

The KC in OU

the college that wouldn't stop teaching even when its doors closed

SHORTLY after the run of April 22, 1889, which opened what is now central Oklahoma to settlement, a Congregationalist minister named Joseph Homer Parker arrived in the burgeoning town of Kingfisher. (Just 24 days after the run, 115 frame buildings had been completed, 50 more were under construction, and 126 foundations had been started.)

Reverend Parker had been sent west to become the superintendent of home missions for Oklahoma. He was to secure land, organize churches, and found a college. This Reverend Parker did, and with dispatch. In 1890 Kingfisher Academy opened, its classes held in the Congregational Church basement. Four years later Kingfisher College was born in a hotel in the town's business district. It later moved to its permanent campus on the eastern outskirts of Kingfisher.

Kingfisher College was envisioned as the southwestern representative of a series of great institutions founded by the Congregational Church, in the tradition of Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth, and was to concentrate pri-

marily on training ministers and religious workers. Cultivating a college on the raw Oklahoma prairie during settlement was a struggle full of disappointments, but Reverend Parker and his faculty persevered. Kingfisher College grew stronger scholastically as the years passed, but weaker financially. Beset by debts, the school closed its doors in 1922. It had graduated 22 classes; 117 had received degrees, although many more had attended. Three of the college's graduates became Rhodes Scholars at Oxford, England, an amazing achievement for a school so small and so young. Its football team did not always enjoy such success; however, it proudly played its rival at Norman to three scoreless ties. (Sadly for Kingfisher, OU won the other 19 meetings—the last two by 179-0 and 157-0 scores.) Its music department was strong and flourishing right until the end. Too, the college succeeded in sending 75 per cent of its graduates into religious work. At the beginning of the 20's, however, poor investments depleted the already inade-

quate endowment and Kingfisher College was no more.

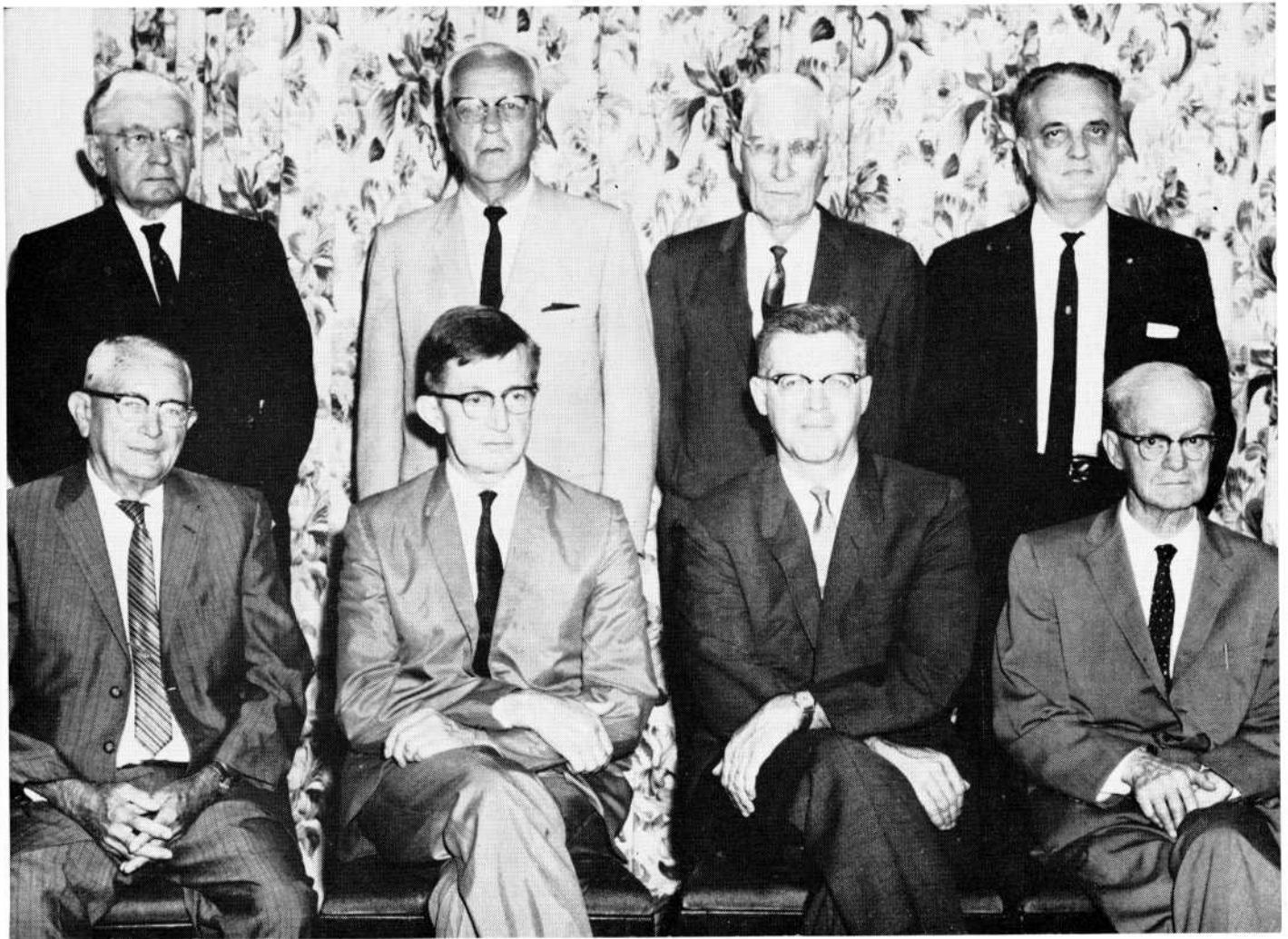
The trustees of the college continued to manage what was left of the assets after the debts had been paid. In 1927 Kingfisher College merged with the University of Oklahoma in an agreement between the KC Board of Trustees and the OU Board of Regents. The college library was transferred to the University as well as all official academic records. OU agreed to recognize the Kingfisher College degree and invited all who held it to become associated with its alumni organization. A number of Kingfisher students transferred to OU as did a member of its faculty.

