



It is on the hood alone that the degree, the faculty and the institution which awarded the degree are all shown. The size of the hood denotes the degree, the color of the trim designates the faculty, and the color and design of the lining identifies the institution.



The two styles of academic headgear are the mortarboard or Oxford cap (above) worn by Dr. Lowell Dunham and the Cambridge model (below) worn by Dr. Clayton Feaver. The latter, a soft cap, is becoming increasingly more popular with the academic community.



The following colors are associated with the various faculties. It is mandatory that they be used on the trimming of hoods and optional they be used on tassels and velvet trim of doctor's gowns.

Faculty

- Agriculture
- Arts, Letters, Humanities
- Commerce, Accountancy, Business
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- Fine Arts, Including Architecture
- Journalism
- Law
- Library Science
- Medicine
- Music
- Nursing
- Speech
- Pharmacy
- Philosophy
- Physical Education
- Public Administration
- Public Health
- Science
- Social Science
- Social Work
- Theology

Color

- Maize
- White
- Drab
- Copper
- Light Blue
- Orange
- Brown
- Crimson
- Purple
- Lemon
- Green
- Pink
- Apricot
- Silver Gray
- Olive Green
- Dark Blue
- Sage Green
- Peacock Blue
- Salmon Pink
- Golden Yellow
- Cream
- Citron
- Scarlet



A variety of lining designs are used by America's colleges and universities. Not enough, however, to prevent some duplication. In his book, Sheard suggests borrowing further from classic heraldry design. Some of the variations, left to right from the top row: chevron reversed, two chevrons, bar, party per bar, party per pale, double bar, triple chevron reversed. OU uses a chevron design (as in upper left corner): crimson with cream chevron. For a guide to all designs see Academic Heraldry (published by Northern Michigan University Press, Marquette, Michigan).



ACADEMIC BIRD-WATCHING

Can you distinguish a distinguished doctor of arts from Tufts from a renowned doctor of theology from Temple? What would a master of science from Santa Clara wear over his gown? What's with the gold tassels? Better bone up on the challenging field of degree identification—it's Spring and commencement time is here again

By KEVIN SHEARD

JUST BEFORE the beginning of the 20th century it seemed that colleges and universities in the United States were developing the kind of ruleless academic costume that emerged from the centuries in Great Britain. There and in the dominions each university adopted its own costume without regard to what other institutions had done. The result is a confusing array of caps, gowns and particularly hoods, each one of which must be separately memorized. Made aware of the problem by the writings of G. C. Leonard, American institutions responded by sending representatives to a commission in 1895 to consider a uniform code for academic costume. The deliberations of the group produced the system which is still in use today, although slightly modified by successor committees appointed by the American Council on Education. The latest of the groups met in 1959.

The code has three main parts; that is, deals with caps, gowns and hoods. Of these the caps are the simplest. Although there is an exception, rarely seen, for women which allows them to wear a soft cap, the mortarboard or Oxford type cap is worn. At this point, remote in time from the deliberations, it seems unfortunate that the commission did not adopt the alternate possibility open to it, based on the Cambridge model. This is a soft cap, which resembles an overlarge beret. It is more comfortable than the Oxford type and is much more functional without any loss in dignity. Be that as it may, the mortarboard is apparently here to stay. It is always black and may be of an appropriate material except velvet is reserved to doctors.

The tassel worn with the cap has three variations. First, it may be black for any degree. Second, it may be in the color of the faculty in which the degree was granted. (The word "faculty" as used here means a major field of learning such as Arts, Law, Philosophy.) The third area of choice in the tassel is restricted to doctors

and governing officials of institutions. These groups alone may wear one made of gold metallic thread.

Some discussion has been engendered about the proper side of the mortarboard on which to wear the tassel. The 1959 committee of the American Council on Education recommends that it be permitted to lie where it will. The group, however, recognizes that in some schools a ceremony is made of switching the tassel from the right to the left at the moment the degree is awarded. It is suggested that this is a substitute for initial hooding of candidates. It must be added that this is a very poor substitute since the first gust of wind is likely to deprive the new Bachelor of Arts of the symbol of his degree. A common practice for doctors, at least, is to sew the tassel in place.

