

tomorrow's teachers

The Wilson Fellows

Photographed by Larry McDade

A cartoon in a recent issue of *The New Yorker* magazine shows a commencement speaker, obviously an affluent member of society who has made his mark in the cold, cruel world, pointing to members of a graduating class and saying, "Now go out there and get yours!"

Most graduates respond to the challenge, doff their caps and gowns, and set out on careers outside the hallowed walls of their alma maters. It is important, however, that some choose to remain within the walls to get theirs, for colleges, in addition to supplying the demands of the "outside," also have the responsibility of replenishing their own reservoirs of teachers.

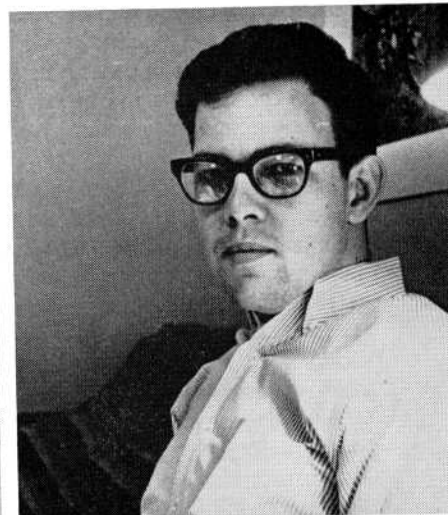
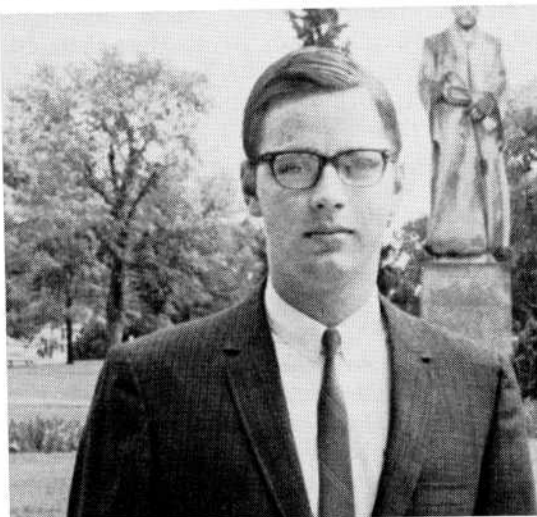
The demand is great. Each year the nation's colleges

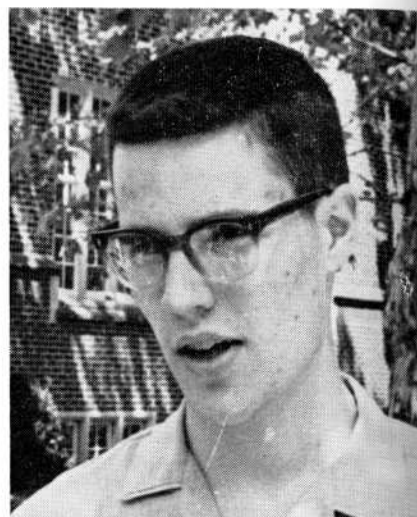
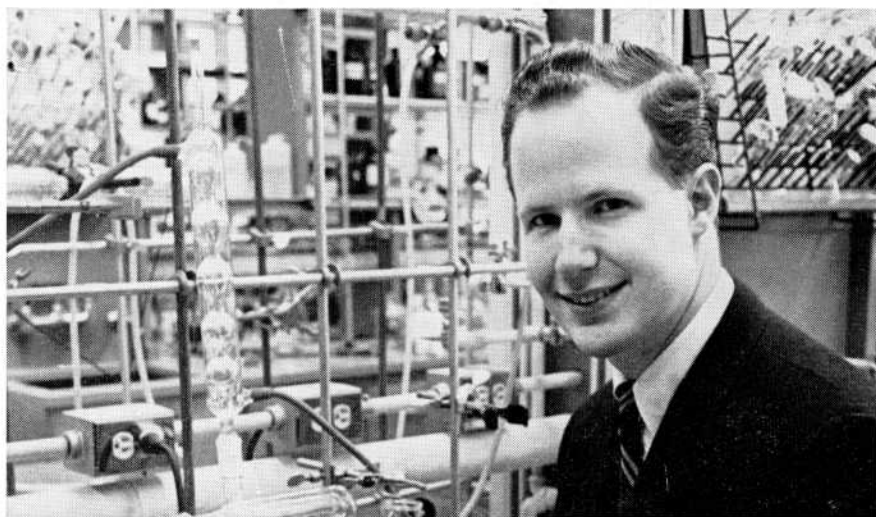
and universities must find 3,000 new teachers to meet expanding enrollments and to fill vacancies caused by retirements and by those leaving the profession for positions in business, industry, and government. To attract and encourage the better students to join the professorial ranks, private foundations and the U.S. Congress have established programs designed to smooth the long, expensive path of preparation required of college teachers. Various fellowships, scholarships, and grants have been made available through endowments and congressional appropriations.

