

Many observers concluded that Brandt's resignation at OU was intended as a "fire alarm" to awaken the people to the University's problems. The *Oklahoma City Times* published an editorial under the caption "Oklahoma Thrown for a Loss":

"The resignation of Joseph Brandt means a loss to the state for reasons that must be frankly faced. One reason is that it came about because of a badly applied program of economy, which was laudable in general, but worked to weaken some of our vital functions of education. It was economy applied in the wrong places.

"Another reason is that President Brandt had a vision for a great revival of practical effort to conserve and utilize Oklahoma's unique natural and human resources, through a research division and intensified attention paid to land use, applied science, agricultural wealth, industrial capacity and decentralization that would bring Oklahoma energy and wealth back to Oklahoma. The interior states are in grave danger of losing these elements of strength to the big eastern metropolitan centers, in a constant drain

that has already set in, and he foresaw this trend and was building for a new and energetic campaign of true and broad-gauged conservation. Through such a program, education gets away from academic dreaming into practical service.

"The ground can be regained if the appointing powers find an outstanding man who will see such a vision of Oklahoma's greatness."

Finding such a man was not easy. It would take the combined efforts of the Board of Regents and a special faculty committee presided over by Dr. George L. Cross, 38-year-old acting dean of the Graduate College. After studying any number of people for the post, one of the committee members finally suggested, "I think we have a better man right here than any that we've interviewed. Why don't we offer the presidency to Dr. Cross?" It was unanimous, and he took the position on an acting basis the first of January, 1944.

No prediction was offered as to when a permanent president would be selected.



## THE CROSS YEARS

**G**EOERGE LYNN CROSS was born on a farm near Woonsocket, South Dakota, in 1905, and attended grade school and high school there. He graduated with a bachelor of science degree from South Dakota State College in 1923 and received his master's degree from the same institution a year later. It was then that he married the college beauty queen, Miss Cleo Sikkink, also a science major, who was completing work for her degree.

He received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago in 1929, and, during the following year, did scientific research on plant proteins at the university as a research fellow with a Rockefeller grant. From Chicago he went to the University of South Dakota as head of the botany department, a post he held four years before being appointed to the OU faculty.

He advanced rapidly at the University. After being

promoted to associate professor and later to full professor, he became head of the botany department. Cross later was appointed assistant dean of the Graduate College and then acting dean when Dean Homer L. Dodge went to Washington, D.C., as director of the Office of Scientific Personnel of the National Research Council. In taking over Graduate College duties, Cross also became acting director of the Research Institute.

His main educational interest was in research, and he believed that a long-range program of basic research would be one of the vital building blocks in making the University a great institution. As the recently appointed acting president he hoped that the system of research professorships set up by Joe Brandt and the Board of Regents would prevent the University from losing its top men year after year.

The first men to receive the "Chair of Research Professor" in recognition of their contributions to knowledge were E. E. Dale, graduate professor of history; J. Rud Nielsen, professor of theoretical physics; O. B. Jacobson, professor of art and director of the School of Art, and Charles E. Decker, professor of paleontology.

With the appointment of Cross came other new assignments. Roscoe Cate, acting executive secretary of the Alumni Association and editor-manager of *Sooner Magazine*, was appointed financial assistant to the president, and Dr. Glenn C. Couch, professor of plant sciences, was named director of student relations. Couch received added duties a short time later with his appointment as dean of the University College. Dr. Cross, who, in addition to his presidential duties, continued to serve for a short while as dean of the Graduate College, was succeeded in the latter post by Victor E. Monnett, who had been director of the School of Geology.

Not much was happening in sports. Football coach Snorter Luster had been banking heavily on his "comin' in on a wingback and a prayer" combination, led by Boone Baker; and, in basketball, Allie Paine, expert floor leader, was named All-American, and Coach Bruce Drake won his fight to have goal-tending eliminated from the game when the National Rules Committee attached a two-point penalty to the practice.

In one of the largest single building projects ever undertaken at the University, Army and Navy trainees were being housed in 900-unit dormitories occupying a considerable area south of Owen Field.

Dr. Cross was unanimously elected president in late August of 1944, thus making him the seventh man to hold the University's top office. Announcement of the appointment was made by Dr. Claude S. Chambers, president of the Board of Regents.

"The office was tendered Dr. Cross as its first and only choice," he said, "after the board had interviewed several prominent educators during the past eight months."

