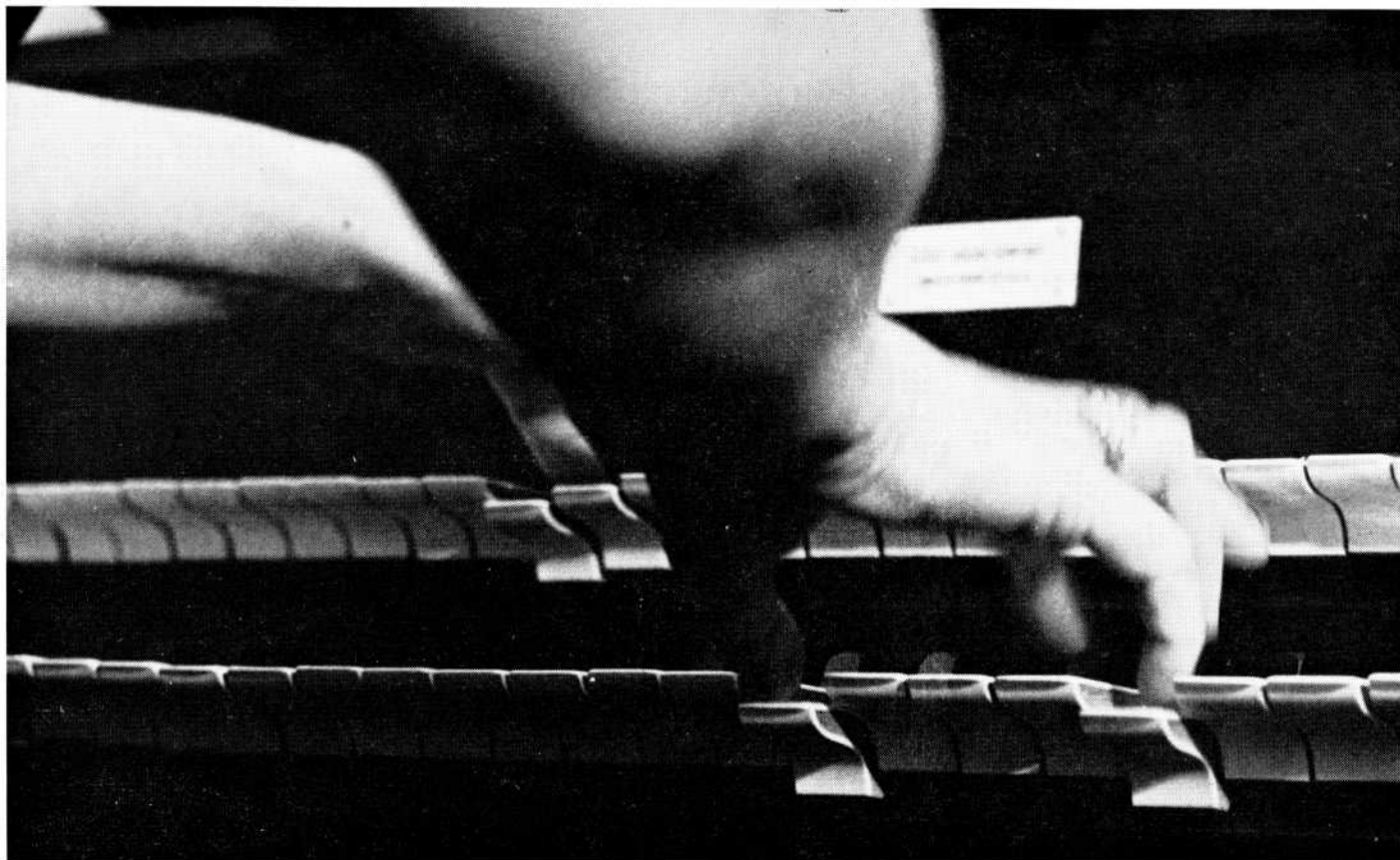
This summer, Miss Andrews has enjoyed what she considers her greatest professional honor to date, an invitation to conduct organ master classes and serve as guest professor of organ at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. The seminary usually invites a European organist but Miss Andrews's invitation was no second-choice matter: she was invited to teach last year but was unable to accept because of previous commitments.

Teaching at Union was a kind of homecoming for her since she had attended Union's School of Sacred Music from 1945 to 1946 and studied organ with David McK. Williams during that period.

Tucked away in her mental scrapbook are souvenirs of other honors—her invitation to visit Sir William McKie, choirmaster of Westminster Abbey, in 1960. Miss Andrews dined with Sir William and Lady McKie and then was given permission to play the Abbey organ.

However, asked to name her proudest moment, the Sooner organist would not hesitate to select a less auspicious event.

"The proudest moment in my life came



in 1952," she recalls in a pleasant, well-modulated voice, "when I was in the first group of ten teachers to receive \$500 awards for excellence in teaching and counseling. I would rather receive an award for my teaching than anything else."

