



"I LOOKED AT THE STUDENTS.
THEY REMINDED ME
WHY WE WERE THERE
AND WHAT WAS AT STAKE."

She is orderly and precise, approaching a university budget she must prepare or the miles she will run with the same disciplined commitment. The next chancellor of the Columbia Campus and the first woman to hold the position in the University of Missouri system, Dr. Barbara S. Uehling possesses a passion for learning and for the students whom universities serve. Keen curiosity and supreme motivation have driven her to the top.

Uehling is an ardent believer in physical fitness who gets up at 5:30 every morning to swim half a mile's worth of laps nonstop or run up to three miles before going to the office. Several years ago she resolved that exercise was her best defense against the mental exhaustion of her work days — seldom less than 14 hours — and any adverse effects of age — she's now 45. Her lithe shape and buoyant stride attest to the value of her regimen. "It's very important to me," she says. "I don't feel nearly as good when I don't exercise."

The clothes she chooses look well on her trim five-foot, five-inch figure. A no-fuss hairstyle, well suited to her way of life, frames her chiseled face. Her clear hazel eyes are warm when she smiles. By any measure, she is an attractive woman, and her appearance is enhanced by the aura of self-assuredness and inner strength that surrounds her.

Certainly Uehling's rigorous schedule doesn't leave much time for pursuits outside her work. The flying lessons she started last fall seem to be the only notable exception. "I decided I needed a little piece of life just for me," she explains. The budding pilot loves "the great sense of freedom" she gets from flying and hopes to work on her instrument rating later. Even before she completes telling of her aviation adventure, she relates it to education: "This is the first time I've set out to learn something completely new as an adult. I've developed a great deal of admiration for the adult learner through this experience."

The only child of religiously fundamentalist parents, Barbara Staner Uehling was born in 1932 in Wichita, Kansas. She grew up and attended grade school, high school and college there.

"I was always an intense kind of person," she says. "My parents didn't stress education — neither of them was well-educated — but I had a self-imposed sense of expectation. I don't know where it came from. I had a real curiosity about the world and what I could do in relationship to it. As a little girl in Wichita, I remember wondering what the rest of the

By Carol Baskin

BARBARA UEHLING APPOINTED COLUMBIA CAMPUS CHANCELLOR

world was like and hoped some day I'd find out."

Achievement brings separation, a sort of isolation, even to children. "Once in the sixth grade, I was chosen to be 'telephone girl.' It was an honor to answer the phone for the principal when he was out. But it made me feel separated from the rest of the kids."

Uehling took piano lessons and loved to sing. She started babysitting as a teenager, then worked in a bookstore to save money for college. She entered the University of

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Wichita (now Wichita State University) on a music scholarship, cutting expenses by living at home.

"I like music, but I soon knew it wasn't what I wanted. I couldn't see myself giving piano lessons in a small town for the rest of my life," she recalls. "It wasn't enough."

Searching for the right field, she stumbled into an introductory psychology course. She completed her bachelor's degree in 1954 and went to Northwestern University on fellowships for her master's and PhD in experimental psychology. Uehling had consistently scored high on science aptitude tests, but was not encouraged to pursue the sciences. "I was interested in the behavior of people and what motivates them," she says. "Experimental psychology was a good combination of my abilities and interests," she suggests in retrospect.

One day in the library at Northwestern, a young medical student named Edward Uehling noticed a psych course syllabus she had with her. It was ample excuse to strike up a conversation. Their acquaintance led to marriage before she completed her master's and two sons.

Her first was born Christmas Eve 1957. A few days later, Uehling's husband had to leave for military duty. "I was left alone with a baby, no friends and a dissertation to finish," Uehling remembers. "It was a very difficult time for me."

In the years that followed, Uehling had another son, taught at a college and a university in Atlanta, where her husband had established medical practice, and endured increasing confusion that arose from trying to balance commitments to family and career.

The Uehlings eventually agreed on an amicable divorce. The boys stayed with their mother, who moved east to teach at the University of Rhode Island and then at Roger Williams College. After two years on the faculty at Roger Williams, Uehling applied for the academic dean's position. The \$20,000 salary wasn't enough for the other two fi-

nalists, but Uehling accepted the job in 1971 and got her real start in administration.

That was only seven years ago, a short time considering the ladder climbing she's done between Roger Williams and Mizzou. From 1974 to 1976, Uehling was dean of Illinois State University's College of Arts and Sciences. In 1976 she became provost at the University of Oklahoma's Norman campus, a position second only to the president. Her salary this year is \$42,360.

At Oklahoma, Uehling has presided over a series of budget reductions as state appropriations and student fee income failed to provide adequate funding. Enlisting the participation of faculty, she also drafted guidelines to use in future cutbacks.

Uehling doesn't feel her professional upward mobility poses any problem to her credibility.

"I have only to answer to myself," she states with assurance. "In each position I have held, I have been absolutely dedicated to that institution, and I have never used any job as a stepping-stone. I have been asked if I bore easily. Yes, I do. But I certainly haven't gotten bored at Oklahoma, and I am sure I won't be bored at Missouri. I know I will be satisfied by the complexities and demands of that institution for quite a while."