Choice of the new president was also approved by Governor Robert S. Kerr, who expressed gratification at the unanimous election:

"His noteworthy accomplishments in the academic world, his successful administrative experience as dean of the University's Graduate College, as director of the Research Institute, and, finally, in the role of acting president, gave the regents the desirable opportunity to choose a president from the faculty."

Dr. Cross' immediate plans for the University centered on postwar problems. His was the job of looking ahead to the days following the war when enrollment of over 10,000 students was expected. He was particularly interested in plans for returning servicemen—housing, guidance, counseling, and programs of study—and stated that in order to meet upcoming demands of heavier enrollment, the University would have to provide additional housing, class and laboratory facilities, utilities, faculty members, curricula, and programs for disabled veterans and civilian war workers. Over and above the impending growth in student population was the threat of losing faculty members after the war through the competition among colleges and universities for good educators and the low level of OU's salary scale. Dr. Cross emphasized the need for faculty participation in policy-making affairs and stated that he would seek the full cooperation of the faculty in establishing policies.

It is interesting to note, in connection with the war, that there were only 274 persons in the 1945 graduating class. Before the war, classes had frequently reached over the 1,000 mark. But most of the male graduates who should have been in commencement exercises were away on fighting fronts, and some of the few who were here wore khaki service uniforms under their caps and gowns. The 1945 class was made up chiefly of women, most of whom were the fighting men's wives, fiancées, and widows. The College of Engineering, perhaps OU's most widely known division, had ten graduates; the law school had four, and one a woman. Former commencement ceremonies were held in the Field House; this one was in the fine arts auditorium, with plenty of room to seat the entire class, its families and friends.

After repeatedly asking for appropriations sufficient to permit rebuilding the University's "war-ridden" faculty and to get its physical facilities program in line with obvious needs, President Cross found that things were beginning to happen in favor of the University. In the fall of 1945, in a move to halt a teacher exodus, increased salary raises, based strictly on merit, came for about 80 percent of the faculty. With this, the president predicted that the era of the University's losing high-caliber teachers was coming to an end.

"We are in the best position the University has been in the past fifteen years to keep our faculty members and add additional competent ones," he said.

It was during those closing days of the war and the advent of the so-called atomic age that colleges and universities all over the country began revitalizing their programs of study and development. At OU, President Cross urged that certain teaching methods of higher institutions of learning be brought out of the dark ages, and that financial backing be adequate so that education "can attract aggressive leaders with revolutionary ideas."

"The time has come," he said, "when it is imperative that we stop fumbling at world cooperation. With our very existence hanging in abeyance, we are now being given one last chance to learn to get along with the people of the world."

Declaring the atomic bomb was developed "far ahead of our social engineering," Cross insisted the discovery "will force us to discard our racial and religious discrimina-



*A legion of pre-fabs, somewhat less than elegant, dotted the campus and eased housing tension in late '40's.*

tions and make us arrive at an understanding of each other." He said that attempts to maintain secrecy of the atomic bomb would soon prove futile. "It is of no use to try to conceal scientific developments from the rest of the world. World organization will not require individual nations to change their political philosophies or their cultural or social patterns, but it will require close cooperation of all in solving the world's problems."

Part of OU's anticipated problems were being solved when it was announced in 1946 that the University had received the Norman Naval Air Station (North Campus), valued at more than \$7 million, which boosted OU's maximum capacity by approximately 4,000 students; and, shortly thereafter, Navy officials signed a revocable permit giving the University authority to use the Naval Air Technical Training Center (South Campus) as a veteran's college.

But bigger news was being made on the main campus, where Ada Lois Sipuel, daughter of a Chickasha minister and a graduate of Langston University, was seeking admission to the University as a law student. Although Dr. Cross had been ordered to refuse admittance to any person of Negro heritage who sought to enroll at OU, he stated that Miss Sipuel's transcript had been examined and that she had been found scholastically qualified to enter the law school. As the girl's plea to come to OU was being tested in the courts, there was talk among state school officials and legislators of starting special extension classes for Negroes and even the possibility of a Negro law school at Langston. The U.S. Supreme Court and the state attorney general's office battled back and forth over the Sipuel case, and, although she did not gain entrance to the school until three years later, her fight opened the way for other Negroes to seek admission. It was G. W. McLaurin, a retired educator, who became the first of his race to enroll at OU, when, in 1948, he became a graduate student in the School of Education.

President Cross was lauded for the University's handling of the situation, and he was cited for outstanding accomplishment in racial understanding by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

But, as progress was being made toward desegregating the University's classrooms, rumors began to fly once more that there were communist teachers and students at Norman. With this framed into an accusation, members of the State House of Representatives decided to go on a campus "Red hunt."

