Sooneristically speaking

Where the magnificent new University Library is dedicated formally February 21 and 22, all Oklahomans may feel a just pride. Discounting local pride, it remains true, nevertheless, that our library is one of the finest college libraries in America. I have been in many of the world’s great libraries, and, unless I except the Bodleian at Oxford, none are as beautiful, as conducive to reading, as the Oklahoma Library. The library is in good taste throughout, it is conveniently arranged, its great reading room is a triumph both for architecture and for the scholar, and it is a real inducement to the research student.

If President Bizzell and Librarian J. L. Rader had sought consciously a memorial to their unselfish service to the university, they could have found none greater than this, the “Oklahoma Crown Jewel.”

In the deaths of Professor Josef Noll and Laurence Pickett Williams, the university has lost not only two most lovable faculty members but has lost two creative artists. Death is an inexorable fact of nature; yet that it should take two just at the start of careers of great promise seems unnecessarily cruel.

Larry Williams made strong friendships. It is doubtful if there were three truer friends on the campus than he, Professor Jacobson and George Wadsack. These latter early saw Larry’s great promise as an artist and encouraged him with every means within their power to carry on with his work. Yale University recognized his genius in offering him a traveling scholarship. This was still available at his death. In fact, had he been able financially, Larry would undoubtedly have spent this year on leave of absence, further perfecting his skill.

The American Association of University Professors has taken its place as the champion of learning in America. A report of its committee on academic freedom and tenure recently condemned the action of the University of Pittsburgh in refusing to appoint a graduate assistant because of his participation in the attempt of the Students’ Liberal club to hold a meeting for the release of Mooney and Billings. Pittsburgh seems frankly subservient to money. The committee reported that the faculty was pervaded with a feeling of futility, of fear and insincerity. Education, true scholarship, dies quickly in such an atmosphere.

Another committee of the association has just returned a report concerning the University of Missouri, which condemns our neighbor for dismissing a professor as a result of a questionnaire dealing with sex matters. The association labels the “offense” as “trivial, if any,” and the action of the Missouri curators as “a clear breach of the principles of freedom of teaching and research and security of tenure in the university.” The action was taken by the university at the time because a number of legislators demanded it.

Scholarship and truth are synonymous. Any university that demands hypocrisy of its faculty members as the price of continued tenure has defeated the goal of higher education.

Sigma Xi has established a chapter at the university. That completes the list of great honorary fraternities on the rolls of the university. Sigma Xi is welcome. We feel that it could have come earlier, since the quality of our university and the high standing of our scientists merited it earlier. But, better late than never.

While Biff Jones, famous army coach, would have been a distinguished addition to our coaching staff, we are glad he is not coming. Captain Jones played a team that is virtually an “outlaw” in sports. I do not recall any time when the redoubtable captain has endeavored to change West Point’s rating with amateur college teams. Oklahoma has maintained too high an amateur standing to kneel down before a famous name, and so concede in a measure to the twilight standard of athletics West Point’s football teams uphold. Bennie Owen and Ad Lindsey are good enough names for us, because they mean playing the game all the way.

The letter of Dr. A. B. Adams, dean of the college of business administration, published in The Sooner Magazine for January, has aroused widespread comment. Dean Adams demanded a stern revision of athletic practices, and there has been plenty of fireworks since. A summary of comment on his letter will be published in an early issue of the magazine.