

# An Intraoffice Memo

TO: R. Boyd Gunning, Executive Editor  
FROM: Carol J. Burr, Editor  
SUBJECT: My reluctant resignation

ONE thing can safely be said about my four years as editor of the *Sooner Magazine*: it certainly has been four years—and I'm sure you will agree. But as you look back on these years from the sanctity of your spacious office with its unobstructed view of the Union parking lot, I hope you will remember that it wasn't all misspelled names and typographical errors. There were some good times as well.

You may feel, of course, that when you hired me you were misled into believing that I knew how to put out a magazine—and me just a green kid fresh from journalism school. Our little on-the-job training program may have been a bit painful for you, but keep in mind that even the seasoned professionals make mistakes now and then. That little mix-up with the postal department, for instance. I kept telling you that a simple mistake in arithmetic does not constitute mail fraud, but you get so excited about federal offenses.

At least we weren't sued when I reported the marriage of that Oklahoma City alumna to two different men in the same issue of the Roll Call. Of course we did get a rather violent reaction when I retired that fellow in Tulsa a few years before he had intended to retire. You must remember that the Roll Call, innocent-looking though it may be, has been a source of danger for all *Sooner* editors. When one of my predecessors reported that *the newly promoted general had his stars pinned on by his wife*, you received all sorts of calls from the campus wags asking if this was new terminology for broad. And if memory serves me, this same fellow once wrote that *Mrs. Jones is now living in Florida with her husband*, and several readers wanted to know whom she had been living with before moving to Florida. I never caused trouble like that.

Most of my trouble, it seems to me, has been that our readers have not always understood me. There was the "Last Lecture" series, for example—a perfectly splendid idea—asking a prominent professor what he would say to his students if it were his last opportunity. But for some reason someone got the idea that I had had the fore-

sight to rush into this professor's classroom and record his last lecture just before he died. The reader thought this a tremendously fine tribute to the man, but after that, I needn't tell you, other professors were none too anxious to welcome me into their classrooms with my trusty tape recorder.

So in defense of all *Sooner Magazine* editors, I must hasten to add that you have had a few ideas that didn't work out so well either. Like the time you decided that I should become my own photographer. Now there was a dandy. My first assignment, if you recall, was a glass factory and a pottery in Sapulpa. Now glass plants are exceedingly wet and potteries are coated with clay. I can hardly be blamed for becoming so distraught at ruining my new \$25 shoes that I accidentally exposed all the film I had shot—which upset me so that I locked my keys inside the car and spent half the afternoon in the Chevy garage being lectured by a fatherly mechanic who regretted giving women the vote. You didn't approve my expense account claim for new shoes or the tow charge—but you did retire the office camera, I noticed.

Of course, all the projects I have tackled have not been disasters. We came up with some pretty interesting articles — and I learned quite a bit in the process. There is probably no one in the country who knows more and understands less about high speed

digital computers, for instance. And I can quote you chapter and verse about histoplasmosis and infrared spectroscopy, hypnosis and open heart surgery, and the problems in educating the gifted student, the handicapped student, the slow reader and the migrant berry picker. I'm the life of every party.

There was one outcome of this job that I hadn't counted on. I really got myself hooked on higher education in general and the University of Oklahoma in particular. I have written so many reams on the importance of colleges and universities that I've actually started to believe it all, and that's no situation for one of us cynical journalists. I have even become convinced that I made an enormously wise decision when I came to O.U.—and stayed and stayed and stayed. Carefully nurtured student skepticism went by the boards along with any doubt that O.U. can live up to its advance billing by becoming the greatest university in the Southwest.

I am resigning, as you know, to join the diaper and 2 a.m. feeding brigade. I wish I could give you a more glamorous reason—perhaps in the manner of my two immediate predecessors, one of whom quit to write the great American novel and the other to manage a saw mill in Guatemala. But you must realize that each new little *Sooner* is a Roll Call item, and a potential source of tuition as well. Not that my husband or I would for a moment attempt to pressure a child of ours into coming to O.U. He (or she) can go to any college he (or she) chooses. But to quote the immortal words of one of our most distinguished alumni parents, "If he goes to O.U., we'll pay his way."

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