The concluding installment of the interesting memoirs of Dr. David Ross Boyd, first president of the university, tells how politics temporarily interrupted the progress of the growing school.

My days as first university president

Told by Dr. David Ross Boyd to Dr. Roy Hadsell, '04 and Betty Kirk, '29

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O story of the development of the University of Oklahoma would be complete without a tribute to the men in and outside official position who aided in its advancement. Doctor Boyd cannot speak too often and warmly enough of these "friends of the university" who helped both materially and spiritually in its growth.

Though he mentions many, among the outstanding ones are S. K. McCall, D. L. Larsh and J. D. Maguire, all of Norman, and Jasper Sipes of Oklahoma City. These men served with constant loyalty and many hours of personal service to weather the political and economic storms which often threatened to engulf the youthful institution. State educational establishments were open to many and vicious attacks in the political arenas of the tempestuous young state and the decision to continue them or to abolish them was often made on the well chosen words of these wise and solicitous men. It was to them that Doctor Boyd often turned and he never found them lacking.

"All of the state educational officials worked together," says Doctor Boyd. "We had the common cause of culture and the advancement of the state and we fought side by side to maintain our cause. Leaders in this movement were S. N. Hopkins, one time state superintendent of schools and Edmund D. Murdaugh, once president of the A. and M. college and later president of the Central State Teachers College at Edmond.

"Murdaugh was an erudite scholar and a great Latinist. One of the most interesting stories told of him was of his meeting with George Lyman Kittredge who had come out from Cambridge to attend a Harvard dinner in Oklahoma City. The party was being held in the Huckins hotel and when Kittredge got there he was much more interested in the state legislators about the lobby than he was in the dinner. Murdaugh happened up, was introduced, and they started a conversation. It ended up in being an exchange between them of Latin proverbs."

A sufficient enrollment was one of the chief problems which the faculty of the territorial university had to face. Education was a luxury and was considered unattainable by the majority of the pioneers. To overcome this prejudice President Boyd spoke at all possible teachers institutes and parents assemblies. After each meeting he would ask the students or their parents not to decide that a university education was impossible until they had talked with him. He always suggested that they try at least a term and aided them in finding work when they arrived in Norman.

Many letters were mailed to prospective students by Norman merchants and Doctor Boyd and his assistants sent out hundreds each year. As a member of the Territorial Board of Education he aided in giving the eighth grade examinations over the state. When the grades on these exams were made out he wrote congratulatory letters to those who passed and encouraging letters to those who had failed. After the latter letters were received many mothers wrote to him—"Thank you for that letter to George. It encouraged him when he needed it the most. If it hadn't been for your letter he would never have gone to school again."

This splendid work of construction was however, interrupted by the nemesis of all state schools—politics. The actuality of statehood and of the election of Charles N. Haskell as governor resulted in an almost complete disruption of the faculty of the university.

Doctor Boyd was classed as "An aristocrat, not democratic enough" by Governor Haskell and was asked to leave. With him went twenty-two others.

Though he took his own dismissal philosophically Doctor Boyd was concerned over the future of his twenty-two faculty members. It was late in the spring and he immediately sent out letters to all of the universities in the country, explaining the political situation and recommending his faculty members. By August every member was placed satisfactorily.

This change resulted in the loss to the university of several of its most brilliant scholars. Vernon Louis Parrington left to go to the University of Washington where he established himself as one of the leading literateurs of the country and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize a few years ago. Also to the University of Washington went Dr. David S. Hall, now head of the health work of that school. Professor L. W. Cole left Norman to study and receive his Ph. D. from Harvard university. Later, through Doctor Boyd, he met President Baker of Colorado university and became the head of the department of psychology in that institution, and has been a leader in his field ever since.

Doctor Boyd left Norman for New York where he became head of the educational work of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. In 1912 he became president of the University of New Mexico, in which position he remained until 1919. He is now retired and living in Glendale, California, with Mrs Boyd and their daughter, Alice.

PHI BETA KAPPA SPEAKER

DR. EDGAR ODELL LOVETT
President of Rice Institute of Houston, Texas, delivered the annual address to Phi Beta Kappa April 22. In a chapel address he declared "Books are the bulwark of present civilization."