Miss Andrews admits that she had wanted to be a music teacher ever since she was a second-grader in her hometown of Hominy, Oklahoma. Her parents matched their daughter's talents with a major accomplishment of their own, managing to provide piano lessons from the best teachers in Tulsa throughout all the lean Depression years. It did not take the young music student long to try teaching herself and by the time she was in junior high school, she was giving the local children piano lessons in return for milk, butter and eggs for the Andrews family larder.

"I never saw or heard an organ until I was 18 years old and went away to college," she continued. "This was a blessing in disguise, as I would have gotten interested in the organ earlier and would not have had nearly as good a piano technique. A good piano technique is essential to an organist.

"Another blessing in disguise occurred in 1939 when I had an opportunity to sign

up for a tour with the leading concert agency for organists. I had to make a choice between teaching and playing concerts then, for I knew that I could not concentrate on my students and practice for concerts too. I don't like to do things half-way. I decided I would rather watch others play well than play well myself. I'm so glad I had to make that decision then, for I have been free to concentrate on my teaching ever since."

Miss Andrews never wavered from that decision, not even when the famous French organist Marcel Dupre, who taught her during two summer sessions at the University of Chicago in the 1940's, advised her to renounce teaching for a concert career.

Her freedom and ability to concentrate on her students is, she feels, one of the ingredients of her success as a teacher.

"A teacher must have know-how as well," she continued, "and I feel that I am lucky in having the knack of being able to impart knowledge. I also pride myself on being able to diagnose what a student's problems are and to tell him what he should do to solve them."

The fact that her students recognize this diagnostic ability can be seen in the num-

erous graduates occupying prominent positions who return to Miss Andrews for lessons and advice from time to time.

"Of course, the most important factor in a teacher's success is having good students," she concluded. "The leading organ students in the country are right here in the Midwest. I don't know why but it's so, as can be seen from the fact that only one non-Midwesterner has won the AGO contest. New York City is full of organists from Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas who are occupying top church positions.

"I thank God every night for the honor and privilege of having some part in the musical training of these talented students."

The abundance of good students has been one of the factors keeping Miss Andrews at O.U. all these years, despite feelers from other, larger universities with more liberal budgets and better facilities.

"I suppose I could be happy teaching anywhere I had good students," the organist mused. "However, I have wonderful students here and I like Oklahoma. I've lived in New York City, Chicago and in Michigan (she received her master of music degree from the University of Michigan), but I know I don't seem to be geared

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## she regards an award for excellence in teaching as her highest honor

to living where people push. Those who claim that this part of the country is a 'cultural desert' do not know what they are talking about. A really cultured person can find culture everywhere, and there is certainly plenty around here. A prospective student from the East wrote me last fall, wondering what she could do in her spare time. Well, I just clipped the 1962-63 entertainment schedule for this area from the Daily Oklahoman and mailed it back. Needless to say, she couldn't begin to attend all the worthwhile activities.

"I like teaching at O.U. I've never felt discriminated against because I am a woman. This happens at some universities.

"Of course, I wish the University had a better organ. This one is old and far from the best. However, I understand the budget problems and comfort myself with the knowledge that Bach did not have a good organ either. His colleagues had the best instruments of the day, far superior to Bach's instrument. However, who remembers the names of Bach's colleagues?"

Although Miss Andrews long ago decided she could not have both a career and a family and do her best with both, she has in fact acquired a large "family" through her teaching. She keeps in close contact with her former students and has even been known to substitute for absent parents at their weddings.

"A teacher has to be interested in her students as persons," she explained. "I try to prepare my students to be good church or concert musicians or college teachers, and this involves much more than musicianship." (Miss Andrews's advice on being a good church musician is more than theoretical. She has been organist at St. John's Episcopal Church in Norman since 1936.)

This personal interest in her students is not confined to the O.U. School of Music entirely as those O.U. alumnae who knew Miss Andrews as a Mortar Board sponsor can testify. Herself a former Mortar Board member, Miss Andrews became noted for the common sense (and sometimes barbed wit) of her contributions as well as her ability to remember the names and interests of former group members.

As for her own music "All Americas," she can reel off names, past accomplishments and present positions without blinking an eye.

First the Fulbrighters, with all but Clarke Mullen, '57fa, accounted for:

Bob Whitley, '51fa, also won the national organ contest sponsored by the American Guild of Organists in 1950 and for the past ten years has been organist-choirmaster at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in San Francisco, California. He also conducts the San Francisco Men's Choir.

Dorothy Young Mallory, '53fa, also won the AGO contest, making Miss Andrews the only organ teacher ever to have two AGO winners. She received a full-time, two-year graduate scholarship to Yale University and is now organist at Nichols Hills Methodist Church, Oklahoma City.

Kay Conner Greenshields, '55fa, is assistant organist-choirmaster at St. John's Episcopal Church in Norman.

Elaine George Ehlers, '58fa, is assistant organist-choirmaster at Trinity Episcopal Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

Clyde Holloway, '57fa, '59mfa, is assistant organist and choirmaster at St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City, and is working on a doctorate at Union Theological Seminary.

