

The Sooner Magazine

OKLAHOMA



ALUMNI NEWS

Granting the First Ph. D. Degree

Rigid Standards Are Set for Highest Academic Distinction

By Dr. Homer L. Dodge, Dean, Graduate School

IN June 4 the University of Oklahoma conferred for the first time, the degree of doctor of philosophy. It was an important event in the history of the university and of education in Oklahoma, coming as it did exactly three decades after graduate instruction was first offered in the university and two decades after the organization of the graduate school.

The decision to offer graduate work leading to the doctorate was reached in the spring of 1927 when the board of regents, on recommendation of President Bizzell, authorized the graduate school to organize graduate study beyond the master's degree with the expectation that in the near future a limited number of departments would offer sufficient work so that it would be possible to confer the doctor's degree.

The first student who was accepted for graduate study leading to the doctorate was Mr. Chalmer L. Cooper, chief geologist of the Oklahoma Geological Survey, who received his master's degree from the University of Oklahoma in June, 1926. Mr. Cooper's major subject is geology; his thesis deals with the establishing of the exact geologic age and stratigraphic position of the Woodford chert, Sycamore limestone and Caney shale, and will include a study of correlative formations throughout Oklahoma and the United States. Mr. Cooper has made considerable progress on his thesis and if he had been able to devote full time to graduate study undoubtedly would have been the first to receive the degree.

Miss Mary Jane Brown, upon whom the degree of doctor of philosophy was conferred at the June commencement,

came to the university in the fall of 1927 after having completed over two years of graduate study at Washington University, St. Louis, the University of Chicago, the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, and the Puget Sound Biological Laboratory. She was able to devote full time to graduate study and completed the course requirements in June, 1928. The thesis has been finished during the past year while she has filled the position of assistant professor of zoology at the Oklahoma College for Women.

During the past two years ninety students who hold the master's degree from this and other institutions have registered for further graduate work. Of the ninety, over forty are expecting to complete work for the doctorate, twenty having made definite plans for completing the work in the near future. Of the ninety about twenty-five are in residence at the university this summer.

While the work of these students is distributed among a large number of departments, there are only four departments offering major work for the doctor's degree. These are education, geology, history and zoology. Several other departments will probably be approved for major work within the next few years, but the policy has been to develop advanced graduate work on a conservative basis.

THERE is a growing feeling among educators that the work for the doctorate in any institution must be justified on quite a different basis from work for the master's degree. A state university, for example, is considered to be justified in offering work for the master's degree in a particular field when there is sufficient demand for it. Sentiment, however, favors the concentration of work for the doctorate in centers peculiarly qualified for certain types of work. In such centers departments will



—Photo by Heffner

AN AMBITION REALIZED—DOCTOR BROWN WITH DIPLOMA

naturally be well developed and students will come from great distances. There is a great advantage in the association with a large group of graduate students working in the same field and with several faculty members who are devoting a considerable proportion of their time to research.

On the master's level the emphasis in graduate work should be on offering work in a large variety of fields and on making this work of approximately uniform quality. On the doctor's level the emphasis should be on the development of graduate work of outstanding quality in special fields. On the master's level a state university should attempt to meet practically all of the needs of its citizens. On the doctor's level it should concentrate on fields in which it is peculiarly fitted to offer exceptional opportunities. For other lines of work its citizens should expect to go elsewhere and in turn students should be expected to come from far and near to carry on work in the fields in which the local institution excels.

In carrying out this policy at the University of Oklahoma it has been found helpful to set up certain standards for judging whether or not the work of a department is worthy of special encouragement. Does the research work of the department deal with problems which can be carried out in Oklahoma more advantageously than elsewhere? Will the research contribute to the cultural, social, or economic development of the state? Is the demand for the work of the department so great that a large local group will be served?

The departments which have been mentioned unquestionably meet these tests. For example, the local demand for work in history is considerable and no one would question the desirability of a widespread knowledge of the subject. The most important reason, however, for a special emphasis in this field is that Oklahoma is peculiarly fitted by location and its own historical background to become a great center for the study of southwestern history. Already the department has in its archives source material which affords a rich field for original research and it is reasonable to expect that it will not be many years before this university is sought out by those interested in the history of the southwest.

Geology and zoology afford excellent examples of fields in which many of the problems are peculiar to the section and can be solved nowhere else. Usually the solution of such problems not only adds to the sum of

human knowledge but also becomes the basis for commercial and industrial development.

At the present time the greatest demand for work leading to the doctorate is in the field of education. Stimulated somewhat by more severe demands of local boards but motivated principally by a desire to continue study and become more thoroughly prepared for the work, large numbers of teachers, supervisors, principals and superintendents are seeking work in education beyond that required for the master's degree. There is a double benefit in such study. These educators will be better trained but they will also, in the course of their training and especially in their research, work out problems of great importance to the schools of Oklahoma. Practically all of the theses on education deal with local educational problems. The value of this work cannot be overestimated, so far-reaching are the results. With the greater emphasis which is placed on the doctor's thesis, more difficult and more important problems may be undertaken.

