First of A Radio Series

The Classes of 1899 and 1904

By Roy Gittinger

(Ed's Note: Dean Git first presented this series on the reunion classes of 1949 over station WNAD. Because of their excellence and appeal to alumni, we asked to be permitted to publish them. The Sooner Magazine will carry the rest of the series in the following months. Dean Git needs no introduction to any of the many alumni. We hand the mike back to him.)

Today we wish to pay tribute to the members of two early graduating classes of the University—the classes of 1899 and 1904. Just 50 years ago on Friday, June 9, 1899, the degree of Pharmaceutical Chemist was conferred on five candidates and three received the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The graduates in pharmacy were Frank Ray Briggs of Pawnee, Sara Elfie Stone of Choctaw City, Oda Lewis Taylor of Norman, Ora Oliver Teeter of Norman, and Minnie Ola Wood of Enid, who soon became Mrs. Rose. Those who received the bachelor's degree were Lawrence W. Cole of El Reno, Jesse L. Helley of Norman, and Roscoe S. Helvie also of Norman. Only three of the eight graduates are now living. Jesse L. Helley, now a resident of Norman and the first of many members of the Helley family, completed the requirements for graduation from the University, is the only living person who received the bachelor's degree on that Commencement day half a century ago. Frank Ray Briggs and Mrs. Minnie Wood Rose, who received degrees in pharmacy, are the other living members of the class. . . .

In passing it should be noted that in June, 1899, for the first and only time in the history of the University an honorary degree, LL.D., was conferred at Commencement. John L. Dille, a former member of the Board of Regents who had recently moved away from Oklahoma, was the recipient. Many years later it should be added the Board of Regents granted this degree to one of its own members, Frederick S. Elder, professor of mathematics. Miss King was assisted in her work by two instructors. The campus included 40 acres, twelve acres of which were planted in trees—elm, ash, and locust. The one building contained 21 receptacles and reception rooms and a front porch. The site of this building was just north of the present DeBarr Hall and nearly on the ground covered by the present Outdoor Theatre. The building faced north.

At the Commencement on June 10, 1904, now 45 years ago, the graduating class numbered 14. Eight received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, one the degree of Bachelor of Science, two the degree of Bachelor of Music, and three the degree in pharmacy.

The eight who received the degree of Bachelor of Arts were James Ralph Bell of Gainesville, Texas; Winifred Edith Bennett of Norman; Sardin Roy Hadsell of Winfield, Kansas; Lot M. Jones of Cordell; Lillie Kate Miller of Norman; William Arthur Morter of Norman; Catherine Sarchet of Guthrie, who soon became Mrs. Willard Gorton, and Grace King, now Mrs. Maguire, director of the School of Music. Mrs. King was assisted in her work by two instructors. The campus included 40 acres, twelve acres of which were planted in trees—elm, ash, and locust. The one building contained 21 receptacles and reception rooms and a front porch. The site of this building was just north of the present DeBarr Hall and nearly on the ground covered by the present Outdoor Theatre. The building faced north.

The degree of Bachelor of Music was conferred for the first time at the June Commencement of 1904. The recipients were Berenice Rice of Wentworth, Missouri, and Lena Alice Stubblesfield of Chandler. Miss Rice was a member of the Fine Arts faculty from 1904 to 1908. She now lives in Oklahoma. . . . Miss Stubblesfield soon married Wallace Perry who, incidentally, was the first alumnus to serve on the Board of Regents. The Perrys now live in New Mexico. The three who received degrees in pharmacy 45 years ago were Eben Gridley of Alva, Rose Haddix of Norman, and Gladie Goode. As present in our memories only (this address was given prior to reunion) will be the five other graduates of the College of Arts—the quiet, gentlemanly Ralph Bell, the able, versatile Edith Bennett, the vivacious Catherine Sarchet, the studious Charlie Kirk—and Roy Hadsell. This seems an appropriate time to pay special tribute to him, an early president of the Alumni Association, a man who spent 42 years on the faculty of the University and 38 as a member of the faculty until his untimely death August 22, 1942.

