

## Old Aliases Remembered As Presidential Home Named Boyd House Again

The gracious, white frame mansion on the corner of Boyd and University Boulevard has stood guard over the main entrance to the University of Oklahoma campus for more than 75 years. Known by many names and serving several functions, the old house with its classic columns never had an official designation until last December when the OU Board of Regents christened it forever after "Boyd House," to honor its first owner and OU's first president, David Ross Boyd.

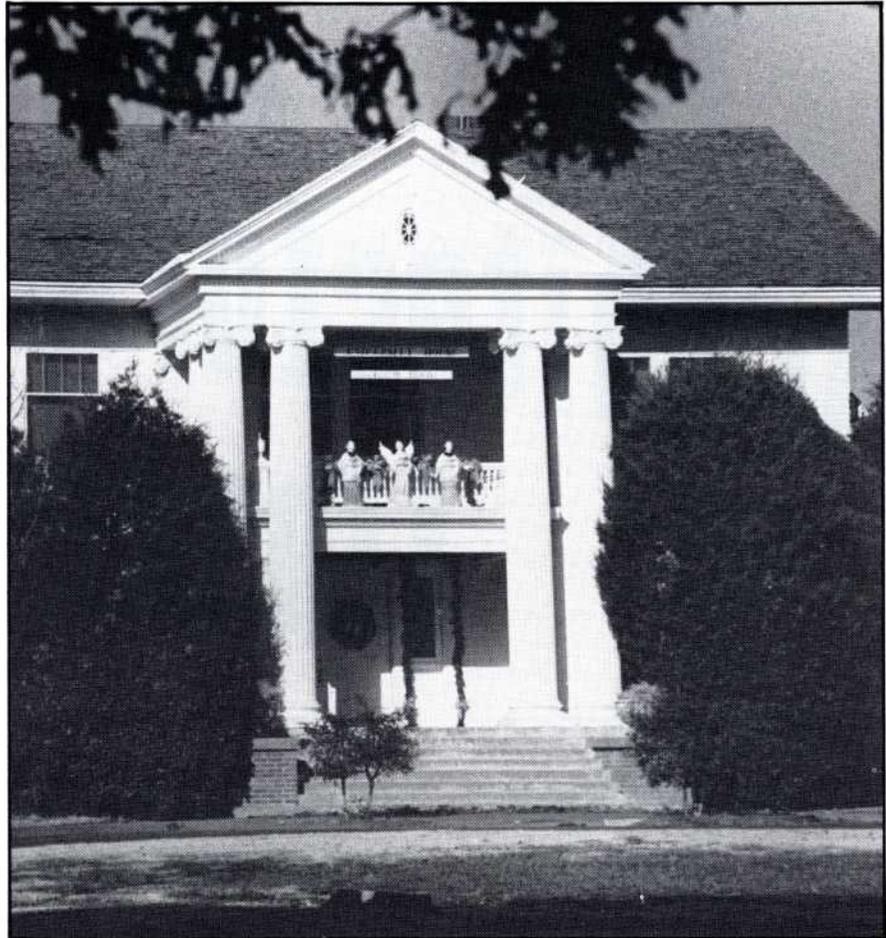
The pioneer president built the three-story house as his private residence in 1906. *The Norman Transcript* reported that the house and "barn" (actually a carriage house which is now a garage/apartment) cost approximately \$7,000, and observed that "President Boyd's new residence on the boulevard is looming up in the distance, the frame work being already completed. It is certainly going to make a beautiful structure — one that Norman as well as Mr. Boyd can be proud of."

Boyd's pride was short-lived. By 1908 he had moved out of both his new home and his office, the victim of new statehood politics. The University leased the presidential home until 1914 when title was acquired from Boyd in a trade for other University land.

Originally the house faced University Boulevard until the present porch and pillars were built onto the Boyd Street side in 1922. Additions to the house were made on both the west and east sides, and extensive remodeling and repairs inside and out have occurred over the years.

In the early '60s, a circular driveway replaced the long sidewalk which had led from the front steps to Boyd Street. President George L. Cross' wife, Cleo, had been promoting the new drive since 1958 when the Crosses' house guest, Eleanor Roosevelt, had to make the long walk in a driving rainstorm during an historic visit to the campus.

Seven of President Boyd's successors — A. Grant Evans, Stratton D. Brooks, James S. Buchanan, William



*The historic white pillared house at 407 West Boyd stands decked out for Christmas as it is officially named "Boyd House" in December regents action.*

B. Bizzell, Joseph A. Brandt, Cross, and J. Herbert Hollomon — lived in the house, each informally lending his name to the structure in turn — "The Bizzell House," "The Cross House," etc. Students also labeled it as "The White House," for obvious reasons, or simply "The President's House."

In 1969 the University purchased another home for Hollomon, away from the campus on the corner of Lindsey and Pickard. The white house was tagged "The Old President's Home," until President-Emeritus Cross commented dryly that perhaps "The President's Old Home" might be more appropriate.

After standing empty for two years, the stately old house was reopened as "University House" in 1970 with new occupants, the Office of University Development, replaced by the Office of High School and College Relations in 1979. During office hours, the

downstairs living area is used as a hospitality and information center for campus visitors. After hours and on weekends the house is available for a variety of campus entertainment functions.

In 1976 University House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and underwent a major face-lift with assistance from a federal grant-in-aid through the Oklahoma Historical Society's historic conservation program. The interior was completely redecorated last year.

In the interest of history, several items of furniture and personal belongings of the former presidential residents have been added to the house furnishings, including portraits of President and Mrs. Boyd, DRB's silver dresser set and several of his personal books, all obtained from the estate of the Boyd's only child, Mary Alice.