There is no intention, however, of implying that advanced graduate work should be confined to these few departments. The intellectual life of a university worthy of the name is dependent upon scholarly activity and research on the part of all members of the faculty. This is possible only in the environment of well developed graduate study. Even though special emphasis must necessarily be given to a few departments, this does not imply the curtailment of the natural development of the work of the others. The university should be more than the formal head of the educational system of the state, it should be the fountain head of intellectual inspiration in all fields. As students go out from its doors with increased knowledge the intellectual life of the state should be quickened through their influence. Research in the sciences should help in the development of natural resources and increased efficiency in industry. Research in the fields of history and government and the other social sciences should contribute to the political and social advancement of the state. Advanced study in the humanities should leaven the state with an intelligent and idealistic leadership.



MUCH a program as the university has undertaken can be successful only with the cooperation and support of the alumni of the institution and the citizens of the state. Those who

have attended the university are aware of the inadequacy of the present physical plant and the heavy teaching load carried by the faculty, but only those who have carried on work beyond the bachelor's degree can fully appreciate how difficult it is to develop graduate study under present conditions. The erection of the library marks a great step in the right direction, but as President Bizzell has pointed out the building is just the beginning. It will be many years before an adequate working library can be accumulated. Laboratory facilities in all departments are inadequate. There are too few research rooms properly arranged and equipped for the research work of either faculty or students. The teaching load of the graduate faculty is such that sufficient time and energy is available neither for personal research nor for the direction of the research of graduate students.

This is a family discussion, written for the alumni and friends of the university and it is right that you should know the truth. At the present time we have well developed graduate work on the master's level and a solid foundation on which to build work leading to the doctorate, but the only hope for the proper development of a program of graduate study depends upon more liberal support for the university and greater emphasis upon this important aspect of its work.

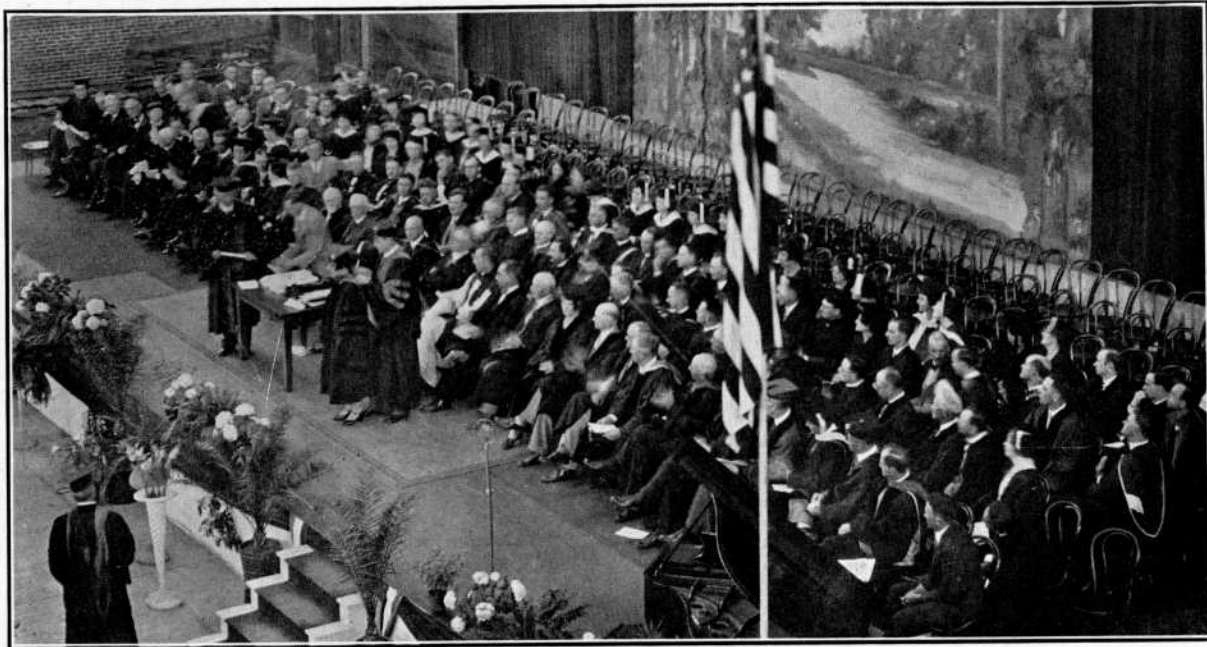
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Summer Oklahoma Daily

The Oklahoma Daily for the first time is this year publishing during the summer session. The paper is a five-column tabloid size newspaper. Charles Tapt of Altus is editor and Ray Kimball is business manager. Savoie Lottinville, editor of the regular session daily, is managing editor. The Daily during summer term is issued by the regular publication board.

