

Fall 1991

Nova Quarterly: The Magazine of the University of Texas at El Paso

News and Publications Office, UTEP

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/nova>

Recommended Citation

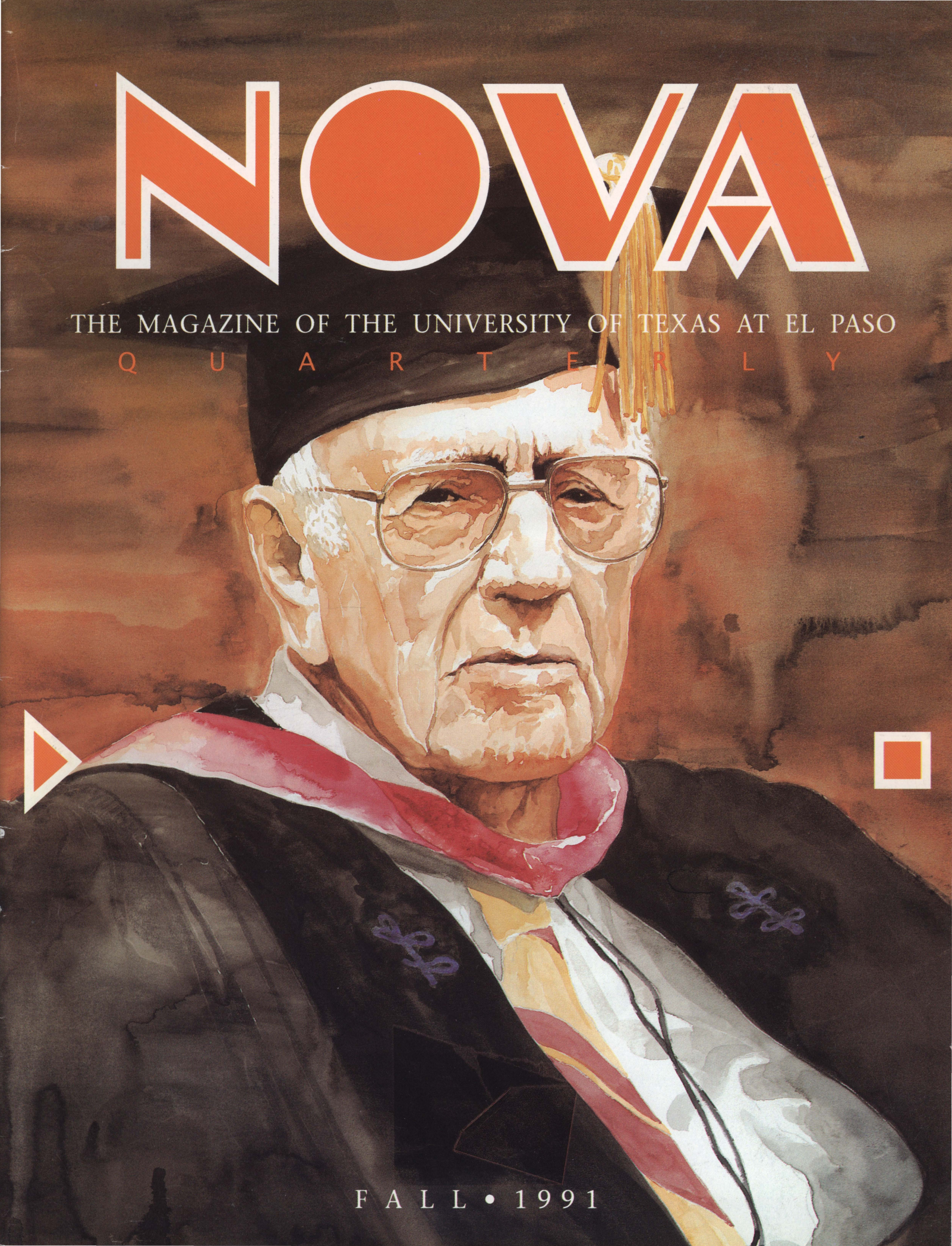
News and Publications Office, UTEP, "Nova Quarterly: The Magazine of the University of Texas at El Paso" (1991). *NOVA*. 115.
<http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/nova/115>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the UTEP History Resources at DigitalCommons@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in NOVA by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UTEP. For more information, please contact lweber@utep.edu.

NOVA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

Q U A R T E R L Y



FALL • 1991

FROM THE EDITOR

Homecoming is a time to re-live old memories. It is a time to renew friendships, a time to see how the school

has changed and catch a glimpse of where it's going. It is a "coming home" to a special place in the heart as much as it is a return to the campus. This year, UTEP alumni can choose from many events to re-kindle memories and connect with old schoolmates. The Golden Grad Luncheon, college and departmental receptions and the 5K run/walk are just some of these events. The Distinguished Alumnus Reception celebrates the accomplishments of our alumni through this year's distinguished alumnus—Allen Born, chairman and CEO of Amax (*see page 2*). The bonfire, spirit rally and the Miners vs. Colorado State Rams game cap off the festivities.

