

Behind the Crocus and the Trees

The University acts less and less like an ivory anything

by Robert M. Strozier
Dean of Students

ONE OF THE unfortunate by-products of the dust-storm currently raised by all of the Congressional and investigative activity in the field of education, is the perpetuation of false stereotypes. It is amusing that the stereotypes frequently are contradictory. One line depicts The American Student, 1953 style, as a saturnine, long-haired radical, hell-bent on adopting any new "ism" which comes along. But another line portrays a crew-cut, panty-raider, frolicking through his college years oblivious to the grave issues of our time.

The fact is, our students are human, quite unpredictable, and far too ingenious to be confined by any stereotype. They can be quite conservative when one least expects them to be; and sometimes they can be more serious than the Dean of Students,

when he perhaps should be more serious than he is.

The campus discussions this spring concerning the bachelor's degree serve to prove one of my points. Though our students pride themselves for their membership in a University noted for its willingness to experiment and change, the uncompromising attitude of many who seem to resist change in the status quo, is in the strictest spirit of conservatism.

Grimness and Spring

Changes have, of course, been going on in the College program year by year. The two-year curriculum in general education became a four-year program; the Ph.B. degree was abolished; Natural Science sequences supplanted sequences in Bi. Sci. and Phi. Sci.; a History course was added. Now a large change is contemplated

with the marriage of the general education program to some form of specialization. Entrance by tests, acceleration, admission before graduation from high school, placement in courses by tests—all of the main tenets upon which the College is built, are and have been great accomplishments, and are not under attack. Yet, the faculty, in its traditional experimental spirit, has plunged into discussions, where, in a curiously conservative mood, many of the students apparently are reluctant to tread.

While I do not look forward to any raids upon the dormitories, I sometimes think our students are too grim and humorless. I especially get this feeling when the students' gravity makes me ashamed of my own levity. Recently a student was arrested for attempting to counterfeit ten-dollar



DEAN STROZIER STILL BELIEVES IN A SENSE OF HUMOR



HARD-WORKING MAROON EDITOR JOAN BRENNARD: "MUCH TOO YOUNG AND PRETTY"

bills. When a *Maroon* reporter asked me for a statement on the subject, I replied that it seemed obvious that high tuition costs at the University had caused the students to start making their own money. This is, of course, a very loose remark from a Dean of Students, but one attempted with good humor and with a basic understanding, I hope, of the great difficulty many of the students have at the present time. The shock on the part of the student made me feel guilty of a gross lack of sensitivity. In any event, I found once again that one should not swallow whole any generalizations about your off-spring today.

May is the month that springtime bursts out on the Quadrangles, but more than the crocus and the trees are blossoming forth this spring. Owl and Serpent is resurgent, *Cap & Gown* is making its first postwar appearance, a fraternity is considering re-establishment on the campus. Acrotheatre has given another splendid performance, students are busy helping in the University's recruitment program, WUCB is expanding, and believe it or not, the *Maroon* seems to have gained enthusiastic campus approval!

To some, many of these things are distasteful parts of a "trend," anti-intellectual, and part and parcel of the discussions concerning the BA degree. But to others, events like the recent pep rally and victory of the basketball team are not really of prime importance.

Owl and Serpent was for many years a good and important organization on the campus. Without fanfare, it worked effectively for the best interests of the University at all levels. Such men as Harold Swift, Harold (Kitty) Gordon, Art Baer, and countless others were active during their undergraduate days and have, through the years, maintained a staunch loyalty to the organization and, of course, to the University as a whole. When the West Stands were built, O & S was given a club room there in perpetuity by the University. When the Stands were assigned to the development of atomic energy at the beginning of World War II, the room was lost for club use. When the club was reorganized after the war, it was without a home of its own, and a lessening of influence and prestige for the club followed.

Now, fortunately, it has been pos-

sible for the University to assign O & S a home in Mitchell Tower, in line with the University's commitment to it from a former day. The event was celebrated on May 13 with a dinner given by the Dean of Students and attended by the present members as well as the alumni council. In addition Harold Swift, Kitty Gordon, Art Baer, and Chancellor Kimpton attended the dinner.

Indicative of the spirit of our students, was the sacrifice by several of them of their spring vacation to remain on the campus to complete the editorial work on the new issue of *Cap & Gown*, which will be published this month. A group which worked long and hard last year finally abandoned plans to publish in 1952, in order to make this issue a really big comeback. The whole University hopes that this will be only the first.