Roy Hadsell began work as a student stenographer in the president's office in September, 1900. During the year 1903-04, his senior year, he was acting registrar. After his graduation and until 1908 he was University registrar. During the next 34 years except for two periods when he was on leave of absence for advanced study he was professor of the English language. Whenever the University had a piece of work that required persistent and painstaking application Roy Hadsell was often the one asked to undertake it. He did not try, as the good executive is supposed to try, to pass work on to others but instead he devoted full time and energy to the task at hand. If the task was successfully accomplished, as it usually was, he was content for the University or for his co-workers to receive the credit. If, as sometimes the case, everything did not turn out as was expected, he was always willing to assume his share of the responsibility. Because of his modesty he never made claims of great achievements and never sought publicity for the work he was doing. The University administration never had a more loyal, earnest, able, and dependable member of the teaching staff than Roy Hadsell. He gave unstintingly of his time to the serious, hard working student as well as to the more brilliant members of his classes. The thousands of students who have been in his classes have not forgotten and will not forget him and his work.

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As time will allow, we shall try to give a general description of the University as it was 45 years ago. The enrollment during 1903-04 reached 467 including two graduate students, 126 in the College of Arts and Sciences, five in the School of Medicine, four in the School of Mines, 77 (mostly of preparatory rank) in the School of Fine Arts, 23 in the School of Pharmacy, and the remainder in the Preparatory School. It may be observed that this was the first year that the enrollment in the School of Mines was listed separately. The School of Mines, as all know, was soon to be merged with the College of Engineering established a few years after this date. The teaching staff in 1904 numbered about 25.

The campus had expanded to 60 acres, but the University still had only one main building—and a wooden gymnasion plus three small frame structures used as laboratories. The main building was known as University Hall. It was located on the site
of the present Administration Building. University Hall was occupied in March, 1903, but unfortunately the first main building was destroyed by fire two months earlier—that is in January, 1903. University Hall was itself to be destroyed by fire in December, 1907, it must be added. The wooden gymnasium was constructed in the summer of 1903. It is still standing just south of the Oklahoma Memorial Union. (It was recently torn down.) In 1904 two buildings were in the process of construction—Science Hall, still known by that name, and the Carnegie Library, now usually known as the Education Building. These buildings were to be occupied respectively in September, 1904, and January, 1905.

One further touch to show how much we have changed. The catalog of 45 years ago gravely records that in the women's gymnasium "the work is carried on for the most part in classes accompanied by music," and further that "women's gymnasium suits require four yards of (Lurk) blue serge or flannel. They consist of two pieces, a blouse and bloomers. The Butterick pattern may be bought in town for a small sum." With this athletic item this broadcast must close...
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SEPTEMBER, 1949 19
Change of Address—Alcatraz!

A shocked look came over the Sooner Magazine staff when a lady wrote in to change her address to Alcatraz Island, California. But all is well. She’s merely there with her husband who is working for the U.S. Bureau of Prisons—voluntarily.

Mrs. William S. Reische, the former Billie Anita Joseph, ’37bs, ’40m.ed, wrote in to say, “My husband is employed by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons and is being transferred (to work) to Alcatraz. He has been working at the El Reno Reformatory for the past nine years.”

She reports that she has been teaching public school music in the El Reno grade schools. In February she took a group of children to sing at the O.E.A. convention in Oklahoma City.

No one is more relieved than the staff to see this matter cleared up.

Hunters Heed; DeBusk Knows

If you are ever in need of information concerning the wildlife of Oklahoma, Kelly DeBusk, ’23–’30, director of the game and fish department is your man.

DeBusk can tell you that his department, with 130 employees, has the responsibility of managing the renewable game and fish resources of this state. And it’s quite a job when you consider that Oklahoma has about 300,000 acres of impounded waters in farm ponds.