In this *NOVA* Homecoming issue, we pay special tribute to C.L. "Doc" Sonnichsen. His service to the university and his love for teaching made him one of the most respected and beloved figures in the history of this institution. His mark on the university resounds in the souls of those who knew him. If you did not know him personally, you'll see he is the spirit that legends are made of.

Recently, UTEP philosophy professor David Hall sent us a travel essay we could not resist publishing. His homecoming is via the "Pink City" in India—a trek through the world of OM. You'll enjoy it thoroughly.

As always, we would like to hear your thoughts about *NOVA*. Write or call us and we'll connect you with ex-college friends through Alumnotes. Viva UTEP!

—Arturo Vasquez

VIEW OF UTEP



Paydirt Pete personifies UTEP spirit.

NOVA



Fall 1991

Volume 27, No. 1; No. 107

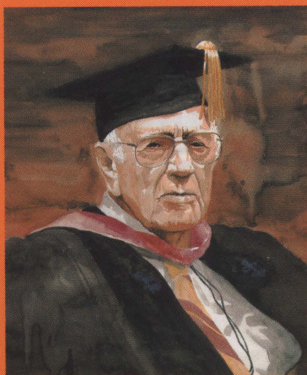
Editor: **Arturo Vasquez**
Assistant Editor: **Chris Williams**
Graphic Design: **Geronimo Garcia, Kathleen Rogers, John Downey and Bobby Daniels**
Photography: **David Flores and Franklin Muñoz**

Contents © 1991 by
The University of Texas at El Paso
NOVA Quarterly (ISSN 1041-6900)
is published by the News and
Publications Office, UTEP, El
Paso, TX 79968-0522. *NOVA* is
sent without obligation to alumni
and friends of the University.
Second class postage paid at
El Paso, TX.
POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to *NOVA*, The University
of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX
79968-0522.

Nova Quarterly is printed by the
University Printing Division.

On the cover:

Watercolor portrait of
C. L. Sonnichsen by
Geronimo Garcia.



Features

2

Allen Born: A Miner at the Helm

by Chris Williams

10

C. L. Sonnichsen Toward the End

by S. Gail Miller

16

OM

by David Hall

Departments

6

Partners

8

Alumnotes

by Kay Peck

20

Highlights



SPECIAL EVENTS

Annual 5 K Fun Run/Walk

Saturday, September 28, 8 a.m.

"A Look Back at Homecomings Past"

September 30-October 11, 1991
Union Gallery

Distinguished Alumnus Reception & Buffet

Friday, October 4, 7-9 p.m.
New Geology Bldg.

Spirit Rally and Bonfire

Friday October 4, 9 & 10 p.m.

Geology Building Ribbon- Cutting & Brunch

Saturday, October 5, 10 a.m.
New Geology Bldg.

UTEP Miners vs. Colorado St.

Saturday, October 5, 7 p.m.

"Tick Tock the Miners Rock-a-Sock Hop"

Saturday, October 5, after
the game, Memorial Gym

For more information call
747-5533




ALLEN

A Miner at

1991-1992

Distinguished Alumnus

 he bronze statue of a miner that will stand in front of the UTEP Geology Department is a fitting memorial for a university that prides itself on its mining roots.

For department chairman Dr. Randy Keller, the statue is also a fitting memorial to the man who donated it — corporate executive Allen Born, UTEP Class of '58 and the 1991 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award.

The donation came after Keller had presented Born with another honor, the Society of Mining Engineers 1989 Jackling Award “for his leadership and ability...in the face of the worst commodities markets since the Great Depression.” While in Las Vegas to receive the award, Born noticed Keller and fellow UTEP geology professor Kenneth Clark admiring a bronze statue of a miner in the convention center exhibit hall. “Three weeks later, he called me and asked if I’d like one for my new building,” Keller recalls. “He’s clearly a very decisive person. And he loves his El Paso roots.”

Born has gone far since riding out of El Paso with a geology degree in his back pocket to work as an exploration geologist for El Paso Natural Gas Co.

He’s now chairman and CEO of Amax, a Fortune 500 mining company. When he became Amax president

six years ago, Wall Street insiders reportedly joked that the troubled company’s management moves were like swapping deck chairs on the Titanic. Now the company is solidly in the black, and Born has twice been named CEO of the Year in the mining industry by *Financial World* magazine.

His achievements previously earned Born UTEP’s Golden Nugget Award for professional accomplishment from the College of Science in 1987.

“The guy is obviously a giant of industry,” says Lloyd Stevens, chairman of the distinguished alumni award selection committee. “It’s incredible the success he’s had. He’s really internationally known.”

The distinguished alumni award will be presented to Born Oct. 4 at a dinner at the new geology department building.