The fact is that Uehling wanted to come to Mizzou. It was more than the \$50,000 salary that interested her. OU President Paul Sharp, in ill health, announced he would retire several weeks before his Norman provost accepted the Mizzou chancellorship. Uehling had been acting president in Sharp's absence. "I wasn't interested in applying," she says. She believes challenging times are ahead for almost all universities, but of the University of Oklahoma, she says: "I don't regard the future for funding of higher education in Oklahoma as optimistic."

Uehling's dedication to higher education is unquestioned. "I have a very sincere conviction about the efficacy of education and want to be identified with it. I believe in what we're about, and this has kept me through a lot of trying periods." Students are the focus of her dedication. She recalls a memory from her first administrative post at Roger Williams College, where the faculty had been unionized: "Very soon [after becoming academic dean] I became deeply involved in collective bargaining. There was a great deal of hostility and an enormous amount of difficulty working out the problems. During breaks I often went to the window and looked out at the students. They reminded me why we were there and what was at stake."

The students are still at stake in higher education's battle to survive the problems that will confront it in the next decade, Uehling says. The years ahead will bring evaluation, trimming, restructuring. "There are ways to make the necessary changes fairly," Uehling asserts, "and I think that we'll have something that serves the student better than what we have now."

Uehling talks of the intrinsic rewards of teaching — "the

feeling a professor has after giving a really good lecture that has stretched the students' minds" — and hopes she can help guide education's yardstick back to measuring quality by those kinds of rewards. In recent years, she says, too much emphasis has been placed on "extrinsic rewards," such as buildings, programs, getting published and size of faculty.

She believes in the team approach and she listens well. "One of my greatest joys in administration has come from knowing that I couldn't begin to do it all myself," she says. "If I have one notion about my purpose as an administrator, it's that I must arrange an environment in which people with a great deal of talent can be fulfilled and make the institution a better place in the process."

Uehling's new job makes her a member of a very elite group of women who hold the top administrative slots on large public university campuses. There are only two others — Dr. Lorene Rogers, president of the University of Texas-Austin, and Dr. Hannah H. Gray, who becomes president of the University of Chicago July 1. She's made history in two states by becoming the highest female in the educational system, and she knows the questions about the significance of that are inevitable.

"I know that being a symbol carries with it a heavy responsibility, and I don't mind that." But, she says, being a woman has little to do with where she is today. "All I've ever wanted is to demonstrate my skills and to be myself. That's been the most important thing in my life."

She credits her achievements to "lots of drive, basic capability—I'm not bashful—a flexibility and willingness to

into my life that is very worthwhile."

Uehling obviously has found raising her two sons a worthwhile experience as well. She talks of them with warmth and pride. Jeffrey is a junior at George Institute of Technology and David, a high school junior in Norman.

Mixing motherhood with the kind of career she has pursued since her divorce has been anything but easy. "They are healthy American boys. I've been aware of their needs, but not always able to meet them because of my career. But we've always been able to talk it out. They're abso-

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lutely super kids. I respect them as individuals. They need to do what they need to do, and I need to do what I need to do. They are very important to me personally and professionally. They provide perspective on education and on me as a person. Whenever I start to take myself too seriously, they take care of that."

A number of years ago, she recalls someone addressing her as "Dr. Uehling" in the presence of one of her sons. "She's no doctor," he retorted. "She's my mom."

In Norman, Uehling lives in a contemporary house just five minutes from her office. In Columbia, she won't have to dash to work in her sporty Datsun fastback. She can walk out the front door of the Chancellor's Residence and be in her Jesse Hall office in just minutes.

"It's just awesome," she says of the prospect of living in a 111-year-old house which hasn't been occupied by a chancellor since 1970, when John Schwada left the post. In those days of student unrest the residence perhaps was a little too accessible. During the Schooling administration, the Chancellor's Residence has been used as a reception house. It is the oldest building on the quadrangle.

Uehling, along with the family beagle, and perhaps David, if he decides to spend his senior year of high school in Columbia, will move into the house this summer. Some renovation and refurbishing are in order before she arrives. After looking through the house, Uehling went home to Norman and told her dog: "I'm not sure you belong in a place that's on the National Registry of Historical Places."

Uehling may wonder about the family pet, but like everything else related to her career, she's quite sure she belongs in that house. In the direct manner that seems typical of her, she says: "I think it's important that I live there. I value my privacy, but administrators also need to be human. I want to make it a place where students, faculty and alumni can feel welcome." □

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learn and a desire to get the job done. I'm very task-oriented."

If achievement has been her companion through the years, so has isolation and that "separation" she recognized as a grade schooler. She is alone, but not lonely.

"I am so caught up in what I'm doing now that I really don't think about being lonely," she says. "I am aware that I am alone at a given moment, but it doesn't bother me. Most people feel lonely when they are closely identified with a particular person most of the time. When you break out of that, you can feel an identity with many different people even though the continuity of one other person is not there as a life spectrum," she says, describing her own life. "I feel fulfilled at the opportunity to know many people I can share with. I can be glad that they brought something