He could also tell you of some of the other University Alumni who co-operate with him in the department. Hubert C. Ward, ’48bs, is the head of the fisheries division of the department, and W. H. Thompson, ’36bs, ’43ms, is in charge of a fisheries research laboratory located on north campus of the University. Thompson’s laboratory is assisting in the training of young men interested in fish management programs. This field, called “fisheries biology,” has been given considerable attention at the University.

In case you are interested in other aspects of the game and fish department DeBusk could enlighten you on the management angles of the department. He can inform you of the propagation of fish at six hatcheries and tell you how these fish are distributed throughout the state. The importance of the department is more clearly realized when you consider that one out of every seven citizens in Oklahoma buys a fishing license and one out of twelve buys a license to hunt. This means that the department has a mammoth task of replacing the fish and game caught and shot each year.

This hoarder of information might even be induced to tell you about the wildlife unit at Oklahoma A&M which the department, in co-operation with A&M and the Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States Government, operates.

Alumni Make Court Closed Shop

Members of the state criminal court of appeals were thinking about organizing a pint-sized University alumni association.

The idea came to them when they discovered that all three members of the court are University graduates. The ratio was 2 to 1 until John C. Powell, ’22Law, Sulphur, was appointed to finish the unexpired term of the late Judge B. B. Barefoot.

This is the first time in the court’s history that the O.U. school of law has been represented by all three members of the court according to Judge Dick Jones, ’27Law. So alumni appearing in the court can at least have something in common with the judges, even if they can’t expect favoritism.

Mrs. Melekian Dies in Tulsa

A student loan fund at Tulsa University is being established in memory of Mrs. Eudean Grantham Melekian, the former Eudean Grantham, ’38Ed, ’41ma, 32-year-old Tulsa University speech instructor who died July 18 in Tulsa.

Mrs. Melekian, who died of multiple complications after a Caesarian section a month prior, was the wife of speech Professor Bernard Melekian of the Tulsa University faculty. Professor Melekian announced the establishment of the loan fund and said persons interested in assisting the fund could send donations to C. I. Duncan, Tulsa University treasurer.

Mrs. Melekian was a former employee of the University Alumni Association. Her brother, Roy Grantham, ’34ba, ’34Law, ’40m.ed, Ponca City, is a present member of the executive board of the association.

She was graduated from Kaw City high school and received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University. During the war she worked with the USO and following the war she served as director of Tulsa’s YWCA. In 1946 she joined the Tulsa University faculty as assistant professor of speech and served in that capacity until her death.

Change of Address—Alcatraz!

Mrs. Melekian Dies in Tulsa
Alumnus Quits Minnesota Post

It is an unusual case when an alumnus of one school is an employee of the alumni association of another school. But such is the case with William Skene Gibson, ’24, who is field secretary for the Minnesota University Alumni Association.

Gibson has been working for the Minnesota association and university staff for 18 years and has held other posts in connection with the association. For 15 years he was editor and business manager of the Minnesota Alumni Association publication. And for 14 years he was sports announcer on stations KUOM and KSTP. His other jobs include reporter and city editor for the Faribault Daily News, Faribault, Minnesota.

Although busy with his alumni activities, he has found time to write an illuminating book about the University of Minnesota. He ranges far afield in his interests being a Mason, member of the Lions Club, and Sigma Delta Chi, honorary journalism fraternity. He is particularly proud of having been the president of the American Alumni Council for 1948-49. Today he is a member of the board of education of the Robbinsdale, Minnesota, Public Schools.

Besides attending the University of Oklahoma, he has attended the University of Michigan and Minnesota. He has done graduate work in education and public opinion analysis. His studies in public opinion analysis have aided him materially in his work with the alumni association.

(Ed’s Note: Hours before the Sooner Magazine rolled from the presses it was learned that Mr. Gibson had purchased a newspaper in Vermillion, South Dakota, and quit his post at the University of Minnesota.)

Harris Attends “Dimes” Talks

Kenneth Harris, ’39ba, ’49Law, senior assistant in public relations, was called to New York City in July to confer with officials of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis on campaign plans for the 1950 March of Dimes.