Despite all the success, Born hasn’t lost sight of where the journey began.

“He speaks highly of the preparation he had at UTEP and the opportunities that his educational experience opened up for him,” says UTEP president Diana Natalicio. “And he’s very complimentary of the faculty of the academic program in which he was enrolled. He’s exactly the kind of alumnus in whom the university can take great pride.”

BORN:

at the Helm

by Chris Williams

*Allen Born, chairman and CEO of Amax,
a Fortune 500 mining company.*

As a youngster in Durango, Colo., academics weren't particularly Born's cup of tea, although he did maintain a "solid B average," recalls Durango attorney Sam Maynes, Born's boyhood buddy. Born's passion was football and basketball, and according to Maynes, he excelled at both. The Durango Demons, Born's high school basketball team, went 22-2 in his senior year and played in the state championship tournament. Both Born and Maynes were in the starting lineup. "What we lacked in size, we made up for in speed and instinctive communication," Maynes recalls.

If Born had an academic passion growing up, it was geology, recalls his wife, Pat.

"I think Al knew when he was 13 that he wanted to be a geologist," she says.

This information didn't come secondhand, either. Pat Born went to school with her future husband since they were both in third grade. They began dating as high school seniors, and were married March 22, 1953, at 19. This year they had their 38th wedding anniversary.

Born may have liked geology as a kid, but his father and grandfather, both miners, told the boy they didn't want him getting into mining. His high school principal, Lyle Howard, went one step further, telling him to get out of Durango. "He told me, 'If you want to come back, come back, but find out what's out there first,'" Born recalls.

Born's first move "out there" was a two-year stint in the U.S. Army. On his return, Al and Pat moved to El Paso, and Born began working on his geology degree. He was determined to get it as quickly as possible, Born recalls.

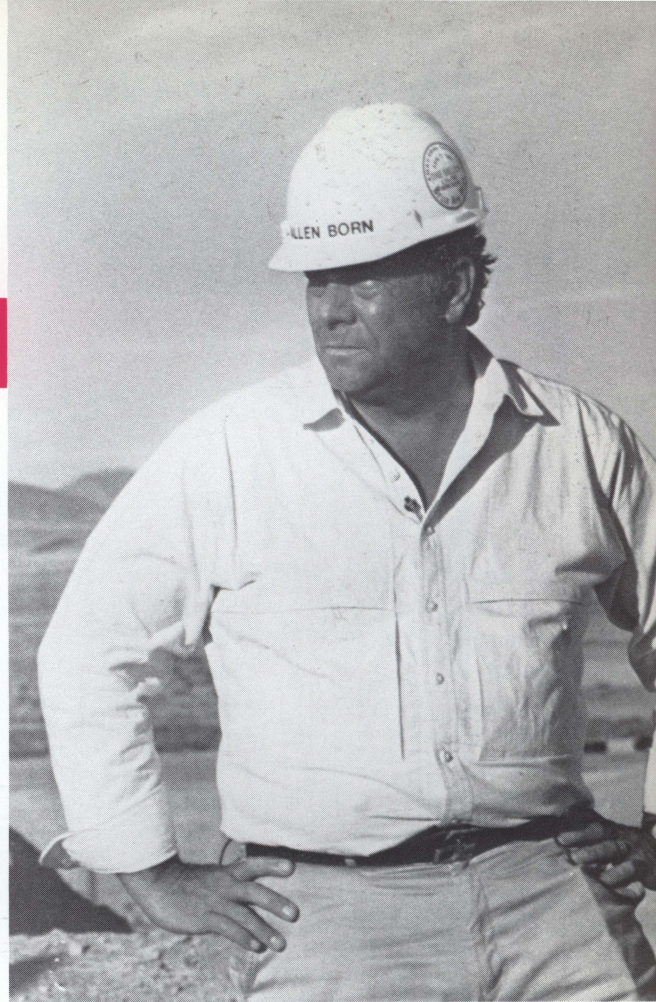
"Every day of the year I went to school," he says. "I started in January of '55 and graduated in June of '58."

Home for the Borns was a ramshackle apartment complex within walking distance of campus that everyone knew as Vets Village, since most of the tenants were veterans. The vets had a little community there, recalls Pat Born. "The children played together, the husbands studied together," she says.

That communal feeling helped overcome some of the hardships that came with the territory.

"I actually had snow come through a crack in the wall onto my blanket," recalls Jack Phillips, a college friend of Born's.

Phillips accompanied Born on a fondly-remembered exploit — the notorious field trip with Dr. Emily Vowell of the geology department. "Jack and I were doing some fossil work and she had ridden with us," Born recalls.



"When it was time to pack up and go, we all went back to our cars. Jack and I assumed she had left with someone else." She hadn't. When Born drove back to get her, Dr. Vowell was walking gamely down the road.

