



# COMMENCEMENT

Ask almost any 1969 senior about the "Tavern" and he will probably direct you to the nearest spot to TGIF on Friday, celebrate an A on an exam, or lament a lesser grade. But ask a 1919 graduate and he will tell you the "Tavern" was a hotel on Broadway where the Saturday night assemblies were held, "the place" to take a date and dance to an orchestra for 50 cents.

A full schedule of activities made commencement a major event for 1919 graduates, some of whom will be on the campus this June for their Golden Anniversary. Baccalaureate service in Jesse Hall (then called Academic Hall) was held on Sunday prior to graduation. The proud senior and his classmates paraded around the Columns on Class Day exercises held Monday morning. Before jealous underclassmen, the class prophecy, class poem and traditional planting of the ivy took place. The following evening the Senior Ball was held in Rothwell gymnasium. A grand march and a "program of music and stunts" elevated the Senior Ball above other school dances.

On graduation Wednesday, a procession of members of the Board of Curators, faculty, visiting dignitaries and graduates began in Academic Hall, ending in front of the Columns where the ceremony took place. Because the University was on a tri-semester basis, graduation was held on April 23.

Like the 1919 senior, today's graduate wears a rented cap and gown. But unlike his predecessor, his class is too large to maintain traditions such as prophecies, poems, and dances.

War conditions made the class of 1919 un-

usually small. Only 322 of the 968 students who entered the University in 1915 received degrees. The daily headlines of the *Evening Missourian* told of war casualties and President Wilson's Big Four meeting; full page ads urged the reader to buy Liberty bonds.

Every draftable male student was required to join the Student Army Training Corps, similar to the ROTC program of today. What's more, nearly every male student wanted to join the SATC. A 1919 graduate told of his inability to be accepted in the SATC because he was underweight. He says he was finally allowed to don the uniform after filling himself with bananas and other "weighty" food prior to stepping on the scales.

In this period before the economic boom of the 20s, the value of the dollar was high. Cigarettes cost 18 cents a package; a coed could receive orchids at the bargain rate of \$12 per dozen; a pair of oxford shoes sold for \$6.50; and a student could rent a decent lodging for \$10 per month.

There were a few similarities to today's fashions. Men's stiff shirts, wide ties and tailored suits would go unnoticed (well, almost) on the streets today. Women's skirt lengths resembled the midi-dress and Carnaby Street styles. Coeds purchased scarfs and accessories, just as her 1969 counterpart does.

Casual dress was not a part of campus life in 1919, however. The male student wore a suit to class and, if he owned a sport coat, it was not worn on campus. The coed was under dressed if she was without her gloves, and most



## -1919 STYLE---

By GINNY GLASS

females wore hats in the classroom.

This formality in many instances, seemed to be limited to dress alone. Students had several favorite spots to "jelly," or coke date. The Harris Cafe on the Strollway and The Palms on Conley were household words to college students. The place to meet Christian College girls was Penn's pharmacy. This drugstore had a balcony, where a common sight was male students "looking over" the Christian girls below.

Cecil B. deMille movies provided weekend entertainment, except for Sunday. With the advent of spring came picnics at the Hink (known as "blanket parties" to more recent graduates). Columbia was "dry" in this period, but bootlegging was probably not unheard of.

It is apparent that alumni from the Class of 1919 who return to the Columbia campus will note drastic changes. However, it would seem unfair to label the collegiate activities of the 1919 grads as conservative. A petition they circulated proves they, too, were active: "Feeling that week-ends as they now end, end all too previous, the undersigned, beg, request, implore and demand that from henceforward and hereafter all Saturday and Monday classes be discontinued because of 1) the distance from Kansas City or St. Louis, 2) poor train service, 3) after effects, 4) Friday night dances and assemblies, 5) Sunday night 'get togethers,' and 6) weekend trips home."

The 1919 *Savitar* was dedicated to those who lost their lives in the service. The war was definitely an overhanging element of the campus. But the war was not the only major event of

1919. The Spanish influenza reached epidemic proportions, and a mass nursing squad of volunteers came to aid the sick. Local homes and Parker Hospital, located next to what was then the Medical School in McAlester, were turned into flu wards. Many students lost their lives during the epidemic.

Graduates of 1919 felt themselves privileged to be given their diplomas that April. The *Missourian* said in its April 23 edition, "The University of Missouri halted today to recognize the achievements of those of its students who had completed the courses prescribed. There were 52 others who might have been on the list."

Dean Walter Miller of the Graduate School delivered an eulogy for the 52 former students who were killed in the war. Committees of students, alumni and faculty formulated plans for the erection of the memorial tower to be built with alumni support. Thus, the 1919 commencement was actually a memorial to honor those students and alumni "who gave up their lives in the war."

Prominent alumni addressed the eager young graduates and, like today, honorary degrees were conferred on deserving persons. Alumnus Thomas B. Catron, a former New Mexico senator, predicted that, "President Wilson will be beaten if he runs for President for a third term." E. W. Stephens, who like Catron graduated over 50 years before 1919, spoke of alumni support: "Friendships made in the University should be capitalized in such a way as to make the alumni a greater force than ever." □