



Photo by George W. Gardner.
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Matthews enjoying a quiet evening at home—but the telephone may ring at any moment for the University's Dean of Students.

'Is Jack There?'

The question, "Is Jack there?" is one that has come to Dr. Jack Matthews, the University's Dean of Students, about once a week for several years; it comes over the telephone, between the hours of 6 p. m. and midnight—sometimes later. The person at the other end of the line is a student in the University, and the call is in response to a note that listed the dean's number and indicated that the person should "ask for Jack."

The person making the call is usually the timid type. Looking over his shoulder or watching from down the hall are the perpetrators of the trick, having some fun at the expense of their student "friend" and the "old Dean of Students."

Dr. Matthews has always tried to turn the tables on the pranksters by putting the victim at ease quickly. "Yes, this is Jack," he tells his caller in a soft voice, "but you do not know to whom you are talking, so retain your composure and we will pretend

that I did ask you to call, that I wanted to talk with you about your father, some of your relatives, or some of the school officials back in your home town." After the student recovers from the initial shock of learning that he (or she) has called the Dean of Students, the two usually carry on quite a conversation. The victims are often embarrassed, particularly the girls, but occasionally a "know it all" type is encountered, such as the one who, after the suggestion that he continue the conversation with the Dean of Students, responded "Aw, cut out that baloney, I want to talk with Jack."

This incident and others were recounted during a visit with Dean Matthews, who was asked to recall some of his lighter experiences with students, clearly apart from the more serious activities and problems with which his office is concerned. The phone call gag—which he claims he doesn't mind—is one of a variety of situations that Jack Matthews gets involved

in as dean. Looking back on twelve years in the office, he says that for the most part it has been enjoyable.

How did he become the University's first Dean of Students? It began in the spring of 1950 when he was chairman of the Department of Physical Education. Dr. Thomas A. Brady, then University vice-president, asked him if he would be interested in the new position being created in the reorganization of student personnel services. Matthews said he was not interested, that he was happy in his work, and that the expanding physical education program was both promising and challenging. Later on, however, when the prerequisites of the new office were explained, Matthews recalls (with tongue in cheek) that as a status seeker he could not resist the privilege of marching near the head of the Academic Procession at Commencement, attending the monthly Committee of Deans meetings, and enjoying all the free meals to which he would be invited by the fraternities, sororities and residence halls. So he took the job. But his family was not impressed with his new title; when he reached home on the day his appointment was announced, Mrs. Matthews and their two children welcomed him as "the dizzy Dean." This did not surprise him too much, however, for he remembered that when he received his Doctor's degree, his family greeted him as "Dr. Quack."

THE DEAN RECALLS ANOTHER TELEPHONE CALL he received at an unearthly hour. When he drowsily answered, a feminine voice indicated the call was originating in Washington, D. C. This was when President Truman was in the White House, and the thought ran through Matthews' mind that just possibly he was to head some important new program. There was a slight delay, which the "operator" explained as wire trouble, then the "important person" at the other end of the line spoke: "Is this Dean Matthews, the Dean of Students at the University of Missouri?" After the dean replied rather eagerly in the affirmative, the voice continued: "Well, dean, I just wanted to let you know it is 3:45 a.m. in Washington, D. C. Good morning." Dr. Matthews chuckles about it now:

"It would be my guess that the call probably originated from one of our local taverns, but regardless of where the call came from, I was quite let down, and I'm still waiting for that important post with the government."

It is likely that a dean of students is a target of student darts and barbs on every campus, and the "dunking board" at the Farmers Fair back in 1952 must have been regarded by the students as an ideal spot for the dean. At this sideshow attraction, a thrown ball hitting a nearby target would release a board holding the dean, who would be dropped six feet into a tank of water. The Farmers Fair (now defunct) was running short of funds, and the committee decided that the price of tossing three balls—a dime—

could be increased to a quarter, with the added attraction of the dean on the dunking board. "Dunk the Dean" had instant appeal and business was brisk. After half a dozen dunkings, Matthews noticed the water had turned blue. It developed that some joker had emptied a vial of potassium meranganate (blue vitrol) in the water. The coloring did not affect the dean, who had coated his body with oil, but the prank, which infuriated the other Ag boys, washed out that sideshow for the day; Matthews had to withdraw as he was due in Washington (not for an appointment) the following day. The next night, a delegation of Ag students called at the dean's home to inform Mrs. Matthews that they had caught the culprit and shaved his head. In fact, his captors had redecorated his pate—with more of the blue vitrol that had discolored the tank water.

DEAN MATTHEWS HAS BEEN ON HAND on both occasions when a student has been placed atop one of the Columns. One stunt was in connection with a Knight Owl election, the other was a publicity gimmick for a student musical. Matthews helped supervise the job of getting the students back down safely. In the second case he informed the drum beaters for the musical that they would have to bear the cost of having Buildings and Grounds remove the student. The students rushed their own rescue efforts trying to beat the Buildings and Grounds crew, which Matthews had summoned to the scene.

"When I saw that the youngsters with their feverish work were going to win, I had to call a halt to their efforts," the dean said. "I pointed out that their equipment was a little flimsy and now that I was on hand, I could not allow them to bring their man down. It would have been far too hazardous. The student musical got its publicity, all right. My friends from over the country, from New York to Denver to San Francisco, sent me newspaper pictures of what I hope will be the last of the Column sitters."

