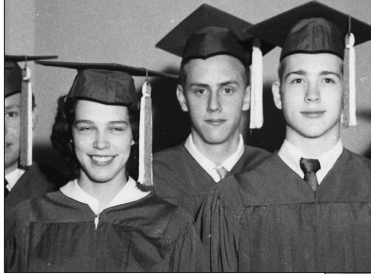


# *Education for Successful Living*



## *University School at the University of Oklahoma, 1917–1973*



*By Steven Wade Mackie\**

Much of the Progressive Era, as well as a school that it inspired, University School at the University of Oklahoma, have long been forgotten. Yet this small, innovative institution was a model of progressive education that roused many educators and students. Dr. Ellsworth Collings, one of University School's first directors and later the first dean of the College of Education, laid a foundation in progressive education. This approach to education

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was inspired by Collings's study with progressive educators such as Dr. John Dewey and Dr. William Heard Kilpatrick while earning his doctorate at Teachers' College in New York City.<sup>1</sup> The progressive foundation of the University School would remain firmly in place throughout its existence. However, in the later years mounting political pressures and changing social attitudes would test this foundation. Most notably, the Soviet Union's launching and orbiting of Sputnik in 1957 caused panic in the American education establishment, raising fears that the United States had fallen behind in technology. A rethinking of educational theory followed, eventually causing progressivism to fall from favor. As a result, this and other influential factors would force the University School to close after almost six decades of educational innovation.<sup>2</sup>

The Industrial Revolution of the mid-nineteenth century had spawned a wave of immigration from European nations, had caused a number of social problems, had rapidly expanded the middle class, and had also seeded a new purpose for the public school system. Progressive educators such as John Dewey emerged, defining the field and placing a "transformational" view of schooling at the heart of the Progressive ideal. Known as "the Father of Progressive Education," Dewey was the most influential educational philosopher of the twentieth century. At the University of Chicago, where he worked from 1896 to 1904, Dewey founded University Laboratory School in 1896. There his progressive educational theories were tested, criticized, and retested. The years of experimentation at University Laboratory School generated a wealth of thought and findings, stimulating Dewey to write a number of books on educational theory to detail his progressive educational thought. Two of his most notable early works, *The School and Society* (1900) and *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902), record a series of lectures given on the results of the experiments at University Laboratory School.<sup>3</sup>

In these books Dewey laid out his practical pedagogy, specifying the role of the teacher, the student, and the curriculum: 1) Learning should be focused on the child rather than the lesson; learning is a social process, which is achieved most effectively through small groups; 2) Learning should be effected through hands-on projects, that is, the study of history through plays, the study of natural science by exploring nature; 3) A goal of education should be not only excellence in academics but also creative problem solving; 4) Education should involve developing in students a sense of responsibility to both the school community and larger community; 5) The process

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of learning in a school setting should be a continuation of the type of learning that takes place in everyday life; 6) Academic learning should be broadly based and encompass not only traditional subjects but also such subjects as arts, sports, music, and various extracurricular activities; and 7) Continuing teacher education and research are integral parts of teacher training; teachers should be given a significant degree of autonomy within a rigorous framework.<sup>4</sup> Dewey further expounded these points and others in his definitive works, *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938).

During the first years of the twentieth century, as progressive educational thought began to take root along with its transformational ideal, educational reform in the United States was filled with promise and optimism. As a result, many schools and curricula in the United States began to change, transforming from mechanistic “rote learning” and teacher-centered approaches to practices that were aligned with progressive educational theory. With the transformational ideal at the center of progressive educational reform, one of its main goals was to democratize education so that all could informedly participate in both the educational process and in local, state, and national governments.<sup>5</sup>

This last ideal of progressive education particularly rang true in the founding of the new state of Oklahoma, its system of higher education, and University School at the University of Oklahoma. After all, the farm had given America its greatness, and the land runs of the late nineteenth century released some of the last rich farmland in the United States to settlers. Furthermore, the federal government aided the democratic process by passing the Organic Act on May 2, 1890. Not only did the legislation create the Territory of Oklahoma, but it also created a temporary government until elections could be held later that summer.<sup>6</sup> The democratic ideal was alive and well in the new territory.