"I don't think I want to tell you what she said when I picked her up," he laughs.

Born managed to overcome the incident, graduate, and go to work as an exploration geologist. It wasn't long, though, before he shifted direction.

"That job (with El Paso Natural Gas) was temporary," he says. "When it finished (after a year), I saw there wasn't a need for geologists, so I went with my college minor, metallurgy."

After a couple of interim jobs, Born was hired by Amax in 1967 as a metallurgist at the company's molybdenum mine in Climax, Colo. With Amax, he not only gained expertise as a metallurgist, but also learned new skills, such as finding new properties for tungsten extraction and finding markets for the company's materials and products. Born also became mine superintendent, and the Amax high command noted him as a man with executive potential. He was given a choice: go to Harvard and get an MBA, or go to Canada as head of Amax's tungsten operations. In 1976, he became president of Canada Tungsten Mining Corp. Ltd., and a year later he took charge of all of Amax's Canadian companies.

Born found the new challenges fascinating. "I found I could put the whole package together and put a ribbon around it," he says.

But the new responsibilities were also somewhat sobering for him, his friend Sam Maynes says.

"He told me, 'Here I am, having the time of my life,'" Maynes recalls. "I never had the opportunity to make these kinds of decisions. It's kind of scary, but it's really a challenge."

Next came a four-year stint with a Canadian mining company, Placer Development Ltd., that established Born's reputation as a man who could revitalize troubled companies. "One guy told me (Placer) was like a ship without a rudder," Born says. With Born at the helm, the company was steered back on course, recalls Vernon "Moose" Taylor, a friend of Born's who served on the Placer board at the time.

Running Placer was one thing, taking over Amax quite another.

"While at Placer, (Amax president) Pierre (Gousseland) asked me if I would consider coming back," Born recalls. "I said, 'No, no way.'"

But the offers got better and better, and Born finally agreed to come back as president and chief operating officer, with the understanding that he was heir apparent for the CEO's job.

The task he faced was daunting, recalls Pat Born. "Everyone knew (Amax) was in bad shape, but when Al got to New York he found it was in worse shape than anyone had told him," she says.

Amax had been a powerhouse in the natural resource business as recently as 1980. But from 1982 to 1986, buffeted with a recession, unprofitable investments and a decline in the molybdenum market, Amax had built up cumulative losses of \$1.7 billion. When Born took over, he began exercising his policy for business repair that has since become famous throughout the mining industry — fix it, sell it, or shoot it. He sold off unprofitable businesses, reduced the size of the molybdenum business in line with its decreased return, and built up the company in other areas — aluminum, gold and energy. The result? In 1990, Amax had sales of \$3.8 billion and net earnings of \$226 million.

Of all the difficult tasks Born had to perform in rebuilding the company, the hardest, he says, was letting people go.

"(Amax) had an upper level that had to go," Allen Born recalls. "And these were people I had known for years."

What ultimately saved Amax, Born believes, is that underneath the bureaucracy there were very good people. "I needed to recover that talent and put it in the proper place. That's why Amax is a success story. You've got to have a captain, but you also have to have a crew."

Born took time out recently from a well-deserved vacation to reminisce about Amax, UTEP and the other significant milestones of his life. As he talked, he was joined by some recent milestones: his two grandchildren, Michael, 5 (he'll be six in September), and Eric, 3.

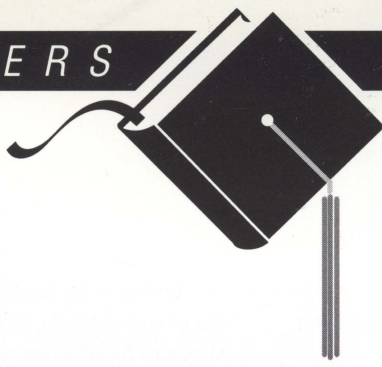
With the interview winding down, Born prepared to take off with the kids. "We're going to the beach!" he said as he hung up the phone.

When Born's friends think of what makes him outstanding, it's qualities like being able to run a Fortune 500 company and still find time to play on the beach with his grandchildren.

"He's everything Donald Trump wishes he was," says UTEP geologist Keller. ■



Allen Born and his wife, Pat, making tortillas in their Greenwich, Connecticut home.



Peter and Mardee de Wetter Establish Endowed Chair for Creative Writing

If, as Ben Franklin asserted, "An investment in education always pays the best interest," then El Pasoans Peter and Mardee de Wetter were as wise as they were generous in their recent creation of the Peter and Mardee de Wetter Endowed Chair for Creative Writing.

Highly coveted among colleges and universities, endowed positions such as the de Wetter Chair enable an institution to recruit and retain outstanding faculty by providing a salary supplement and/or support for related professional expense to the individual who fills the named position.

The de Wetters' gift to UTEP of \$500,000 (through a charitable remainder trust) will form the corpus of an endowment which, in turn, will generate an annual income to support their Chair for Creative Writing in perpetuity.