One of the oldest and most prestigious of the private programs is directed by the Woodrow Wilson National

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From left to right are Linda Robertson, Ray Hively, and Joe Campbell who will enter Washington, Harvard, and California, respectively.





The sons of faculty members, Richard Hopla (left) and Frank Bernhart plan to teach on the university level in chemistry and mathematics.

Fellowship Foundation (see page 8). Between 1,000 and 1,500 graduating seniors in colleges and universities of the United States and Canada are selected annually to be Wilson Fellows. The stipends they receive to the graduate colleges of their choice provide them with a comfortable start toward the advanced degrees.

The 1966 Wilson Fellows are John A. C. Kirton, Bartlesville; Joe P. Campbell and Ray M. Hively, Muskogee; Frank R. Bernhart, Richard E. Hopla, and Linda Robertson, Norman; Carol Ann Reid, Oklahoma City; Benna K. Kime, Tulsa, and Gary L. Blasi, Liberal Kan. (Honorable mention went to Winford Gene Turner, Holdenville; Vicki J. Gotcher, McAlester, and Carolyn M. Johnson, Woodward.) Their fields of study are English (Campbell, Robertson, Kime, and Reid); political science (Blasi); physics (Hively); chemistry (Hopla); mathematics (Bernhart), and history (Kirton).

They will attend some outstanding universities for their graduate degrees—Harvard (Blasi and Hively), California (Campbell), Michigan (Bernhart), Stanford (Hopla), Wisconsin (Kirton), Cornell (Reid), University of Washington (Robertson), and Tulane (Kime).

"It's a long process to bring a student to the point where he wishes to go into graduate study and become a teacher," says Dr. Philip J. Nolan, chairman of the department of classics and an adviser to letters majors. "There is just not as much prestige in the Midwest in being a college professor as there is in other areas."

It's encouraging to observe the high caliber of students who are planning to become college teachers, despite strong competition for their services from business and industry. The Wilson Fellows are bright, attractive young people whose performances and future promise elicit lengthy monologues of praise from their professors, who exult about the Fellows with the enthusiasm of a Herman Franks discussing a Willie Mays. Words like "sharp," "efficient," "highly intelligent," "genius," "phenomenon," and "brilliant" are used to describe the nine. One professor, in speaking of two, articulated a consensus of the entire group: "They are blessed with independent judgment. They form well reasoned opinions. They don't swallow what they hear; they think about it." Another described the students he knew as "highly motivated, deeply committed, and de-

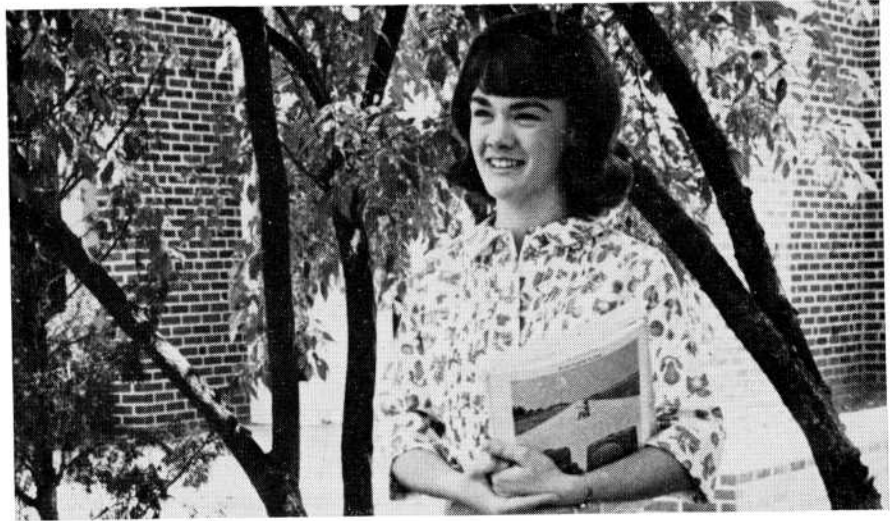
termined to succeed. They are eminently practical and clear-sighted. They set their goals, find out the rules, and then go after them." Still another: "They are the kind who do over and above what's necessary to do."

The Fellows have amassed an impressive collection of honors and awards during their years in OU. If they were awarded the equivalent of athletic letter jackets, theirs would be covered with slash marks, stripes, medals, patches, and stars. Most are members of Phi Beta Kappa. Gary missed this honor, chiefly because he was graduated in only three years (he made 60 hours of straight A as a freshman) and the organization decided not to name juniors this year. All have participated in the Honors Program during their stay here, and several were members of the first class of University Scholars and the President's Leadership Class.