On September 9, 1892, a week before President David Ross Boyd opened the University of Oklahoma’s doors in Norman for the first time, the *Norman Transcript* reported, “The University of Oklahoma exists for the people. It is supported by the people and offers its advantages free to all alike.”<sup>7</sup> Supporting this belief rooted in the democratic ideal, the university also opened the Preparatory Department. Its mission was to prepare elementary and secondary students in basic skills so that they might eventually attend university classes. The article in the *Transcript* outlined the department’s mission and described the plan of study:

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Knowing well that the disadvantages incident to the settlement of a new country have debarred many from the privileges of school for some time, the university has established a general PREPARATORY COURSE of three years, which is designed to give about such training as would be received in a well-conducted high school. This course will furnish excellent preparation for those who will desire to go further in the work of the collegiate departments, and will at the same time furnish a good general education to those whose age or circumstances compel them to stop with the preparatory work. In this course are embraced English grammar and composition; arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; physiology, botany, and physics; physical geography; writing and studies in English literature; history of the United States, civil government, and drills in the art of public speaking. Those who complete this course will have a good general education and in addition to this such preparation in Latin and general history as will enable them to prosecute most successfully the various courses offered in the university.<sup>8</sup>

Some time between 1895 and 1899 the unit's name changed from "Preparatory Department" to "Preparatory School," but the mission remained virtually unchanged. Statehood in 1907 strengthened the public school system, better preparing its graduates; therefore, the Preparatory School was closed in 1909.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Preparatory School was closed, the university administration was still interested in educating the young, henceforth with a different focus. The 1916–17 school year brought serious discussion between the university administration and the School of Education, then part of the College of Arts and Sciences.<sup>10</sup> In May 1917 the State Board of Education gave its blessing to the new direction. Later that fall, under the guidance of Dr. William Schmidt, University School was opened as a junior high school. Its classes accommodated grades seven through nine and were located in the Carnegie Building, along with the School of Education.<sup>11</sup>

Placing both the secondary unit and the School of Education in the Carnegie Building was no accident. The newly formed junior high was to serve a dual purpose. It would educate the young, and it would train teachers to practice their craft. Rooted in the metaphor of "school as laboratory," it supported experimentation for both student and teacher. The State Board of Education described the school's purpose as that of "a school of experimentation, observation, and practice."<sup>12</sup> Throughout the institution's history both students and teachers commonly knew and used those words. A new kind of school was born in Oklahoma.

Despite the United States' declaration of war on Germany on April 6, 1917, the creative and innovative energies were flowing at

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full force at the University of Oklahoma, especially with the official establishment of University School. Under the continuing leadership of Schmidt, the University School clarified its purpose in a plan of operation that remained in effect until the school's closure in May 1973:

### The University School

By vote of the State Board of Education in May 1917, the university was authorized to open in the following September, in connection with the School of Education, *a school of experimentation, observation, and practice*. This school at present consists of a junior high school, comprising grades seven to nine inclusive. The enrollment is temporarily limited to twenty-four pupils in each grade. The school will serve a variety of purposes:

1. It will furnish laboratory facilities for the School of Education in working out courses of study for high schools. It is hoped that such courses may serve as models for the state.
2. It will serve as a laboratory for working out in a scientific and practical manner problems relating to instruction and supervision. Plans for the effective supervision of study are being developed at the present time.
3. It will furnish much needed laboratory facilities for work in connection with educational measurements.
4. It will constitute a training school for high school teachers, principals, and supervisors, thus furnishing facilities for practice in teaching and supervision, as well as, convenient opportunities for observation.
5. It will serve in general for the exemplification of that which is best in educational theory and practice.<sup>13</sup>