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The University of Oklahoma school of journalism continues its ranking as one of the few class A schools in the United States, according to the appraisal announced in May by the United States Publisher. Twenty-three schools only were given class A rating; it is noteworthy that in the last decade the Oklahoma school has consistently remained in this rather small group of schools, which, in 1920, contained only eleven schools. Thirty-three schools were given class B rating.



—Truby Photo for The Sooner Magazine

DEAN DODGE PLACING THE DOCTOR'S HOOD ON THE SHOULDERS OF MARY JANE BROWN

A Great Moment in University of Oklahoma History

THIS is a moment of great historical importance to the University of Oklahoma." It was Dr. W. B. Bizzell, president of the university, speaking. The occasion was on Tuesday, June 4, at the commencement exercises in the fieldhouse. More than eight hundred graduates, clad in their black gowns, sat expectantly in the pit of the fieldhouse, their diplomas in hand. The last master of arts had taken his seat and Dr. Guy Y. Williams, adept master of ceremonies, breathed a sigh of relief. There was a slight pause. George Wadsack, registrar of the university, left his seat and delved into the recesses of a box and drew from it a hood, new to academic life in Norman. It was in red and white, the university's colors, and in blue. Dr. Homer L. Dodge, dean of the graduate school, took the hood from Mr. Wadsack. President Bizzell turned to the audience that had waited more than two hours, and began speaking. A new milestone had been passed by the university—the first doctor of philosophy degree was about to be conferred.

From her seat in the front row arose Miss Mary Jane Brown of Chickasha, Oklahoma. There was no announcement. Quietly she walked to the stage and Doctor Dodge placed on her shoulders the hood. Typical of this miracle-making land, Oklahoma, a woman was the first to receive the highest academic award of the university. It was a great moment in the university's history. There was an ovation, long and sincere, from the audience. Doctor Brown received the homage of Soonerland.

PRESIDENT BIZZELL, in his short address, declared that the university had jealously guarded the standard of its doctor of philosophy degree. So jealous was the university that none but the most deserving receive it, that the university invited Prof. Robert K. Nabours of Kansas State Agricultural college, to assist the examining committee. The audience, said Doctor Bizzell, could be assured that the candidate was worthy of the honor.

Doctor Brown was born at Nashville, Indiana, October 14, 1886. She received her bachelor of arts degree from Butler university. She was a student at the Marine Biological laboratory, Woods

Hole, Massachusetts, and was a graduate assistant in zoology at Washington university, St. Louis, from which institution she received her master's degree in 1921. She became associate professor of zoology in Transylvania college, Lexington, Kentucky, in 1921, leaving there in 1923 to become a fellow in zoology at the University of Chicago. From 1924 to 1927, she was instructor in biology at Lindenwood college, St. Charles, Missouri. During the summer of 1925, she was a student at the Puget Sound biological laboratory. From 1927 through 1928, she was a fellow in zoology at the university. She was then working on her doctorate. She completed her work in 1928 and became assistant professor of biology in the Oklahoma College for Women at Chickasha, with which institution she is still a faculty member.

Doctor Brown worked on the problem "Comparative Studies in the Animal Ecology of Oak-Hickory Forests in Missouri and Oklahoma." Among her conclusions were these:

1. The Missouri forest has a much greater animal population than the Oklahoma forest, both in number of animals and in number of species.
3. A number of the predominant and seasonal animals are found in both the Missouri and Illinois forest.
4. The predominant and seasonal forms of the Oklahoma forest are more similar to those of the Illinois and Oklahoma prairie than to those of the Missouri and Illinois forest. Hence it may be inferred that the animal population of the Oklahoma oak-hickory forest is more typically that of the true prairie type than that of the true deciduous forest type as represented in Missouri and Illinois.
5. The deciduous forest formation is characterized by lower temperature, greater precipitation, higher humidity and humus soil composition.
6. The prairie formation is characterized by higher temperature, lower precipitation and humidity, greater wind velocity and sandy soil composition.
7. The correlation of the seasonal accession of animals and plants is not as evident in the Oklahoma forest as in the Missouri forest.
8. The animals making up the presocieties in the Oklahoma forest hibernate in the soil-leaf stratum beneath the habitat in which they are found during the active seasons of the year, while in the Missouri forest they may migrate from the grassland to the forest border, then to the forest preceding hibernation, and in the reverse direction following the breaking up of hibernation.
9. The animal components making up the various stratal societies migrate between the different strata, in response to the climatic changes.
10. The animals of the oak-hickory forest of Missouri are more deeply lethargic and have a longer hibernation period than those of the Oklahoma forest.

Doctor Brown defended her thesis with brilliance.