Gowns, which according to the code are all black, aside from variations in materials and fullness are of three kinds. The bachelor's gown is a relatively simple kind falling in straight lines from a fairly elaborate yoke. Its distinguished characteristic is the long sleeves. It should have no adornment although a few institutions pipe the yoke with a school color.

Masters' gowns until 1960 were set apart by a peculiar arrangement of the long sleeves whereby the arm emerged from the sleeve through a slit at the elbow. The rest of the sleeve dangled and terminated around the knee of the wearer in a square end into which a semicircle was cut. The gown was the despair of the wearers because no matter how hot the day a coat had to be worn under it. Disregard of the rule led on occasion to spectacular, if incorrect results when members of the physical education department wearing short-sleeved shirts were observed with their brawny arms protruding from the slits. In 1960, however, the gown was modified by the committee of the American Council on Education. In place of the elbow slit, an opening was made at the wrist and the gown was made to close.

This ended the battle of the arms. Of course if one wears the old style master's gown, which may with propriety be done until it is no longer fit for wear, he should wear a coat.

The doctor's gown is an elaborate costume marked by velvet panels down the front and around the neck as well as the bars of the same material on the bell-shaped sleeves. It is cut much fuller than the other gowns and unlike them may be ornamented in color. Both the panelling and the sleeve bars may show the faculty in which the degree was awarded. As a matter of practice, however, except in the areas of Philosophy and Law, dark blue and purple, respectively, faculty colors are rarely seen on the gown. The reason seems to be it is felt that other colors produce a garish effect.

Of all the components of the costume the hood bears the heaviest symbolic burden. Since the cap, gown and hood are no longer required to keep the wearer warm, their function is one of identification. To perform this they must make clear the level of the degree, the faculty in which it was given and the institution which awarded it. The cap performs none of these tasks except to the extent that the velvet material marks the doctor and the tassel may show either the level by being made of gold thread or the faculty by being of some color. Since a doctor may wear a cap which is not made of velvet and anyone may elect to wear a black tassel, there is no certainty in the cap. Likewise the gown merely points out the level of the degree, not the institution which awarded it. To the extent that doctors use the velvet panelling and sleeve bars in color some information may be gleaned about the faculty.

It is on the hood alone that all three items are clearly shown. The level of the degree is shown by the size of the hood, the width of the velvet trimming and, in the case of doctors, by the shape. The bachelor's, master's and doctor's hoods are three

Continued on page 32

Academic Bird-Watching

Continued from page 15

feet, three and one-half feet and four feet long, respectively. The velvet trimming in the same order is two, three and five inches. This extends all around the hood on the exposed edge. To make a more comfortable fit, it is allowed to narrow on the neck band.

This same trimming identifies the faculty in which the degree was awarded. For each faculty there is a corresponding color, so a glance at the trimming is all that is needed to identify the faculty. For example, White is used for Arts and Letters. Thus a bachelor of arts will wear a hood trimmed with a two-inch White velvet border. The Master of Arts will have a three-inch border and the Doctor of Letters, a five-inch White trim.

The last references of the hood is to the institution which awarded the degree. The commission of 1895 undertook to solve the problem of identifying the university in an ingenious way. It provided that the hood be lined with the colors of each school awarding degrees. In this manner a glance at the lining, which is worn exposed, would give the required information. In theory the method was simple. In practice, however, the sheer number of schools made it complex. With the growth of higher education and the consequent increase in the number of institutions the difficulties have multiplied. Obviously only a limited number of institutions can have single colors in the hoods. Although the spectrum has an infinite number of points, there are limits to the human ability to recognize them. To meet the need for further differentiation, two-color patterns were introduced and a registry system set up. Whatever the intentions of the commission, the overwhelming majority of schools has adopted the chevron design. This concentration has produced hundreds of duplicate hoods. The same thing is true to a lesser extent of other two-color designs. *END*

KEVIN SHEARD is professor of law at Cleveland-Marshall Law School, Cleveland, Ohio, and author of Academic Heraldry in America (Northern Michigan College Press, Marquette, Michigan). This article has been taken from Prof. Sheard's book.

IMAGE IS NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS.

A paper copy of this issue is available at call number LH 1 .O6S6 in Bizzell Memorial Library.