Immediately following World War I many changes took place across the United States and on the University of Oklahoma campus. The Progressive Era in politics was coming to a close, although many of the progressive educators' ideas were still in practice and would remain so for many years to come. In 1919 these concepts found a voice in the formation of the Progressive Education Association (PEA).<sup>14</sup> Stanwood Cobb, one of PEA's founders, stated frankly the organization's purpose: "We aimed at nothing short of reforming the entire schooling system of America."<sup>15</sup>

Change was also occurring at University School. Andrew C. Parsons replaced Schmidt in fall 1919, and the school continued to grow and prosper under Parsons's leadership. In order to better

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serve the students graduating from the junior high, he transformed the school into a junior-senior high by adding grades ten through twelve. University School graduated its first class in spring 1920.<sup>16</sup> That same year, the School of Education was removed from the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences and made independent.<sup>17</sup> Eventually, the leadership changed again, but new leadership brought a vision that forever influenced the school.

Before coming to University School, Ellsworth Collings had conducted his dissertation research, developing a “Project Curriculum” during an experiment from 1917 to 1921 in rural McDonald County, Missouri.<sup>18</sup> The experiment further enhanced ideas from William H. Kilpatrick’s work with “The Project Method,” which translated many of John Dewey’s ideas into a set of practical guidelines for teachers. First Dewey’s student at the University of Chicago and later his colleague at Columbia University, Kilpatrick wrote of Dewey in a diary entry dated March 18, 1935, “The work under Dewey remade my philosophy of life and education.” In the same entry Kilpatrick esteemed Dewey as the third greatest philosopher the world has ever known. He wrote that Dewey is “next after Plato and Aristotle and above Kant and Hegel as a contributor to thought and life.”<sup>19</sup> Dewey’s and Kilpatrick’s influence on the Missouri experiment is documented in Collings’s book, *An Experiment with a Project Curriculum* (1923). Writing an introduction to the work, Kilpatrick praised Collings and summarizes the underlying theory of that experiment, which would eventually be implemented at University School:

1. Pupils find *purpose* in the projects they choose to do, aided by the guidance of their teacher.
2. In the *doing* of the projects, not only a set of skills are learned. Attitudes, responsibilities, self-confidence and other life interests are also acquired.
3. The learning and subject matter in the activity of all the projects are subordinate to the project. In other words, first the project is chosen, then the learning, whether it is to be history, mathematical skills, etc. arise out of meeting the needs to satisfy towards completing the project.
4. Borrowing Dewey’s “continuous reconstruction of experience” each project elevates and enriches the subsequent experience.<sup>20</sup>

The success of the Missouri experiment eventually brought Collings to Oklahoma and set University School’s progressive philosophical foundation.

Collings’s zeal for progressive education was spawned by more than just studying with progressives. His ambition was drawn from his early experiences as a student in a rural school. Finding the les-

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sons pointless and boring, he had quit during his seventh year of classes. Much to his parents' disapproval, he returned home to help with the farm. However, the following year, the school "through mere accident" hired a teacher with real interest in educating boys and girls.<sup>21</sup> Collings testified that "this teacher installed, at his own



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*Ellsworth  
Collings  
(Courtesy Western  
History  
Collections,  
University of  
Oklahoma).*

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expense, a small laboratory and workshop in the rear end of the little school and began all sorts of experimentation in agriculture and instruction in wood and cloth"<sup>22</sup> and engaged the students in many purposeful projects. Eventually, he reenrolled, graduated, and attended college, focusing his studies on education. He admitted having had many quality teachers throughout his student career, yet he attributed his success to "the courage, common sense, and vision of this one country school teacher."<sup>23</sup>

Founding the curriculum in progressive education was not the only legacy that Collings established at University School. He is also credited with expanding many of the institution's programs, including arts and crafts, music, and physical education as well as drama and literary clubs. He also began the newspaper, *Sooner Club*, and the yearbook, *The Schooner*. In 1924 the school achieved membership in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and in the National Honor Society.<sup>24</sup> *The Schooner* of 1926 devoted an entire page to "Improvements" brought about by Collings. Among those mentioned were physical environment, quality supervision, and outside activities.<sup>25</sup> Most of these programs and clubs, including the newspaper and organization memberships, remained active until the school closed in 1973.