John Turnbull, '61fa, is completing his Fulbright studies at the Music Conservatory of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Other national contest winners include:

Lloyd Walser, '58fa, who won the national organ competition sponsored by the American Federation of Music Clubs in 1957 and also received a full-time, two-year graduate scholarship to Yale. He is now professor of organ at the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind, New York City.

Two other national contest winners won their titles just this spring. Diane Bish, a senior from Wichita, Kansas, won the AFMC contest and Louise Anderson, a graduate student from Akron, Ohio, won the Gruenstein Memorial Award sponsored by the Chicago Club of Woman Organists.

The two students who won full three-year scholarships to Curtis Institute, Richard Bouchett, '59fa, and William Whitehead, '59fa, both have leading church positions now. Bouchett is the organist at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, and is a member of the faculty at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey. Whitehead is director of music

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Miss Andrews, who has played some of the great consoles of the world, including the famous organ at Westminster Abbey in London, also enjoys playing the electric organ she has in her home.

# Space Law

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through his talk, generated the feeling among the gathering of scientific and legal spokesmen that space conferences such as the one at the University should be continued.

"I accord few credits to those who would go slow with space exploration or those who find few benefits flowing from our space activities," said Dr. Welsh.

"Such a state of mind points to the inadequacy of the measurer and not to the non-existence of the benefits," he added. "How can one pretend to measure the benefits the people of this country receive from our educational system or from the accumulation of knowledge obtained through research and development? What precise value would one attach to our legal system or our democratic processes? How would one place a dollar value on the protection we receive from our military forces? Yet, we know these things have immense values. They are real. They are important. So, to a considerable extent, can we attribute values to our space program."

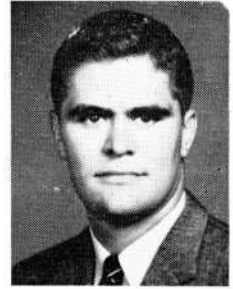
On the impact of the space program on employment, Dr. Welsh said, "I might suggest, somewhat parenthetically, that any constructive program which increases the demand for skilled people is a positive and favorable element in our economy." He added that national economy and peaceful application of space competence to national security go hand in hand.

"The greater our military strength and the more certain that aggressors are that we will use such strength to maintain our freedom, the healthier is the atmosphere within which private enterprise can and will thrive," Dr. Welsh said. "The space program has an important contribution to this state of national security.

"It is true that both our policy and our

## Conversation Piece

How did you spend summer vacations when you were a student in college?



**KEN MULDROW, '61bus**  
University of Texas law student  
Austin, Texas

**MULDROW**—My brother Mont and I went to the University of Hawaii in the summer of 1959 where we both took three hours of economics. We spent a couple of months there before returning to Brownfield [Texas] to work on our farm . . . It was a lot of fun in Hawaii, because there was always time for such things as surfing and swimming . . . I stayed in Brownfield all of the summer following my freshman year, and the summer of 1960, after my junior year, was spent at Fort Hood, Texas, for [Army] summer camp. After getting a business degree at O.U., I worked the following summer in a bank at Brownfield.

practices direct that all of our space activities be for peaceful purposes. Surely, no activity is more peaceful in effect than that which discourages war. Weakness encourages aggression. Alertness and strength discourage it. Space capabilities which increase our strength—economically and militarily—deter aggression.

"We are concerned, and rightly so, with the image the people of other nations have of the United States. We gain from a 'prestige image.' The ideal picture is that of a nation of strength in ideas, in technology, in freedom, in standards of living and in military power to protect the viability of the other prestige ingredients. The space program, effectively and imaginatively conducted, contributes positively to all of those ingredients.

"Of even greater importance is the potential impact the space program can have on world peace through substituting competition in space exploration for competition in building nuclear striking power. If sanity prevails, the path to the stars can be the path to peace."

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## Winningest Coach

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for the First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and has made successful recording for Cameo Records

Other students recalled by Miss Andrews who now occupy important positions include:

Nancy Davis, '57fa, '59mfa, professor of organ at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky; Patsy Bleidt, '60mfa, a member of the faculty of Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois; Dorothy Jeanne Gentry Waits, '44fa, professor of organ at the University of Tulsa; Homer Jackson, '61fa, organist at the First Congregational Church, La Grange, Illinois; Max Smith, organ professor at Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina; Mary Ruth McAlley, professor of organ at West Texas State College, Canyon, Texas; Phillip Simpson, '59fa, '63mfa, professor of organ at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and Conrad Grimes, '60mfa, organist-choirmaster at the First Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg, Canada.

You may be certain that this list will continue to grow. Each year it is becoming more and more difficult for Miss Andrews to choose her class of new students from the dozens of promising organists applying from all over the country. But such abundance of material, while taxing, is sure to keep Mildred Andrews in firm possession of the title of winningest coach of the console.