Says Carl Jackson, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, "With the current state problems in funding for higher education, we realize now as never before the value of an endowed gift. In essence, endowments are our only defense against the fickle nature of state support for education."

Asked why, in an age that stresses science and technology, they elected to sponsor a position in creative writing, Peter explains, "Universities in this day and age are able to attract funding for the sciences, but we think money for liberal arts is woefully lacking, so we decided to help balance the scales a bit."

Mardee adds that, "My lifelong, compelling interest in literature convinces me that creative writing is the key to preserving the heritage of our culture."

To answer the question of why they chose to invest in UTEP and El Paso after having lived the last two decades in

California, one has only to look at the de Wetter's roots:

Mardee is a fourth generation El Pasoan, the only child of Charles and Betty Belding. She graduated from Crockett Elementary School, El Paso High School and, in 1944, the College of Mines (BA in English; MA in History).

Of her Mines education, Mardee reflects that over time she has "come to appreciate the rare education" she received at the college. She cherishes, in particular, the small classes and extraordinary professors.

"With the current state problems in funding for higher education, we realize now as never before the value of an endowed gift. In essence, endowments are our only defense against the fickle nature of state support for education."

"With such mentors as C. L. Sonnichsen, Rabbi Roth, Eugene Porter, J. L. Waller and Rex Strickland," she wonders "who could NOT learn?"

Peter de Wetter was born in New Rochelle, New York, and educated in Europe and at Phillips Exeter Academy. He arrived in El Paso in '43 on a troop train to join the First Cavalry Division which was then still mounted. As luck would have it, the soldier and the scholar met, married and, after the war ended in 1945, made their home in El Paso.

Peter pursued a business career first as president and chairman of O.K. Van and Storage of Texas and New Mexico, and later as president and CEO of The Bekins Company of Texas. Three de Wetter sons, Charles, David and Robert, were born in El Paso. In addition to being a successful artist, Mardee focused her energies on the El Paso Museum of Art. Through the Junior League, she, Mrs. Calvin Adams and Mrs. John Moses established the Museum's docent program, a first for El Paso.

During this time Peter was active in various civic activities. His many civic roles included chairman of the Civil Service Commission, president of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Rio Grande Girl Scout Council, president of Goodwill Industries and a national Goodwill board member. From 1969-1971, he served as mayor of El Paso.

After Peter completed his term as mayor, a business opportunity prompted the de Wetters to move from El Paso to Los Angeles, California, where Peter became CEO of The Bekins Company. In 1979, he was elected executive vice president and director of National Medical Enterprises, a worldwide health care provider. He also served on the board of eleven corporations, including Thomas J. Lipton, Mattel, Beneficial Standard Company and Lawry's Foods.

Not surprisingly, the de Wetters carried to California a longstanding habit of community service. Mardee's interest in art led to a ten-year stint as special docent at the Huntington Library, Art Gallery and Botanical Gardens. Qualified through rigorous training to guide visitors in all four areas of the museum, she also became a reader at the Huntington Library,

researching and writing a book on the only Russian to fight in the American Revolution.

A writer of poetry since age five, Mardee honed her skills in "the California years," publishing her first volume of poetry, *The Sandwriter*, in 1985. Copies of *The Sandwriter* were sold at the Huntington Library, to which all proceeds were dedicated.

Her second volume of poetry, *The Sand Glass*, was published in 1990 and was offered for sale at both the Huntington and the UTEP libraries, to which she directed the proceeds. UTEP Library Director Robert Seal is "deeply grateful for Mrs. de Wetter's donation of 300 volumes of *The Sand Glass* to our library." Proceeds from the sale of this volume have been used to establish a special account within the library's pooled endowment fund.

"Every year," says Seal, "the interest earned off the proceeds from *The Sand Glass* sales will be used to purchase additional books for the library."

While Mardee filled her California days with her writing and Huntington responsibilities, Peter immersed himself in affairs of the Los Angeles community. An obviously busy executive, he nevertheless found time to serve on numerous civic boards, advisory councils and committees.

He served on the board of the Los Angeles Music Center for seven years; he was three times presiding chairman of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He was a founding member of the French Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease, and trustee of the Claremont School of Theology. Peter also served as director of numerous charitable organizations, including United Way, YMCA, Boy Scouts of America and Goodwill Indus-



Peter and Mardee de Wetter

tries. Always loyal to El Paso, he recently assisted UTEP in obtaining a major gift from National Medical Enterprises which made possible the Anton Berkman Learning Center in Biology.

After Peter's retirement in mid 1989, the de Wetters returned to El Paso. "It was the natural thing to do," explains Peter, "we've always loved it here. ... We love the people, the climate, the desert and mountains. ... El Paso is our home."

Characteristically, the two have jumped head first into the "swim" of El Paso activity. In addition to continuing with her

writing, Mardee is about to embark on a folklore history project.