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Collings served as director of the University School until 1926, when he became the first dean of the School of Education.<sup>26</sup> Later, in 1929 the School of Education became the College of Education, granting it even more independence.<sup>27</sup> Dean Collings served as leader of the college for nineteen years, always keeping a close eye on University School. In 1935 he, University School Director Chester O. Newlun, and Ruth Elder opened an elementary school to accommodate grades one through six. There was not an empty room in the Carnegie Building, which now housed both the College of Education and the University School. Therefore, the new elementary school moved into the old Medical School's morgue, known as "Stiff House," and remained there under Elder's direction until her retirement in 1966.<sup>28</sup>



*Carnegie Building, University of Oklahoma (Courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma).*

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On the national scene, the late 1930s forced crucial decisions from progressive educators. The social transformative ideal of progressive education was overshadowed by the growth of the middle class and the increased emphasis on the child-centered curriculum. Boyd Bode's 1938 book, *Progressive Education at the Crossroads*, marks this transition. In it, he declares, "Progressive education stands at the parting of the ways. The issue of democracy is becoming more insistent in all the relations of life. It implies a social and educational philosophy, which needs to be formulated and applied. If progressive education can succeed in translating its spirit into terms of



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democratic philosophy and procedure, the future of education in this country will be in its hands. On the other hand, if it persists in a one-sided absorption in the individual pupil, it will be circumnavigated and left behind.”<sup>29</sup> Bode’s words proved to be prophetic. Progressive education lost its focus with the oncoming world war and unconsciously ignored Bode’s warning.

From the 1930s through World War II University School was immune to many of the national and international changes taking place. Until Dean Collings retired in 1945, the College of Education and University School remained under his constant guidance and leadership. However, with his departure, inevitable alterations occurred. Many seemed like a step in the right direction at the time. Eventually, however, some educators would question the modifications.

The year 1947 brought significant change to the school. With World War II ended, many American soldiers returned and went to college on the G.I. Bill. Around the nation, universities, including the University of Oklahoma, exponentially grew. As a result, the University School was moved to campus buildings originally constructed for a U.S. Navy training facility called North Base, making room in the Carnegie Building for more education classes.<sup>30</sup> Relocation allowed the school to expand in size and in curriculum, but the move also isolated students and teachers from the university environment. However, North Base provided a new administration building with room for the kindergarten and the elementary school and much larger classrooms for home economics and art. Another building housed the fine arts department and cafeteria. The high school had its own building, and for the first time the school had its own gymnasium.<sup>31</sup>

The campus was so spread out that it was impossible to supervise all of the children as they passed from class to the cafeteria or gymnasium. Mark Mills attended the school from second to eleventh grade. He recounted a story about the “passing period”: “If you were devious, there were opportunities to slip off campus. There was a fire station on the North Base and they sold candy, and you weren’t allowed to go there. Why they were selling candy when the only possible clientele they would have were the kids at the school was a question I didn’t ask myself at the time.”<sup>32</sup> While the freedoms were occasionally abused, there existed a trust between teacher and student. In the end, the students knew they could not get away with much. After all, the school population was small, and the teachers had close relationships with the students’ families.

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The decades following World War II were characterized by political strife on the international stage and by the movement for racial freedom on the domestic scene. In 1954 the Supreme Court desegregated public schools in the *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision. Flexing his progressive ideals, Oklahoma Governor Raymond Gary did not hesitate to initiate compliance soon after the ruling, defying the federal government's request for briefs from the states' attorneys general on how to best handle the new ruling.<sup>33</sup>

The Russians' launching of Sputnik in 1957 put new demands on curriculum in American schools. The federal government demanded more results in math, science, and engineering, so that Russia would not achieve technological superiority.<sup>34</sup> Standardized testing became increasingly popular as a means of evaluating both a school's and its students' progress, which placed more stringent demands on the curriculum. All of these factors chipped away at the belief in progressive educative philosophy, hence placing more pressure on University School for pedagogical conformity.