"We would welcome an investigation," Dr. Cross said, unalarmed. "Obviously, if there's anything going on here that we don't know about, we'd like to be informed of it." As University officials expected, it turned out to be a wild goose chase. Columnist Ray Parr wrote: "All that was uncovered was a whole nest of Democrats, Presbyterians and a sprinkling of native-born Texans—but no communists."

Meanwhile, on the sports scene, Snorter Luster, forced to resign because of ill health, was succeeded as head football coach by Jim Tatum, a discharged Navy lieutenant. The new coach brought with him his entire staff, including Charles (Bud) Wilkinson, and their Iowa Pre-Flight football team, heavily loaded with talent.

Tatum compiled an 8-3 won-lost record in 1946, including a 73 to 12 lashing of Oklahoma A & M, then relinquished the top job to Wilkinson, who also succeeded Jap Haskell as athletic director. It was also during the 1946-47 season that OU, led by Coach Bruce Drake and player-of-the-year Gerald Tucker, was runner-up to national champion Holy Cross in basketball. Other Sooners were making sports headlines, among them, drama student-track star Dennis (Bill) Weaver and golfer Charley Coe.

By 1947, younger faces were returning to the campus, and enrollment hit a new high of 12,350. The University prepared for its growing population with a building boom. New features on the main campus were 500 pre-fabricated

cottages, the Niemann Apartments for married students, and Woodrow Wilson Center, housing for men. Between the South Oval and the pre-fabs, a new four-wing dormitory for girls was being constructed. The University Press had a new building, a new wing was being added to Holmberg Hall to house music practice rooms, a classroom building was being built just south of the physics building, and an addition was being built on the east side of the engineering building.

Comprising more than eight times the area occupied prior to acquisition of the two naval bases, the University was spread out over an expanse of five and one-half miles in length. The School of Drama, architectural engineering, the Extension Division, and the University Laboratory School were the main functions of the North Campus, while housing facilities became the invaluable arm of the South Campus.

Two catastrophes hit these two campuses in 1949. The first occurred on April 30, when 48 persons were injured and twelve buildings destroyed by a tornado which swept through the North Campus causing damage in excess of \$1 million. Eight months later, the South Campus was hit by fire, which completely destroyed the old Navy BOQ, where men students were housed, injuring twenty more, and burning the books, money, and clothes of nearly 400 others.

In the early 1950's, more campus construction was completed. Memorial Stadium was expanded to accommodate more than 55,000 fans, and a new press box added, the most modern facility of its kind in the nation. Also constructed were a new geology building, a power plant, an education building, men's quadrangles, a home economics building, a new ballroom for the Union, and a biological station for the study of aquatic life at Lake Texoma. On the South Oval, Kaufman Hall was dedicated in honor of the "memory of Kenneth Carlyle Kaufman, teacher, scholar, poet, historian of literature, generous friend, lover of foreign cultures and of his own Oklahoma," and a statue of President Emeritus Bizzell, made by sculptor Joe Taylor, was erected as a memorial from the Class of 1943.

Among the now familiar names that were establishing themselves in the permanent University family were Lloyd Swearingen, Mark Everett, Earl Sneed, Dorothy Truex, R. Boyd Gunning, Fayette Copeland, Laurence H. Snyder, Horace B. Brown, Pete Kyle McCarter, Ralph Clark, and Robert Rucker.

Others were already being recognized for their careers, when, in 1948, five Oklahomans became the first to receive the University's top award—the Distinguished Service Citation. The recipients were A. S. Mike Monroney, Fifth District congressman, who was one of America's first two congressmen to win the *Collier's* Award for distinguished Congressional service; Generals Raymond S. McLain and William S. Key, U.S. Army leaders who gave service to the nation during World War II; Dr. Everette L. DeGolyer, internationally known geologist; and playwright Lynn Riggs, author of *Green Grow the Lilacs* on which the musical *Oklahoma!* was based.

It was during this period that Bud Wilkinson became perhaps the most popular figure in Oklahoma, and certainly one of the best known—not only in Oklahoma but among sports enthusiasts everywhere. The very name Bud

Wilkinson became synonymous with winning football, so that by the time Wilkinson had completed his first ten years as coach at OU, he was acknowledged one of the most famous men in the history of the game.