Combined awards include a General Motors scholarship (Bernhart), the Carl Albert Award (Blasi), the Rita H. Lottinville Prize (Blasi), Outstanding Independent Woman (Reid), Bronze Letzeiser Medal (Reid and Kirton) plus a number of general honorary organizations like Mortar Board, ODK, Pe-et, and specialized clubs within specific fields.

Grade averages are without exception in rarefied regions, falling comfortably in the 3.5 to 3.96 range. Three finished their final semester with a flourish—straight As.

Most chose OU because it was there. The University's accessibility and reasonable cost were usually the chief reasons for most of their decisions to attend college here. Two of the Fellows, Frank Bernhart and Richard Hopla, are sons of faculty members, Dr. Arthur Bernhart in math and Dr. Cluff E. Hopla, chairman of the zoology department. "I came here because OU is the best school in the state for physics," says Ray Hively. Like Ray the others are generally pleased with the teaching. "I don't feel I could have a better undergraduate education," says Carol Reid. Gary decided upon OU as a 14-year-old high school student. "I spent a summer here in 1960 on a special science program under Dr. Bliss and made the decision then to enroll here," he says. Joe Campbell came to OU despite a high school guidance counselor who advised him not to go to college—he was almost certain to fail. Joe had an unattractive disciplinary record and had spent his junior year



English is the field Benna Kime (left) of Tulsa and Carol Reid of Oklahoma City will study. Graduate work will be at Tulane and Cornell.

in a remedial English class. His subsequent performance indicates that guidance counselors do not possess infallible judgment and that students are capable of maturation.

More than one have made or will take academic U-turns. John Kirton's BA is in mathematics, but he will change his field of study to history in graduate school. "John majored in math, I think, because of the emphasis on science that was so prevalent while he was in high school," says Dr. Nolan. "Through his associations he tended more toward the humanities. His work can really be construed as a tri-major, because he's had a great deal of classics and history with his math." Gary was a math major also in his freshman year. "Both students and professors I knew influenced me in my decision," he says. Benna Kime was a prelaw major for "about three weeks. I wanted to do something that would at least allow me to conquer the world, and English sounded so prosaic," she says.

In describing the kind of teachers they hope to become, many want to emulate the professors who have taught them. Names like Nolan, Maehl, Ruggiers, Elconin, Plint, French, Sutherland, Cutts, Thayer, Male, Schmitz, Reigle are among those singled out. "A good teacher," says Benna, "should have thorough command of his subject and an interesting delivery. He should not soft-pedal but should reveal his enthusiasm. Some seem to find their subject as dull as you do." Richard says, "It's important that a teacher can challenge a student to think and see that he knows how. The memorization and recitation of facts is too widespread."

The Wilson Fellows were asked to comment on OU's needs and shortcomings. Said one, "By and large little is done to stimulate intellectual activity. I would like to see more debates, special seminars, forums, visiting professors and speakers appear on campus. We have been in the process of choosing a College Bowl team, but this is simply big league Trivia. The President's Conference on the World of Ideas was basically a good idea (*Sooner Magazine*, Jan.), but the students weren't invited to take part."

"There needs to be more places where students can get together to discuss intellectual ideas," said another. "The campus church groups are the only agencies I know of that are actively working to stimulate thought. The administration seems to give official sanction to the social life. There

need to be more things to recognize academic achievement for its own right."

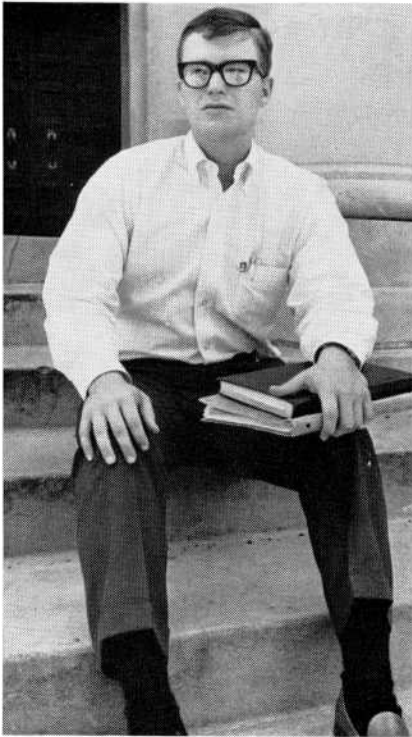
"You can become lost here in the party whirl," was another comment. "This is especially true of freshmen. I know a number of students who have been really disappointed and frustrated when they come here. You have to hunt to find any intellectual stimulation and many rarely find it."