Although the school had moved to its new postwar location, its mission as "a school of experimentation, observation, and practice"



*North Base, new home of University School (Courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma).*

remained constant, while endorsing growth. The spacious new site on North Base allowed for expansion.<sup>35</sup> For the first time, grades kindergarten through twelve were offered. The College of Education grew as well. It witnessed a tenfold enrollment increase,

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largely due to the G.I. Bill. The surge of majors in education placed new demands on University School. Throughout the 1950s all student teaching was done there, and sometimes as many as ten student teachers observed a single classroom.<sup>36</sup> The school, the teachers, and the students were accommodating because all understood the metaphor of “school as laboratory.”

The unique nature of the educational program allowed the free flow of creative energies. As a result, many innovative programs arose that not only influenced school life, but affected education in the state and nation. One regimen that changed math instruction in the United States had its roots at University School. Eunice Lewis, who taught mathematics from 1947 until the school’s closing, was invited in 1958 to the University of Illinois as part of a select group of math educators. They developed a new system for precollege math education programs. The program was called “the New Math.” Many agreed that it significantly improved the method of teaching the subject.<sup>37</sup>

One of the defining experiential programs of University School was the “School-Out-Of-Doors: A Living Laboratory for Learning.” This interdisciplinary endeavor, begun in 1956 for junior high students, used the university’s biological station at Lake Texoma as a classroom for a week.<sup>38</sup> Ernest C. Plath, director of University School from 1955 to 1958, and Charles L. Caldwell, math and science teacher from 1928 to 1964, believed in integrating nature and the outdoors into the curriculum. In the early 1950s studies of “school experiments with camping and outdoor education in other states: Michigan, Indiana, Mississippi, California, Texas, and South Carolina” were being published.<sup>39</sup> Plath and Caldwell became interested, read the reports, and eventually got the rest of the staff to start planning. Plath firmly believed that “all groups expected to take part in an activity should be represented in planning that activity.”<sup>40</sup>

The faculty devised some basic assumptions and purposes that changed over the ensuing decades:

### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. That the planning and preparation for the week out-of-doors is a valuable learning experience.
2. That an outdoor setting is conducive to learning and to the development of desirable skills and attitudes.

### PURPOSES

The School-Out-of-Doors provides opportunities for:

1. Application of skills acquired in the classroom to learning

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- situations in the out-of-doors.
2. Learning new skills.
  3. Practice of wholesome social living and good citizenship.
  4. Enriched experiences in nature study and science.
  5. Learning about health and safety in the out-of-doors.
  6. Exploring outdoor recreational interests.
  7. Experience in leadership training for senior students.<sup>41</sup>

The students eagerly responded. Of her experience at the School-Out-of-Doors in 1957 eleventh-grader Sally Reynolds wrote that “I learned more about nature and how she protects her animals, plants, reptiles, etc. . . . I learned how to be with people. We had fun because we co-operated and everyone participated in everything. . . . We learned something about astronomy. . . . We took a few specimen[s] of algae, fern and moss. . . . We learned about the different formations. . . . I learned things that I couldn’t possibly learn in a classroom.”<sup>42</sup>

The curriculum in the School-Out-of-Doors was interdisciplinary and pervasive throughout the academic year. Dr. Dan Hobbs, elementary school principal from 1958 to 1960 and interim director from 1960 to 1961, mentions that even though the students were at the biological station for only a week, teachers first prepared the students months in advance and then utilized student learning in planning subsequent activities. He noted that “they [students] would study . . . they would gear up the whole year, in their sciences on the campus in expectation of what was going to happen down there during the week.”<sup>43</sup> Martha Mills, English teacher from 1963 to 1973, organized School-Out-of-Doors after Caldwell retired. She found inspiration by teaching class on the beach of the lake. Her students always produced some of their best work when they were drawing on their experiences in the camp. To Mills, it was more than just academics: “What we learned, among other things, was how to live together.”<sup>44</sup> At the biological station many of the classes were taught by the university’s finest professors, including the internationally renowned ornithologist and bird artist George Miksch Sutton.<sup>45</sup>

