The Pride Overlooked?

Thank you for the article about “Coach” Thrailkill, “And the Band Plays On” (Sooner Magazine Fall 1995). I was a member of The Pride long before Gene Thrailkill came to OU, but I have gotten to know him through my association with the Band Alumni Association. He deserves this recognition.

The Pride played for 14 special events in September and has been divided into four bands to meet the demands for appearances. Obviously, many people enjoy The Pride. What a shame the School of Music refuses to include The Pride in its literature to prospective students!!

Don King, '63 B.B.A.
Weatherford, Oklahoma

Editor’s Note: In answer to an inquiry on alumnus King’s behalf, acting director Jane Magath confirms that The Pride was inadvertently omitted from a list of ensembles in a brochure printed by the School of Music two years ago. Spotted last summer by a sharp-eyed band alumnus, the error was corrected in a reprint, and the old brochures were discarded. The school regrets the oversight.

The Inaugural Sooner

The Fall 1995 issue of Sooner Magazine is terrific. It does an exceptionally nice job of vividly bringing a special event to the many Sooners who weren’t able to be there.

Ladd Greeno, '71 B.B.A.
Concord, Massachusetts

Editor’s Note: In 1969 Greeno was elected the first president of the newly organized University of Oklahoma Student Association.

At 99 and Counting

Editor’s Note: Clyde H. Whitwell, '18 B.S. in electrical engineering, celebrated his 99th birthday on February 27, 1996. A regular reader, Whitwell writes to Sooner Magazine with a strong hand and a keen recollection of the dominant figures of his youth. Excerpts from Whitwell’s reminiscences of Norman (his hometown) and of OU (his alma mater) follow.

“Paving and sidewalks ended a few blocks south of our home at 912 Porter Avenue, and sewer and city water service did not reach us,” Whitwell writes. “For St. Patrick’s Day in ’17 or ’18, Old Trusty (the engineers’ canon) was dismantled and buried under the manure pile at our home, but it was exhumed by a force of lawyers.”

Whitwell’s University was populated by historic names: President Stratton D. Brooks, Engineering Dean J. H. Felgar, electrical engineers Harold V. Bozell and L. W. W. Morrow. “The campus consisted of the (Parrington) Oval, the Engineering Building, the power plant and the athletic field—one section of wooden stands.

“I assisted Benny Schultz (a 1918 classmate who became head of the OU light and power plant) in wiring the Chemistry Building and Holmberg Hall,” he says, “was a laboratory Assistant under physics professor William P. Haseman and tutored (World War I) draftees in elementary electricity and telegraph code in the summer of ’18.

“Radio broadcasts were just beginning around ’17. At my home I devised an electrolytic interrupter and used it to connect a Ford spark coil transformer, homemade key and 100 feet of baling wire as an antenna. My signals were picked up at the University and were said to sound like ‘a pig snorting.’”

After graduation and military service, Whitwell worked briefly for Westinghouse Electric and had a 41-year career with Equitable Gas Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Florence, retired to Shell Paint Village, Fort Myers, Florida.

An Update:

Almost everything you ever wanted to know about the University of Oklahoma . . .

◆ Basheerah Ahmad, an OU junior from Midwest City, is now the current Miss Black America. An outstanding student, she is an OU Scholar and a State Regents Scholar, placing her in the top one-half of 1 percent among Oklahoma students.

◆ OU Coach Larry Cochell recently was named the 1995 Regional Coach of the Year for NCAA Division I by the American Baseball Coaches Association. Cochell’s 1995 Sooners finished 42-16.

◆ Previous OU private fund-raising records have been broken by the $64 million committed to the institution in the 14 months since David Boren became president. The total more than doubles the average annual fund raising for the past decade and is 40 percent above the previous annual record.

◆ Membership in the OU Associates—those who give OU an unrestricted $1,000 annually—has reached a new high of 2,000, up from 1,390 Associates last year.

◆ The total number of annual contributors to the University rose from 17,000 last year to 20,000 this year, up nearly 30 percent from two years ago.

◆ New figures for freshman National Merit Scholars show the University of Oklahoma third among public institutions, fifth among all public and private universities and first once again among all institutions in per capita enrollment of Merit Scholars.

◆ The two-time defending national champion OU Advertising Club has become the largest student chapter in American Advertising Federation history. The OU AdClub was chosen AAF’s Chapter of the Year each of the last two years.

◆ The University Symphony Orchestra is the first university orchestra to be invited to perform at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, acknowledged to be the premier conference in the world for band and orchestra conductors, teachers and students.

◆ A U.S. News and World Report survey ranks OU’s undergraduate business programs in the top 20 percent in the country.

◆ The OU men’s gymnastics team is the 1995 National Academic Team Champions. The team included four 1995 Academic All-Americans—Jeremy Killen with a 4.0 G.P.A., Casey Bryan, 3.78; Dan Fink, 3.75; and Eric Weaver, 3.62.

(To Be Continued)

2 SOONER MAGAZINE