Harris, who served as state publicity chairman for the 1949 Oklahoma March of Dimes under the general state chairmanship of President Cross, explained the methods and techniques used in Oklahoma to produce record-breaking contributions.

The University of Oklahoma, for the second consecutive year, ranked first in the nation in student per capita contributions to the 1949 March of Dimes. Oklahoma, as a state, moved from 48th place to 11th place in the national standing in gain over 1948 contributions.

Harris indicated that some of the Oklahoma adoptions to the national plan may be implemented in other state campaigns.

During the month of July, Oklahoma lead the nation in the number of new polo cases.

In New York, Harris visited with several O.U. alumni including Harry Nunn, ’39ba, who is completing his doctorate while serving as an instructor at New York University, and Russell Black, ’42ba, radio news commentator.


While in Washington Harris attended the Senate hearings by the Public Works Committee on the Keystone Dam Project, which is of considerable importance to Oklahoma. Senator Robert S. Kerr, ’36, is the author of the pending legislation and did most of the questioning of the witnesses.

U.P. Covers Senator Kerr

The following story was sent out in August by the United Press concerning Robert S. Kerr, ’16:

“One of the most salty, human fellows on Capitol Hill is the junior senator from Oklahoma—Robert Samuel Kerr.

You walk into his office, which is lined with pictures of 4-H club winners, and he greets you as “my good friend.” After you have talked with him for ten minutes, you get the idea that he means it.

“I love people,” he tells you.

“Kerr, a huge, gray-haired citizen who used to be governor of his state, is what you might call “A-F-O”—all for Oklahoma. Everybody on his staff has the Oklahoma twang in his speech. Particularly lan Dwight, his administrative assistant who used to be a Cheyenne Indian chief.

“The senator likes to sit back and watch the wheels whirl while he thinks things over. He didn’t make his first speech on the floor of the upper House until Monday of this week. And he wrote it nine times.

“I work hard on all my speeches,” said Kerr, who is a great orator. ‘I’ll borrow a phrase from somebody. Good things are rewritten—not written.”

Kerr puts in a dozen hours a day on the job. He has never had a weekend out of the city since he has been on the job here. He teaches a men’s Bible class at the First Baptist Church.

“That takes another two hours of work—plus the time it takes to teach the class,” he said.

“In between times, the senator finds a few hours to be a sportsman. He is a great fisherman and delights in showing his friends pictures of the fine ones which didn’t get away back in Oklahoma.

“I used to like to hunt, too,” said he, “but gave it up when I found you couldn’t do a good job settin’ down.”

“Campaigning for the Senate—or for any office—was old hat for Kerr. He’s been in politics for years. His slogan was ‘land, wood and water—the things Oklahoma lives by.’

“His opponent in the race took the challenge to Tulsa during the heat of the campaign and suggested that the slogan ought to be ‘land, wood, wind and water—with heavy emphasis on the wind.’

“Everybody knows how that came out.

“The senator has a great command of the language and demonstrates it every time he gets on his feet. For instance, last June he delivered the commencement address at Claussen high school in Oklahoma City. His daughter was a member of the class.

“I believe in God,” he said. “A God that is both universal and personal. I believe in prayer; prayer that is both reverent and vital. But prayer that is mere wishful thinking is but a delusion and a mockery.”

“When I came here, I started to see what I could do to help the merchants of Oklahoma to get their share of government contracts. I’ve begun to have a little luck. I do it for nothing. You can call me a ‘no percenter’.”

Beck Named to College Post

Dr. Roland Beck, ’26ma, ’32phd, professor of education at Central State College for 17 years, will be the new education department head at newly-formed Baptist College, Prescott, Arizona.

In 1919 Beck was principal of his first two-room rural school at Pleasant Dale, and later became superintendent of schools at Elmore City. In 1930 he taught in Tennessee and joined the Central State faculty in 1932. For seven years he served as director of the demonstration school.
Two Sooners Get Scholarships

Two Oklahomans, Perry E. Tudor, '47ba, '49ma, Enid, and Jewell B. Best, Jr., Tulsa, have been awarded fellowships to the University of Chicago, Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins announced.