Besides the underpinning progressive philosophy of education, several distinct differences existed between University School and its local counterparts. The faculty of University School took advantage of its close relationship with the university, thus utilizing to the fullest extent the professors and campus facilities. Although the North Base location was not as convenient as the previous site had been, teachers continued to take their students to campus many

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times throughout the year to observe a university class, to use a lab, or to hear a guest lecturer.<sup>46</sup> University School teachers were autonomous. They had the freedom to write, interpret, and conduct the curriculum in the manner they deemed to be consistent with the mandated plan of operation as “a school of experimentation, observation, and practice.”<sup>47</sup> These words also helped foster a strong sense of community. One result was a high retention rate among teachers. Interestingly, the opposite was true for the directors. Many of the principals and directors stayed at the school for only a few years while completing a graduate degree.<sup>48</sup> This gave the teachers a majority of the power. Martha Mills reiterated that “the teachers at University School, when we had a faculty meeting, they made all the decisions about what was going to take place. We had principals . . . [and] they were all men, who were working on doctor-



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*University High School's homecoming queen is crowned in 1963 (Courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma).*

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ates. So, they would be there a year or two, and then we would have another one. So, they would listen to what the teachers wanted, and then it was more or less understood that they would carry out what the teachers had decided. That was the structure.”<sup>49</sup>

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Many of the challenges in the school's later years proved destructive and eventually led to its closure. As progressive education fell from favor and its idea of democratic schooling limped closely behind, University School held a tighter rein on both while steering itself into pedagogical isolation. Relocation to North Base physically symbolized the separation, driving the school further into a corner. As the isolation grew, so did the potential for closure.

Throughout its fifty-six-year history University School had served as a model of progressive education. Its foundation rested upon progressive educational philosophy; its faculty were master teachers. It was seen as a laboratory for experimentation, and the university willingly subsidized it. Nevertheless, these many innovative aspects did not immunize the school from national or local politics, from changing attitudes in education, or from social movements. In varying degrees, those forces played a devastating role in the institution's last years.

First, mirroring the ardor of liberation and self-expression of the post–World War I years and the Roaring Twenties, many educators, who claimed to be progressives of Deweyan descent, began misinterpreting Dewey's theories of education. They constructed schools that claimed to teach Dewey's child-centered curriculum but actually educated for self-expression. Focusing solely on the child's whimsical interests, the program of activities paid little heed to the importance of the role of the teacher or to the curriculum. Dewey sharply criticized these schools, many of which were begun by his former students, for giving too much emphasis to the individual. The economic collapse following the stock market crash on "Black Tuesday" in October 1929, coupled with the environmental hardships experienced in the Dust Bowl Era ushered in new educational challenges in the United States and particularly in Oklahoma. There was a push for schools to return to "the Three R's" and to offer religious training. Dewey understood these approaches as indoctrination and criticized them as such. He claimed that both "the would-be progressive teachers" and their curriculum and the religious fundamentalists' approaches to education threatened the values and operations of a democratic society. This marked a transition for Dewey and other progressive educators from creators to defenders of progressive education.<sup>50</sup>

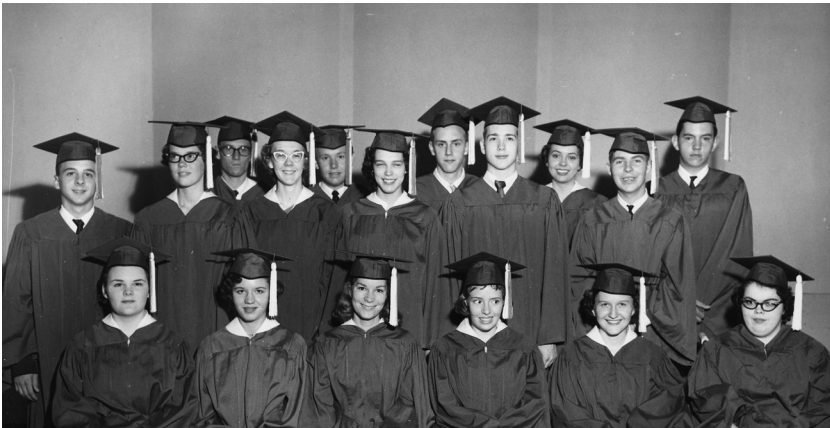
Second, progressive education suffered in the 1950s because educational reform was not a social or political priority during World War II and the late 1940s. John Dewey's death in 1952 added to the reform movement's decline. Although the Progressive Education