Peter, a seasoned management consultant, steadied the El Paso Museum of Art during the difficult time before the new director was hired. Currently he serves as chairman of the Greater El Paso Housing Development Corporation and as a director of the Chamber of Commerce. He is also involved with the Rio Grande Food Bank, a trustee of the University of the Americas Foundation in Puebla, Mexico, and a newly appointed member of the UTEP Development Board. --Jan Cavin

ALUM NOTES

by Kay Peck

▼30s

Alfredo Arguelles (B.S. '36) has worked in the mining industry of Mexico for over 40 years including numerous supervisory positions with American Smelting and Refining Company.

▼60s

H. Robert Saldivar (B.B.A. '63) is a deputy assistant secretary in the Acquisition and Material Management section of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, D.C. **Enrique Solis** (B.S. '63; M.S. '71) was awarded the Maestro Award from the scholarship committee of the Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Solis was vice-president of academic affairs at El Paso Community College and will be starting a new position on the New Mexico State University graduate staff this fall.

Celia Alvarez Munoz (B.A. '64) continues a successful career in art including exhibits at the Dallas Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Robert Blystone, Ph.D., (B.S. '65) was awarded the Dr. and Mrs. Z.T. Scott Faculty Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching at Trinity University in San Antonio where he has been a member of the faculty

since 1971. In addition to his teaching, he is a textbook consultant and a researcher of lung development at or near the time of birth.

Jessie Blackwelder (B.S.Ed. '66; M.Ed. '68) has retired after a 25-year coaching career with the New Mexico Junior College in Hobbs, New Mexico. During that career, he led the NMJC golf team to eight conference championships, one regional finish and two national rankings.

Charles Robert Heard (B.S. '66) was named senior instrument and controls engineer for Spring, 1991 and was elected to the Advisory Board of Directors for Tippet and Gee, Inc. Heard is a resident of Abilene, Texas.

Elva Duran, Ph.D., (B.A. '69; M.A. '91) was named the 1991 Outstanding Alumnus for the University of Oregon's College of Education. She received her Ph.D. from that University in 1978. Dr. Duran taught in UTEP's College of Education from 1972 until she retired this year.

▼70s

Juan Ontiveros (B.S. '74) was selected as the new Director of Facilities Services at UTEP. He joined the UTEP staff in November, 1990 as the facilities services' Coordinator of campus utilities. Ontiveros was previously the chief engineer on a contract between White Sands Missile Range

and Dynaspan Services Company.

Kathy Kavanaugh Satterfield, M.D., (B.A. '74) received her doctorate in podiatric medicine in May from the College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery in Iowa and has been selected for foot and ankle surgical residency at one of the Yale Clinical Campus Hospitals in the New Haven, Connecticut area. While attending medical school, she was selected for Who's Who Among American Medical Students.

Her husband, **Timothy Satterfield**, (B.A. '74) was accepted by the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. As part of his chefs' training, Satterfield recently completed an externship at Rancho Encantado Resort in Tesuque, New Mexico outside of Santa Fe.

Guadalupe S. Olivas, Ph.D., (B.S.N. '75) is director of public health services for the Pima County Health Department in Tucson, Arizona. In addition, she received a certificate of recognition from Who's Who Among Hispanic Americans and a Leadership Recognition Award from Chicanos Por La Causa.

Monica Morrison (B.B.A. '76) is a supervisor of automation and information systems for Southwest Airlines at their Dallas headquarters and is a member of the Dallas Committee for Foreign Visitors. Her husband, **A. Benjamin Chavez** (B.B.A. '52) is the contract management specialist in the Dallas regional office of the Resolution Trust Corporation.

Daneen T. Harris, Maj./USA, (B.S.N. '77) had an unexpected encounter with former classmate, **Jerry Thompson**, CDR/USN, (B.S.N. '75) while they were both serving with Operation

Desert Storm. Harris, an Army nurse, accompanied patients to the hospital ship, USS Mercy. Thompson was serving aboard the Mercy, and the two UTEP alumni met by chance in the officer's mess.

Harris earned her master's degree in health science from Texas Wesleyan University in 1987 and was registered as a nurse anesthetist in 1988.

Patti Purcell (B.S.Ed. '79; M.Ed. '86) was named the Region 19 (school districts in El Paso and Hudspeth Counties) Primary Teacher of the Year.

▼80s

Thomas N. Pender, P.E. (B.S. '80) has been named engineering department manager at Union Carbide's Washougal, Washington Crystal Products Facility.

Irma Montes (B.S.N. '80) was named 1990 Nurse of the Year by her fellow nurses at Providence Memorial Hospital in El Paso.