In compiling a glowing over-all record of 139-27-4, Wilkinson, and his able line coach, Gomer Jones, produced offensive and defensive machines whose records have yet to be approached by any other team. Three OU teams won national championships, three led the nation in scoring. Rushing, passing, and defensive records toppled during the Wilkinson regime. Perhaps the most notable achievements of all were the unequalled winning streaks of 47 and 31 games and a scoring streak of 123 consecutive games. But there were many, many more, almost too numerous to list. The Wilkinson-Jones partnership also produced a host of All-Americans:

Buddy Burris, Jack Mitchell, George Thomas, Jim Owens, Darrell Royal, Stan West, Wade Walker, Frankie Anderson, Buddy Jones, Jim Weatherall, Leon Heath, Tom Catlin, Billy Vessels (the only Heisman Trophy winner in the history of the Big Eight conference), Buck McPhail, Eddie Crowder, J. D. Roberts, Max Boydston, Kurt Burris, Tommy McDonald, Bo Bolinger, Ed Gray, Jerry Tubbs, Bill Krisher, Clendon Thomas, Bob Harrison, Jerry Thompson, Joe Don Looney, Wayne Lee, Leon Cross, Ralph Neely, and Jim Grisham.

Other athletes were making the sports pages—among them, Tommy Evans, Lester Lane, Paul Courty, Danny Hodge, Eddie Fisher, and J. D. Martin—but the definite mainstay was football under Wilkinson. His teams for ten years were the finest of modern college football.

**T**HE UNIVERSITY during the past two decades has seen many significant changes. The fact is, more growing up has been achieved during this time span than in all the remainder of the school's history.

From its raw beginning of forty acres on barren prairie worth \$1,500, the University has expanded into a \$67 million plant stretched over 3,065 acres. Where once stood one building now is home for ten colleges, not to mention the South Campus, Max Westheimer Field, and Research Park in Norman, plus the Schools of Medicine and Nursing at the University Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Fisheries Research Center at Noble, and the Biological Station at Lake Texoma. The campus, where Boyd, DeBarr, Amos, and Rice had taught, today boasts a faculty of more than 600 members, many of them widely known for significant scholarly contributions to their fields.

More than 70,000 degrees have been conferred upon graduates living in every state and territory of the United States and in some 70 foreign countries. These alumni hold degrees earned in Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Law, Pharmacy, Medicine and Nursing, and Liberal Studies.

New centers for engineering and fine arts have risen on campus in recent months, as well as a microbiology building, an aerospace research center, and modern student dormitories. The University's distinguished library now has over one million volumes, including special collections of unusual merit, such as the Frank Phillips Collection in



*The Crosses congratulate Bud after an early bowl win.*

Oklahoma and Indian History, the DeGolyer Collection in the History of Science and Technology, the Bass Collection in Business History, and the Bizzell Bible Collection. The University's Museum of Natural History houses extensive collections of priceless artifacts, while the University Press continues to publish prize-winning books, and the international quarterly, *Books Abroad*, has subscribers in more than sixty nations.

These are just a few of the things that are a part of the University today. There are more. Special endeavors such as the University Scholars, Honors Program, and President's Leadership Class are attracting gifted students and speeding their academic progress; adults are realizing their educational ambitions through the growing Bachelor of Liberal Studies program and the modern facilities of the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education; leaders in the humanities, artists-in-residence, and drama and music groups have helped create an atmosphere of culture and intellect on the campus.

This is the University of the sixties. Naturally, there is much yet to be done, such as taking care of that continuing problem—faculty salaries—which are far too low in comparison with those in other major universities. Also needed are research grants, more books for the library, and so on. But these matters are all part of a larger challenge the University has accepted—the Plan for Excellence, described as OU's long-range blueprint for academic greatness.

"The Plan is the culmination of painstaking analysis by administration and faculty members of the strengths and weaknesses of the University and its potential for the next quarter-century. Their conclusion is that the University possesses the base for becoming a dynamic center of learning, but that this ambitious undertaking is possible only through a major program of continuing private support."

Perhaps this far-reaching challenge is best expressed by President Cross: "The University of Oklahoma is entering a period in its history which illuminates a need for greatness and demands the achievement of excellence.

"The University of Oklahoma must provide the best possible educational opportunities for the increasing number of young men and women who are seeking education beyond the high school level. The scientists, historians and philosophers who graduate from the University of Oklahoma must compete with graduates of the finest schools in the world. When they cannot compete successfully, the University has failed them.