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Association had very successfully spread pedagogical methods throughout its existence, it began to lose its political base as it transformed from an all-encompassing organization into a quasi-professional one. In 1955 the PEA folded, and two years later its journal, *Progressive Educator*, issued its final number.<sup>51</sup>

Third, public schools in the mid-twentieth century faced unprecedented challenges: centralization, consolidation, increased bureaucracy, forced bussing, and racial integration. University School isolated itself from many of these problems by functioning with fierce independence, as many of the teachers and administrators dictated. The move to North Base in the 1940s brought further isolation and began the gradual severance of ties between the College of Education and University School.

Fourth, the quarters of the University School on North Base were old, wood-frame, multistory buildings. Some classrooms that were centrally located within the buildings had no windows. To get to some of their classes, students had to walk through classrooms in use by other students. After all, North Base had been constructed to serve the Navy, not children. For years the City of Norman Fire Marshal's Office pressured the school and the university to bring the buildings to code. Proper updating was not an option for this small school, but its administrators never lacked creativity. In accordance with the school's tight budget, they bought rope ladders



*University High School graduates of 1961 (Courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma).*

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for the classrooms and hung them from the windows of the upper stories. The students loved the fire drills; the teachers did not.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the early 1970s brought tighter budget constraints to higher education. The University School had three sources of funding: state appropriation, private tuition, and university underwriting. The state's share was based on average daily attendance, just as it was in the case of the Norman Public Schools. The tuition was a nominal amount annually paid by the families. The university paid the balance. During the 1972–73 school year that burden reached \$150,000, and the College of Education considered closing the school.<sup>53</sup> Some recognized its value. Others thought that the money would be better spent to improve the quality of the college's own faculty. After all, times were changing. The year was 1973. The Progressive Era was long over. Few ever discussed the ideas of the progressive educators John Dewey and William Kilpatrick. Even the ideas of Ellsworth Collings, on which the school's foundation was based, were quickly being forgotten. At the time, schools emphasized standardized testing and basic skills to prepare students for the work force. No longer were progressive education or laboratory schools *en vogue*. At length, the College of Education decided that the money could be better spent on higher, rather than secondary, faculty. The university agreed. The University School closed after graduating forty-five students in May 1973.<sup>54</sup> In the end, the College of Education never received the promised funding, and University School remained closed forever.<sup>55</sup>

### ENDNOTES

\* Steven Wade Mackie teaches "School in American Cultures" while pursuing a doctorate in Educational Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

<sup>1</sup> Ellsworth Collings, *An Experiment with a Project Curriculum* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), viii. Although Collings was enrolled at Teachers' College, where he eventually earned his doctorate under the guidance of Kilpatrick, he also took courses with Dewey, who was a professor in the Philosophy Department at Columbia University.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Hobbs, interview with the Steven Mackie, November 2, 2005, Norman, Oklahoma [recording in possession of the author].

<sup>3</sup> See John Dewey, *The School and Society: Being Three Lectures by John Dewey . . . Supplemented by a Statement of the University Elementary School* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; McClure, Phillips & Company, 1900); John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902); The University of Chicago–Laboratory Schools, "History and Philosophy of the Laboratory Schools," <http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/academics/ms/handbook/3.shtml> (accessed September 25, 2006).



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<sup>4</sup> The University of Chicago–Laboratory Schools, “History and Philosophy of the Laboratory Schools,” <http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/academics/ms/handbook/3.shtml> (accessed September 25, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), viii–ix.