Then there was the case of the young man who got in trouble when a certain group was trying to collect enough string to stretch from a fraternity house across campus town to a sorority house. At a downtown filling station the boys spotted a display of small pennants fastened to a cord. As they sought to take down the cord, police came on the scene and a merry chase followed. The boys were apprehended, and the driver of the student car, summoned by the dean, was denied the privilege of operating a car at any time in or around Columbia.

However, only a few weeks later, the young man burst into the dean's office to announce, "Dean, I've been caught again." It developed that he had gotten in his car and, with his roommate, headed toward Christian College. In this short drive he had ignored several stop signs and once more the police apprehended him.

(Continued on next page)



Dr. Matthews

Jack continued

"Why in the world did you get in that car and drive it when you knew you were not supposed to drive the car?" Dean Matthews demanded. "Why didn't you let your roommate drive the car?"

"Oh, I couldn't do that," the student said, "I couldn't let him drive the car, he's a reckless driver."

DURING THE FIRST YEAR AS DEAN OF STUDENTS, DR. MATTHEWS and his wife vowed that they would attend each and every student function to which they were invited. (The vow later was regretted, and still later renounced). Social activity in a college community reaches two peaks during the year—during the Christmas formal period and the spring formal period. Most formals for all organizations take place on Friday and

Saturday nights on only two or three weekends, which means that as many as fifteen formals might be held in one evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Matthews have often wondered whether they established a new record among deans of students when, in one evening, they attended twelve formal dances in twenty-minute shifts. Quite proud of this feat, they even bragged a little about it to some of their younger friends as well as their contemporaries. Then the payoff, as recalled by Dean Matthews:

"A good dentist friend of mine, making small talk with a student patient in his office, remarked that he knew Dean Matthews and that recently the dean and his wife had attended twelve formal dances in one night. The student, from a reclining position in the chair, turned his head around and speaking somewhat slyly said, 'Yes, and we saw him out at our house sneaking around, too.' That did it. We began to taper off in our social excursions."

As everyone who knows the Dean of Students well realizes, he keeps his sense of humor and a buoyant spirit on a job that makes many demands on his energy, patience and judgment. As he finished reminiscing about some of his lighter experiences, he hastened to add that not all of them are humorous. Some are sad and some are tragic. But Dr. Jack Matthews, Dean of Students, finds each new experience interesting, and to him the days, the weeks, and the years go by too quickly.

Houston welcomes Devine

Reports from Houston on Head Coach Dan Devine's recent appearance there are that it "was a smashing success from every angle." Not only did he get the opportunity to spend some time with the large group of Missouri ex-students in the area, but he left a wake of newspaper, radio and television publicity which, one informant writes, "put Missouri in a favorable light in this football hotbed." Devine made a fine impression at a press luncheon at the Houston Club and later that day at the Prudential Life Insurance Company's auditorium where 150 alumni saw the Tiger-Jayhawk game films.

At the luncheon, Devine wore a sheepish grin and a ten-gallon hat as Morris Frank, Houston Chronicle columnist and nationally-famous toastmaster, put him on the griddle. The popular newspaperman and TV personality was given a Mizzou freshman cap in recognition of his consistent plugs for the Tigers in his programs and columns during the year.

Among the honored guests at the luncheon were former Missouri football stars Bailey Houx, Harry Viner and Red Bourne. Houx, the Tiger quarterback of the 1900 era, presented Devine with the Texas hat which the coach promised to wear next season. Devine also received a commission as Honorary Citizen of the State of Texas, courtesy of Governor Price Daniel. Mrs. Harland Miller (Tiger Marge) presented a Texas belt set to Assistant Coach Clay Cooper, who accompanied Devine.

Devine, addressing the alumni meeting, assured the Bluebonnet Bowl committee that Missouri "certainly isn't going to get into the habit of turning down bids, and if we had chosen to go to a bowl this year, the Bluebonnet certainly was our first choice." Bowl officials present disclosed officially that Missouri was invited to the bowl first.

Coach Devine sketched briefly the 1961 season and discussed some of the prospects for the coming year, as well as explaining again to Houston alumni the University's decision against accepting any bowl bids following the dramatic victory over K.U. Houston alumni had been plugging for Mizzou in the Bluebonnet, but the soundness of the coach's explanation left his hearers in agreement on the Tiger decision.

Nap Ramsey, president of the Houston alumni chapter and chairman of the arrangements group, worked with a joint committee of Miners and Tigers—Houston's Alumni Association operates jointly with the School of Mines alumni—and honorary chairmen were Houx and Viner. Committee members included Tom Brawner, Vaughn M. Bryant, Marge Miller, Jackson Letts, Henry McQueen, Karl Hasselmann, Bill Lindholm, Fred Hillis, Dr. James E. Watson, Dale Henderson, Frank King, Mike Bogle, Don Lambert, Bud Schuarte, Ralph Graham, Rollo Wade, Ted DeFelice, Lt. Col. Joe Friedman, Harry Hackethorn, Bill Hopson, Hayden Glatte, Harry McConnell, Claude Henley, Art Casper, P. J. Moore, Dennis McColgin and Monte Pendleton.