In 1951 the trustees of the college and the University Regents, chiefly through the leadership of the late Victor Harlow of Oklahoma City, who was president of the college Board of Trustees, established the Kingfisher College Chair of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. Dr. J. Clayton Feaver was brought to Norman to fill it as the Kingfisher College Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. The chair has since been expanded into an operative section of the philosophy department and each year two Kingfisher College Fellowships are awarded to graduate students.

The basic purpose of studies in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics is "to give responsible instruction and orientation in the area of moral and spiritual values, and to clarify the relation of religion to other areas of human experience, especially science . . . The presupposition is that the person and his achievement are of prime importance, and that instruction in matters that relate to personal growth and fulfillment is a central concern of education."

Kingfisher College Curriculum

The following courses are offered as the Kingfisher College core curriculum: 2—Philosophies of Social and Religious Morality; 105—Ethics; 106—Ethics of Social Ideals and Policies; 107—Philosophy of Religion; 108—Religion and Science in Philosophic Perspective; 151—Religious Philosophies of the West to 400 A.D.; 152—Religious Philosophies of the West after 400 A.D.; 153—Oriental Philosophy and Religion; 325—Studies in Ethical Theory; 339—Studies in Philosophical Background of Christianity. Course changes are made from time to time. Also, courses in the Philosophy of Science complement the Kingfisher College core curriculum. The student wishing to concentrate in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics may also enroll in advanced seminars and reading courses in this area, as well as other course offerings in the department of philosophy.



Members of the Kingfisher College Board of Trustees present for its final meeting sat for this photograph. From left to right, seated, are Roy Eaton, Dallas; Dr. J. Clayton Feaver, Kingfisher College professor of religion and ethics; Dr. Robert Morgan and T. H. Roberts, both of Oklahoma City. Standing, left to right, are M. T. Drisko and C. O. Burnside, Oklahoma City; Rev. Elmer Pierce, Crescent, and Harold Hubbard, Kingfisher.

The growth of the program and the response by students have been impressive. When the chair was established, the courses then offered had an enrollment of 47. Last year slightly more than 600 students were enrolled in the courses each semester, or nearly 10 per cent of the student body.

On May 27 the Kingfisher Board of Trustees, faculty members from the OU department of philosophy, and representatives of the University of Oklahoma Foundation met at Faculty House near the OU Medical School in Oklahoma City for the final meeting of the board. At this occasion, after more than 70 years as a separate entity, the college trustees voted to dissolve the board and to turn over all property and records to the OU Foundation for future administration. Among the assets which had been accumulated since the college was

closed 42 years ago were real estate mortgages and other investments valued at \$100,000. The endowment fund, under the assiduous guidance of board treasurer T. R. Roberts, had grown to that amount from less than \$30,000 ten years after the college closed. The property and records were received by the OU president, Dr. G. L. Cross, and for the foundation by its director, R. Boyd Gunning.

One of the final acts taken by the board was to approve a plaque which will hang in the college library, located in the OU Bizzell Memorial Library. The plaque will honor the memory of Joseph Homer Parker, the founder, and Victor Harlow, the moving spirit behind the Kingfisher Chair. It will also express appreciation to long-time board secretary Roy Eaton and to treasurer Roberts.

Attending the final meeting in addition to the members of the board were

Drs. Carlton W. Berenda, William Horosz and Feaver, of the philosophy department, Dr. Cross, Gunning, and Lee B. Thompson, Oklahoma City attorney, who has donated his legal services to the board over the years. Dr. Robert Morgan, president of the board, presided at the meeting. Board members present were C. O. Burnside, Roberts and M. T. Drisko, all of Oklahoma City; Eaton, Dallas; the Reverend Elmer Pierce, Crescent, and Harold Hubbard, Kingfisher. Board members who were unable to attend were Miss Rose Witcher, El Reno, and Oscar Holderby, Oklahoma City.

Income from the endowment will be administered in the future by a board consisting of the president of OU, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, director of the OU Foundation, and a Kingfisher College representative.