"The national interest must be served. The University of Oklahoma is not isolated; it is a part of the vital resources of the state and nation. The ideas of man in the 20th Century have created a greater propulsive force for higher education than has existed before in our country's history. New information in science, technology, medicine, human behavior and many other fields has accumulated at an astonishing rate since 1940. Our educational program must include the new knowledge and contribute to its expansion through research.

"How can the University of Oklahoma become a great university?

"The answer will be provided by the faculty, the alumni, the state legislature, business and industry and others who appreciate education's vital role in our society.

"We will build from a position of strength. The University of Oklahoma has a strong, dedicated faculty, which can be improved by the addition of a few outstanding teachers and an adequate salary structure for all.

"As we reach for greatness, our objectives will be to supply leadership in independent thought, to emphasize creativity in research and teaching, to become a center of scholarship and culture, and to serve God, the nation and the state."

The area of first priority in the president's mind and in the Plan for Excellence is the University's faculty.

"With the exception of the student body," Dr. Cross once said, "the most important part of any university is its faculty. The faculty consists of a group of professional personnel selected in such a manner that all fields of learning are represented. I cannot stress too strongly the idea that members of a faculty *are* professional personnel. They are not merely employees of the Board of Regents or of the state, who are hired, in the usual sense, to do work prescribed by the board or the president. They are professional people who have met rigid professional requirements. They have been engaged, on behalf of the state, to perform professional services of an educational nature. Their relationships to the university are, or should be, similar to the relationship of a doctor to his patient, or a lawyer to his client. If they are to perform satisfactory service for the state, they must have a maximum of freedom of thought and action commonly known as academic freedom.

"The professional nature of a college faculty is not always well understood by the rest of the citizens of a state. Many individuals who would not think of trying to tell their doctor or lawyer how to perform professional services have no hesitancy in telling the college professor how or what he should teach. . . .

"Public pressures must be acknowledged and given a fair and impartial hearing. Usually, however, the pressures must be resisted firmly, because the university that segments of the public seem to want may not be the university that the state should have at all. . . . A state university can

develop successfully only if those who are in charge keep long-range, major objectives in mind and are able to resist the short-run, minor pressures which inevitably develop from time to time. Educational sights must be trained on some distant star rather than on a nearby planet, if a university is to follow a direct course.

"The institution which utilizes these principles steadily through the years may not always be popular with the entire public; the alumni may worry about its public relations; and it may occasionally suffer from inadequate appropriations. But it will be following the only course which can lead to greatness."

It is just such foresight and influence that demonstrates that Dr. Cross, the nation's ranking state university president, is the right man for the tasks the University has placed before him, just as Boyd, Brooks and Bizzell were the right men for the jobs they had to do. E. E. Dale sums it up thus: "Dr. Boyd was a builder; Dr. Brooks was an administrator; Dr. Bizzell was a scholar. Dr. Cross is the rare combination of all three."

President Cross has been at his post for 22 years. In a speech commemorating the start of his tenth year in office, he offered some absorbing "Reflections on the Administration of a State University."

"A few months ago," he said, "I was scheduled to speak at a dinner in the northern part of Oklahoma and, as usual, I found myself a little behind schedule as I traveled that afternoon to make the engagement. While passing through one of the smaller towns en route, I allegedly drove too fast through a school zone. An elderly constable on duty stopped me and waved me to the curb. He asked if I didn't realize that I should slow up while passing through a school zone, and I told him that I was sorry I had been so careless. He then walked around behind my automobile and looked at the number. As he returned he said, 'Cleveland County. What town are you from, son?' I told him that I lived in Norman. He asked me how long I had lived there, and I told him 17 years. He looked at me reflectively and said, 'So you live in Norman, the University city—you've lived there 17 years—and you don't know any better than to speed through a school zone. Hasn't the University of Oklahoma made any impression on you at all?' I didn't get a ticket. To my relief, the officer didn't even ask to see my driver's license. But the incident started a trend of thought which kept me occupied during the remainder of my trip.

"A president has interesting and diverse responsibilities, but he has little to do directly with the main business of the university, which is scholarship. In the words of Walter A. Jessup, 'The president must be all things to all men. He must be a man who will charm the prospective donor, who will delight the students with his youthfulness, who will have wisdom and experience to lead the faculty to make decisions with unanimity, who will take full responsibility for a winning football team, who will say nothing to outrage either the stand-patter or the new-dealer, at the same time standing four-square on all things. He ought to be a man who is religious enough to suit the fundamentalist but sufficiently worldly not to outrage bibulous alumni. Truly, such a man is a white blackbird.'