Said another: "I think the best point about OU is that it's not institutionalized to the extent that you can't talk to professors. The communication between the students and the faculty is as good here as anywhere. The thing that disturbs me is that if the money doesn't come, many of our good teachers will be tempted to leave."

"There is a good deal of superficiality here, and a large amount of thoughtless conformity. Of course we grade-seekers have conformed in our way. We've made a choice to go all out for grades, and grades *do* matter. I wouldn't have my fellowship without them, but I hope the pursuit of learning is our first motivation." "The anti-intellectual atmosphere which prevails here is stultifying," said another Fellow. "Efficiency and expediency become the ultimate ends of bureaucracy. There's a strong don't-rock-the-boat atmosphere here. The disturbing thing is that it seems that all the channels for initiating change are sewed up. Students run through here without much of a say. A high-school graduate who doesn't go to college has more freedom and responsibility than an OU freshman. The newspaper is not a student newspaper; it's controlled by the journalism faculty and yet every student contributes part of his fees for what amounts to a journalism laboratory paper."

Most of the students are pleased with the Honors Program (*Sooner Magazine*, March 1965) which has afforded them the opportunity to enjoy small classes under top teachers at a fast pace, to take part in interdisciplinary colloquia, and to conduct independent research projects and directed outside reading. All said the best memories they would hold of OU would be of the associations they made here. Said one, "I believe OU is moving in the right direction though far too slowly. I realize penury is the chief reason for dragging, but I hope we can all do more in the

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John Kirton (above) enters Wisconsin for graduate study in history. Gary Blasi heads for Harvard and a political science degree.



state to support the school."

Gary Blasi was one of the leaders in the May student "study-in" which protested the lack of financial support of Oklahoma's institutions of higher learning. The Higher Regents subsequently raised fees to pay for the increased costs of a larger 1967 enrollment, and many believe that the student demonstration (*Sooner News-Makers*, June) played an important

part in the Regents' ultimate decision.

The nine Wilson Fellows will not be addressed as "Professor" for some years yet, but those who know them believe time is the only factor before they enter the classroom on the side of the lectern. "All these kids are going to be good," says an OU professor, "and a couple could be great. I hope we can afford them in a few years."

END

The Wilson Fellowships

In May the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, supported by Ford Foundation funds, named 1,408 prospective first-year graduate students in the U.S. and Canada as recipients of Wilson Fellowships for 1966-67. The two countries are divided into 15 regions by the Wilson Foundation with OU in Region 11, which covers Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota and includes five other universities in the Big Eight conference (Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma State).

OU, with nine Wilson Fellows, ranked second in the region to Kansas' 18 Wilsons. Kansas State had 4, Nebraska 5, Missouri 6, and Oklahoma State 1. "The University through the years has been a leading institution in the region," says Dr. John S. Ezell, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a member of the regional selection committee, composed of professors from the schools in the five states. "Overall we are second, just behind Kansas in the number of fellowships received by our students."

A Woodrow Wilson Fellow receives a living stipend of \$2,000 for one academic year to the graduate school of his choice. Married male Fellows with children receive an additional allowance of \$1,000 for the first child and \$250 for each additional child. Tuition and fees are also paid by the Foundation.

In accepting the award, a Fellow pledges to give serious consideration to a career in college teaching and during tenure to take a full graduate schedule, but he does not obligate himself to become a teacher.

The selection process begins in the fall with the nomination of prospective Fellows by one of their professors. After the nominations, panels of

teachers in each of the regions screen the applicants, asking some to attend an interview before a selection committee. Of the more than 11,000 applications in the 15 regions, about 3,000 were selected for the interview, from which the 1,408 Fellows from 380 colleges and universities were finally chosen.

The Region 11 interview was held in Kansas City. Dr. Ezell points to two criteria the selection committee looks for in the candidates. "First, they must have the ability to do successful graduate work, and second, we are interested in attitudes and personalities which suggest to us their potential in becoming good teachers."

Particular weight is placed on the quality of a nominee's preparation for graduate study. There must be a solid foundation at the undergraduate level for study leading to the PhD. A candidate must show competence in foreign languages, and an ability in the writing of essays and of reports on independent work.

The 1966-67 recipients represent 24 fields of study with English and history being the largest. The Foundation primarily supports candidates in the humanities and social sciences. Science and mathematics majors may be nominated but they must apply simultaneously for a National Science Foundation fellowship. Two of OU's Wilson Fellows—Ray Hively and Richard Hopla—are in this category and will study under NSF fellowships toward graduate degrees in physics and chemistry, respectively. Another OU Fellow, Carol Reid, has received a National Defense Education Act Fellowship which she is required to accept and with the two NSF Fellows will be known as an honorary Wilson Fellow.