OKLAHOMA'S political "carpet-bagging" days apparently are about at an end and the voters are at last turning to the home grown products to administer their affairs of state.

Two years ago, Joshua Bryan Lee, '17, became the first University of Oklahoma graduate to be elected to the United States Senate.

This year, Leon C. Phillips, '16 law, became the first graduate of the University to win the nomination for governor on the Democratic ballot, a nomination that is tantamount to election in this overwhelmingly Democratic state.

And when the 260-pound, cigar-chewing, former House of Representatives Speaker assumes the worries of the State's chief executive early in January, he will find that more than two score members of the Legislature are former University of Oklahoma students.

Pledged to economy and a war against patronage, the ninth elected governor of Oklahoma faces the same long odds he did when in 1913 he set out to become the No. 1 political leader on the University of Oklahoma campus and a guard on the football team.

Without previous experience in either field of endeavor, he determined to seek student fame, and in 1915 he was president of the Student Council and a guard on the all-victorious football team that Ben G. Owen still calls his best in history.

They tell how Red used to slip through the line to smear plays and how in the Kansas game he stopped three plays in a row to throw the Jayhawkers back 25 yards.

And they tell how he set out to become president of the Student Association with as much serious determination as he set out later to become governor of Oklahoma.

When he entered the University, young Phillips, a former student for the ministry at Epworth University in Oklahoma City, was opposed to social fraternities as a matter of principle. But in the closing days of his junior year, he began to see fraternities in a more tolerant way, and his friend Paul Darrough, now an Oklahoma City attorney, persuaded him to pledge Sigma Nu.

His sister, Mary Lois, now Mrs. H.E. Boorom of Oklahoma City, became a member of Delta Delta Delta.

Leon Phillips, the senior, was serious and bespectacled. The 1916 Sooner, following the custom of labeling each senior with a verse, said of him:

*Learned, mighty, modest, he,
  Plain as his own hair to see.*

The yearbook listed these activities beside his picture: Sigma Nu; Masonic Club; Phi Delta Phi; Sooner Bar; Forum; Custer County Club; Assistant Business Manager, 1915 Sooner; president Student Association; University Oklahoman Board; Publication Board; Y.M.C.A. Cabinet; President Freshman Law Class; Varsity Football; Class Football; Class Baseball. After graduation he was called back to the campus to become a member of Coif, exclusive law fraternity.

SUMMING UP his football career, the Sooner commented that there were any number of aspirants for the vacancy at left guard on the Sooner team of 1916, but Red's "speedy dependability, his pep and his habit of being always in the fight" finally landed him the place.

Mrs. Phillips, who attended O.U. as Myrtle Ellenberger, was active in the Y.W. C.A. cabinet, serving as president in her senior year. She was secretary, treasurer and critic of Zetalethan society at various times. She was made a member of the O.U. chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1920. A graduate in 1912, she was not in school at the same time as Leon Phillips, but her home was in Norman and they had plenty of opportunities to see each other. They became engaged.

Perhaps no graduating senior ever had such a closing week hung onto his career at the University as Leon Phillips experienced. It was to be a week they would never forget. And it was.

Red was to be admitted to the bar on Tuesday. They planned to be married secretly Wednesday. Then, on Thursday he would March up to the platform and get his degree. Without telling anyone of their marriage, they planned to slip away Friday on a honeymoon.

No one knew of the plans except Myrtle's mother, who lived in Norman, and Leon's sister, Mary Lois, who had graduated from the University the previous year.

The trouble was, they had planned nothing to keep them busy on Monday. The boys at the Sigma Nu house called Myrtle and then Mary Lois early Monday morning to report that Leon was suffering from an acute attack of appendicitis. At first, neither refused to believe the report. But when they were finally persuaded that Mr. Phillips was one sick graduating senior, they came over.

He was writhing with pain. Medical facilities in Norman were sketchy since school was out. So there was nothing to

Two pictures of Leon Phillips during his days as student and football player on the O.U. campus.
Phillips decided to run for the House and who had held office as representative from the Okfuskee County Election Board and secretary of the Okemah School Board. He became active in the Methodist church and Mrs. Leon Phillips, Myrtle Ellenberger, '12 and Leon Phillips, '16, law, who are slated to be the first O.U. couple to occupy the governor's mansion.

Mrs. Leon Phillips (Myrtle Ellenberger, '12) and Leon Phillips, '16, law, who are slated to be the first O.U. couple to occupy the governor's mansion.