Tudor and Best were two of the 215 students from 34 states and 11 foreign countries selected for the graduate study awards, part of the University’s $750,000 annual program of aid for outstanding students.

Tudor was awarded a $1,000 university fellowship to the divinity school. A symphony musician for seven years, Tudor received his bachelor’s degree from O.U. in 1947 and his master’s degree in June 1949. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Tudor, reside at 2414 North Commercial, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Best’s awards was a $600 university fellowship in mathematical biology. Decorated four times while a first lieutenant in the air corps, Best received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas in 1947.

Stage Beckons Amzie

Actress, director, producer, writer Amzie Strickland, '40drama, is not satisfied. She aspires to venture into another field.

Amzie, who is a veteran performer on New York City radio and television shows, still has a desire to go on the stage. This Oklahoma City girl has had experience in this field. At O.U. she was a member of the Washington O.U. alumni club. She also served as secretary to former Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgantheau.

Believe it or not, the sons are not twins.

Mrs. Lynden Mannen, the former Patricia Lyon, '34bs, dropped in to the Alumni offices recently. With her two sons, Jimmy, left, and Billy, Mrs. Mannen was a former president of the Washington O.U. alumni club. She also served as secretary to former Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgantheau.

Battle of Sexes Rages Anew

The men’s room of the Oklahoma City courthouse is about the only holdout against the women’s invasion. One of the last masculine strongholds fell recently when Dr. Carolyn Hays, '47med, was named assistant director of the health department.

Dr. Hays, the type of doctor that would make an epidemic a pleasure, was the first woman in Oklahoma county history to hold that post. She served a year’s internship at Children’s Hospital in San Francisco and later practiced in Vinita. Then she came to Oklahoma City to broaden the women’s sphere of influence at the courthouse.

The possibility of illness in the Hays’ household are practically nil. Carolyn’s husband is also a doctor, Dr. Marvin B. Hays, '43bs, '45med, is currently taking orthopedic training at Cripled Children’s Hospital in Oklahoma City. Between them they are able to give their two-month-old daughter, Jane, complete medical attention.

Alumnae Works in Calgary

One of the youngest women engineers in the oil industry, Irene Haskett, '44bs, is in Calgary, Canada, working for the Imperial Oil Company, Limited. This native of Norman was loaned to the company by the Carter Oil Company for a period of six months to a year.

In Canada she will study the Imperial company’s reservoir behavior problems. She has been in this field of engineering with the Carter Company for some time.

While at the University she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Tau Beta Pi, honorary fraternities. She was also a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, national honorary scholarship fraternity for freshman women; Sigma Pi Sigma, physics honorary fraternity and Chi Delta Chi, national honorary literature fraternity for women.

H. W. Phelps Gets Commendation

Official naval commendation has been given Henry W. Phelps, '49pharm, for his work during and after the April 30 tornado which struck North Campus of the University.

Phelps, a graduate student in the school of pharmacy and a naval reservist, was commended in the citation for “giving untiring assistance to the search parties and establishing a first aid station prior to the arrival of other relief forces.”

Barkley Is New Argentine Prof

Dr. Fred A. Barkley, '30ba, '32ms, is a new professor in the Instituto de Botanica at the Universidad Nacional, Argentina.

In the Argentine paper, Tropico, Dr. Barkley was lauded for his accomplishments in the field of botany. They said of him, “Ha realizado colecciones botanicas que totalizan mas de 25,000 numeros en el suroeste de los Estados, Mexico, y Colombia, habiendo sido conferidas altas distinciones por diversas instituciones cientificas.”

Hilles Resigns Marshal Post

Dave E. Hilles, '21ba, United States marshal for the western district of Oklahoma, said he would resign his post November 1. He will be succeeded by Rex Hawks, assistant commissioner of charities and corrections.

Hilles said his plans for the future were indefinite. Before taking the marshal’s job he was in the hardware business in Stillwater. The hardware business still appeals to him, he said, and he may go back to it.

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