Tom Fullerton (B.B.A. '81) was selected for this year's issue of Who's Who in American Industry and Finance. Fullerton is an international economist with The WEFA Group (formerly Wharton Econometrics), an economic forecasting firm in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

David G. Short, D.O., (B.S. '81) graduated from the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his residency at the Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital. He is to open a practice as an ear, nose and throat/plastic surgeon in Logansport, Indiana in September, 1991.

Michael J. Wiedel (M.D.A. '81) married Marilyn Echavez on June 23. In addition, he recently moved from New York to Wytheville, Virginia.

Sandi Wong McKellips

(B.S. '82) was invited by the Society of Women Engineers to re-present her paper, "Creative Child Care Solutions," to their national convention to be held in San Diego, California. She first presented that material in the 1990 Society of Women Engineers' Convention held in New York.

Terry W. Vanderpool (B.S. '82) was named manager of the Timken Company's Philadelphia district office.

Marc G. Gast (B.B.A. '83) was promoted to the position of divisional quality Engineer by United Technologies Corporation's Automotive Products Division.

David J. Carrillo, LTJG/USN, (B.A. '86) has returned from deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Desert Storm. He served aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau, homeported in Norfolk, Virginia.

Richard P. Ruiz, LT/USN, (B.B.A. '86) completed a three year tour-of-duty aboard USS Roanoke, homeported in Long Beach, California. He has reported for duty in Washington, D.C. where he and his wife, **Emma Ruiz** (B.S. '90), anxiously await the birth of their first child.

Raymond Herrera, Jr. (B.S. '87) has been promoted to Public Health advisor for the Centers for Disease Control of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Ralph Westmoreland, 1Lt./USAF, (B.A. '88) was selected as the unit company grade officer of the quarter by the 6920th Electronic Security Group at Misawa Air Base, Japan.

▼ 90s

Joe Valenzuela (B.B.A. '90) was appointed marketing representative for the Goodman Planning Group.

OBITS

Mark Edward Lopez (B.S. '86) March 9, in Redondo Beach, California.

He was 29. Survivors include his wife, Blanca; his parents, three brothers and one sister.

Virgil J. Rindom (B.A. '41) March 17, at age 74. He had been a resident of El Paso for 60 years. Survivors include his wife, Mary; two sons and one sister.

Paul Douglas Ferguson (B.S. '77) March 19 in an El Paso Hospital. He is survived by his mother and three brothers.

Leonardo J. Gallardo (B.S. '61) March 28. He taught math and algebra at Burges High School in El Paso for 25 years.

Hector Carranza, LTC/USA, (B.S. '74) May 3, in an automobile accident in Saudi Arabia where he was serving as part of Operation Desert Storm. Survivors include his wife, Nancy, and one son.

Jay A. Mynatt (B.S.Ed. '64) May 4. She had been a resident of El Paso for 50 years and taught in El Paso and Fabens since 1964. Survivors include one son, her mother, two brothers, and one sister.

Bruce G. Bartell (B.A. '59) May 12. Survivors include his wife, Peggy; one son, two daughters, and one brother.

Evangelina Jimarez Cortez (B.S.W. '85) May 18. Survivors include her mother, one sister and four brothers.

Vanita Mae Sizemore (B.A. '56 M.A. '60) May 24. She had retired as a teacher at Austin High School after 30 years in the El Paso Independent School District. Survivors include one daughter and two sons.

John Franklin Lance (B.A. '38) of Tucson died May 27. He served for 20 years as director of the National Science Foundation before he

retired in 1987. He is survived by his wife, Kate, one daughter and one son.

Robert E. "Bobby" Simpson (B.B. '55) May 29. Survivors include his wife, Elizabeth, his mother and three daughters.

Helen B. Railston (B.A. '59; M.Ed. '71) June 2 in El Paso where she had been a resident since 1936. She taught second grade at Coldwell Elementary School until her retirement. Survivors include her husband, Louis A., and two sons.

J. Ted Cottle (UTEP supporter) June 3. Cottle was an established El Paso businessman who organized and taught the first real estate course at UTEP (Texas Western College at that time).

Virginia H. Farah (UTEP supporter) June 8. She was the owner of Gilcrest Jewelry and a notable supporter of many worthy El Paso organizations. Survivors include two sisters.

Allie Mae Harry (M.Ed. '51) June 14, at age 86. She taught for 40 years, most of which were spent teaching first grade with the El Paso Independent School District.

Survivors include her husband,

Charlie; one daughter and one sister.

Joseph M. Ray, Ph.D., (UTEP President, '60-'68) June 20, at age 83. In 1968, after he left his position as University president, Ray was appointed to the graduate faculty where he continued to serve UTEP until his retirement. Survivors include his wife, Jettie H.; two sons and one daughter.

Charles Leland "Doc" Sonnichsen, Ph.D., (faculty member, Dean of the Graduate School '32-'72) June 29, at age 90. Sonnichsen was one of the Southwest's most respected historians and authors. His 14 published books of Southwest literature include *Pass of the North*, *Roy Bean: Law West of the Pecos*, and *Alias Billy the Kid*.