"Unfortunately, no professional training has been designed for prospective college presidents. According to Mr.

Charles Dollard, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a suitable academic background should include courses and experience in 'banking and diplomacy, door-to-door selling, public relations, juvenile delinquency, and, for good measure, a little training in psychiatry.'

"But the president of a university and the effect that institution may have on him are not very important. The important thing is what happens to the university during the process."

The Cross policy has been simply to accept as cheerfully as possible each responsibility that comes his way. When there is need to make a choice between responsibilities, "I always—perhaps somewhat unwisely—accept the larger or the largest of them.

"This is what happened when I became president of the University of Oklahoma. . . . I am not a college president by profession. I am a scientist, retooled for administrative responsibilities during World War II—a time when there was a serious shortage of personnel. I accepted the new responsibility with misgivings which have not been allayed entirely. But after nine years of experience (1952), I have come to believe that practically anyone can get along fairly well as a college administrator if he can learn to do five things:

1. Use the collective judgment of the members of the faculty in deciding all matters pertaining to policy. This is difficult. It means committees, and committees mean delays. Someone has said that if Moses had been a committee, the children of Israel would still be in Egypt. But it means fewer mistakes also, because one can't make mistakes as fast if he uses committees.

2. Find very competent administrative officials to whom much University business can be delegated, and keep out of their way as much as possible. I am convinced that this is extremely important. During times of crisis, I find it advisable to leave the campus so that the vice president can get the job done without interference.

3. Develop the ability to distinguish clearly between personalities and issues when dealing with University affairs. There is no place in college administration or any place else for even the slightest degree of personal prejudice.

4. Learn to decide each issue on a merit basis, with the institution's long-range interests always in mind, and pay no attention to the pressures which will be exerted from time to time by groups with vested interests. This may reduce somewhat the length of a president's service, but it will mean more effective service.

5. Approach each day's problems with the knowledge that throughout history the good in man always outweighed the bad, although perhaps only slightly; and with the faith that this will be the case in the future.

"Possibly, in a sense, these ideas may be considered a philosophy of life. At least they involve acceptance of responsibility, faith in one's fellow beings, respect for the individual, and belief that if one does his best each day, somehow, with God's help, things will work out all right."

In most instances—for the University of Oklahoma—things are working out all right. Like any child growing up, she has had her bad moments, her bumps and bruises and times of sadness. The past years, nonetheless, do reflect an exciting period of growth of an important institu-

tion of higher learning, years that have developed an academic environment conducive to responsibility and freedom in teaching and learning.

The University's colorful past and a foundation for its future are thusly extolled in an anniversary poem by historian E. E. Dale:

*This is our heritage  
The traditional Sooner Spirit,  
Born at the crossroads of  
frontier migration, with  
its faith in the common  
man,  
Its optimism for the morrow,  
Its respect for the open  
mind,  
And its reliance upon  
divine leadership.*

## THE END OF 75 YEARS

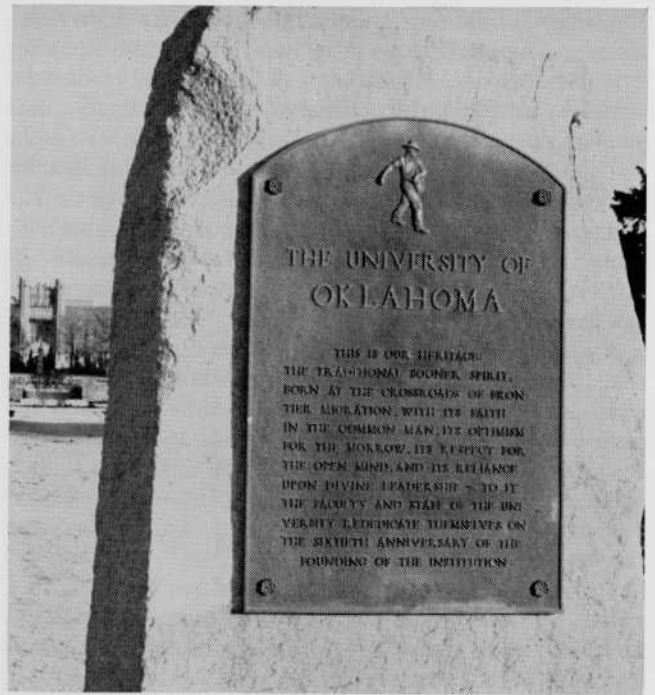


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