<sup>6</sup> Danney Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma: The Making of a New Kind of State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 25–27.

<sup>7</sup> *Norman (Oklahoma) Transcript*, September 9, 1892.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Funston Foil Gaither, “History of University School,” October 15, 1975, 4, University School Collection, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. It should be noted to the interested reader that Gaither served University School as history teacher, principal, and director before becoming professor in the College of Education. In the 1970s he started collecting data and artifacts to write the history of University School, a history he never finished. All of his notes, data, and artifacts (including Euclid, a stuffed cat made by the students from scraps of fur. Euclid was the school’s mascot and was highly cherished by the students and faculty) have been collected and are preserved in the Western History Collections.

<sup>10</sup> *General Catalog of the University of Oklahoma, 1930* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1930), 86.

<sup>11</sup> *The Schooner*; University High School Yearbook (1972), vi.

<sup>12</sup> *University Catalog, 1917–1918* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1918), 107.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> The John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, “Progressive Education,” <http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey> (accessed April 8, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, 241.

<sup>16</sup> *The Schooner*; University High School Yearbook (1923), 8.

<sup>17</sup> *General Catalog of the University of Oklahoma, 1930*, 86.

<sup>18</sup> William Heard Kilpatrick, “Introduction,” in Collings, *An Experiment with a Project Curriculum*, 6–7.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Tenenbaum, *William Heard Kilpatrick: Trail Blazer in Education* (New York: Harpers and Brothers Publishers, 1951), 75.

<sup>20</sup> Collings, *An Experiment with a Project Curriculum*, xvii–xx.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Gaither, “History of University School,” 9.

<sup>25</sup> *The Schooner*; University High School Yearbook (1926), 2.

<sup>26</sup> Gaither, “History of University School,” 13.

<sup>27</sup> *General Catalog of the University of Oklahoma, 1930*, 86.

<sup>28</sup> Gaither, “History of University School,” 14–15.

<sup>29</sup> Boyd H. Bode, *Progressive Education at the Crossroads* (New York: Newson and Company, 1938), 43–44.

<sup>30</sup> *The Schooner*; University High School Yearbook (1972), vi.

<sup>31</sup> Gaither, “History of University School,” 17.

<sup>32</sup> Mark Mills, interview with Steven W. Mackie, November 9, 2005, Norman, Oklahoma [recording in possession of the author].

<sup>33</sup> Hobbs interview.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

## UNIVERSITY SCHOOL, 1917–1973

<sup>35</sup> “University High School–Significant Events,” [author unknown], University School File, Office of the Dean of the College of Education, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Mills interview.

<sup>37</sup> Hobbs interview.

<sup>38</sup> *The Schooner*, University High School Yearbook (1972), 65.

<sup>39</sup> Gaither, “History of University School,” 18.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> *13th Annual School Out-of-Doors Handbook–1969*, University School File (Norman, Oklahoma), 4.

<sup>42</sup> *The School-of-Outdoors Bulletin–1957*, University School File (Norman, Oklahoma), 31.

<sup>43</sup> Hobbs interview.

<sup>44</sup> Martha Mills, interview with the author, November 16, 2005, Norman, Oklahoma [recording in possession of the author].

<sup>45</sup> Anne Barajas, “More than just a Memory,” *Sooner Magazine* (Summer 2003), 30.

<sup>46</sup> Mark Mills interview.

<sup>47</sup> *University Catalog, 1917–1918* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1918), 107.

<sup>48</sup> Hobbs interview.

<sup>49</sup> Martha Mills interview.

<sup>50</sup> John Dewey, “The Need for a Philosophy of Education,” *The Later Works, 1925–1953* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1981), 9:198.

<sup>51</sup> Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, 273.

<sup>52</sup> Martha Mills interview.

<sup>53</sup> Hobbs interview.

<sup>54</sup> “University High School–Significant Events,” 4.

<sup>55</sup> Martha Mills interview.