Bud Beyer came through with another brilliant performance of his Acrotheatre in late April. This time he was co-sponsored by the scout troop of the Hyde Park Baptist Church, which shares in the profits of the performances. Bud and Vera, his wife, Jimmy Jackson, Ruth Grulkoski (Olympic star), and dozens of others have given short performances in many high schools in metropolitan Chicago and have appeared on television several times. The climax of the year was reached in their Mandel Hall performances which every alumnus should have seen. Bud also finds time to work with the Boy Scouts and the Neighborhood Club. He is also one of our best teachers of physical education.

Another investigation?

The spectre of another possible investigation of the University by one of the Congressional committees or by the state legislature disturbed the administration, faculty, and student body. The students responded intelligently to the situation by establishing an All-Campus Civil Liberties Committee (ACCLC), truly representative of campus opinion. Drawn from every type of student organization and lead by steady and intelligent young men and women, the committee has served the campus and the University well.

Even the extremists on campus have co-operated with ACCLC to interpret the majority's sentiments. There have been no incidents to embarrass the University administration, which announced at the outset that it would not make statements of issues before the issues were defined. Matthew Dillon and Marlin Smith, as chairman and vice-chairman, have



IDA NOYES HALL FRIEZE: "THE SPLENDID FACILITIES OF IDA NOYES . . . A RESIDENTIAL UNIT FOR WOMEN . . ."

done the University a great service by their intelligent and temperate leadership.

Extremists in student leadership are less in vogue locally and on the national scene, and the last year has seen a real maturation of responsible student leadership. The National Students Association, with which our student body is associated along with the students at 225 other colleges and universities, speaks for a majority of the students in the country on many contemporary issues which concern students. Its leadership has been uneven in quality, but at the present it seems to be in good hands.

Electing Bill Birenbaum (Director of Student Activities on the Midway) to the chairmanship of the national faculty board of NSA, has been a step in the right direction for this organization, which, at times, perhaps reflecting the national student body, has taken itself too seriously.

The improvement in the *Maroon* this year has been the subject of wide comment. Joan Brennard, fourth-year student in the College, looks much too young and pretty to lead effectively such a group of literate, young individualists. Yet she has done so. The *Maroon* has expanded in size, it has covered the campus news more fully, and it has maintained a sane editorial policy, especially as the year has progressed. This does not mean that the staff is usually in agreement with administration policy. Far from it! Since the majority of the

staff comes from the College, they have been concerned about the discussions centering about the College curriculum and the degree. And they have made their views well known.

New home for women?

Plans are being drawn for a new residence hall for women between Ida Noyes and Dudley Field, although the project is not yet financially assured. Last spring the College faculty voted approval of a residential college, along the lines of the colleges in English universities. Attempts to adapt the idea in this country have been something less than successful, yet as Deans Ward and Northrop ably pointed out, the experiment here should be more meaningful since there is a basic curriculum, and there are many common interests among the College students.

If the project reaches fruition, a head master's house for a College faculty member and his family will be constructed adjacent to a series of four units, to house about fifty each. The Cloister Club would be reopened to serve as a common dining room. The splendid facilities of Ida Noyes would greatly enhance the value of a residential unit for women in this particular spot. When the barracks now on Dudley Field are no longer permitted to stand (because of city regulations which were relaxed for veterans), the Dudley Field will again become the women's athletic field. I can think of no finer setup for wom-

en college students in the country.

I think one of the finest tributes to the spirit of our College students has been the enthusiastic help of many student leaders in bringing the merits of our education to prospective students. Recruitment of new students has been greatly expanded under the able direction of Ruth McCarn, Mac Hazlett, and Harold Haydon, along with several other men and women who have given this activity new direction. Alumni, particularly younger ones who have recently had the College experience, and many students currently enrolled, have worked actively with Mrs. McCarn in this program. Since we are usually atypical in what we do at the University, the business of interpretation is always a difficult problem.

It's hard to believe that this academic year has almost run its course. But Alumni Week End, with its colorful Sing, is upon us. We are involved in making our annual selection of the outstanding students in the extra-curriculum during the year 1952-53. Comprehensive exams already have the students burning the midnight oil. Each year at the University seems to evaporate more quickly than the preceding, and the years vie with one another for their color and interest. While one hates to see the time fly by so quickly, these busy days are reassuring that your Alma Mater is not a cloistered ivory tower, but remains the bustling, dynamic, ever-changing place you will remember so well.