Survivors include his wife, Carol, one son, one stepson and two daughters.

John W. Donohue, Jr., (B.S.S. '57), former director of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, July 3. Survivors include his wife, Elaine, his mother and one daughter.

Hector Bouchez Rivero (B.S. '79) July 15.

NEWS ABOUT YOU...

Do you ever wonder what happened to your ex-classmates and friends? We're sure a lot of our readers do...so update us on what's going on in your life or send in any interesting news you may have about a former classmate. Fill out this form and send to:

NOVA Quarterly
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas 79968-0522

Name _____

Year graduated _____ Degree _____

Address _____

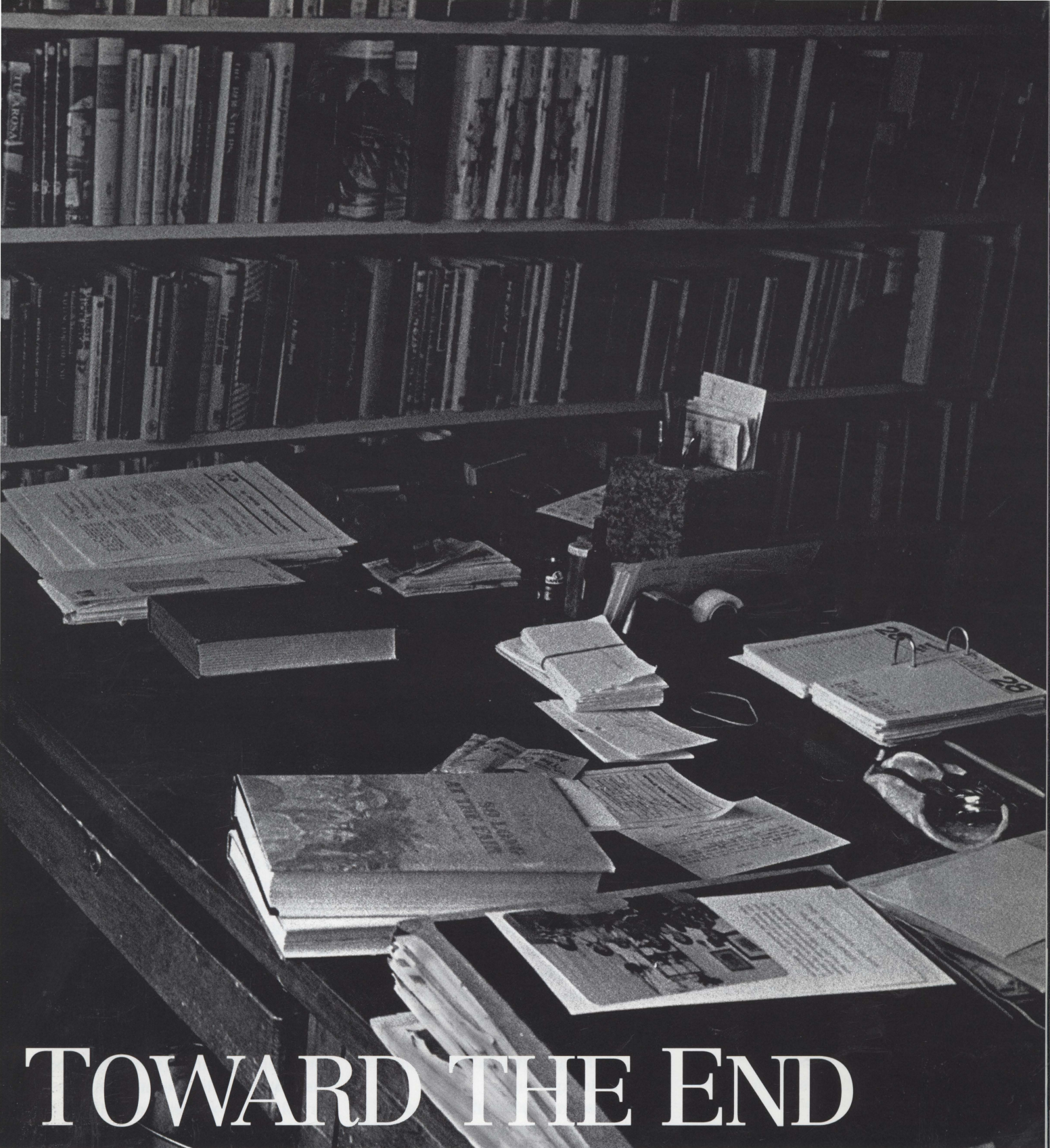
YOUR NEWS _____



C.L. SONNICHSEN

by S. Gail Miller

S. Gail Miller, a former staff writer in the UTEP News and Publications Office, attended the 38th annual Western Writers of America, Inc., convention in Oklahoma City June 24-27 to interview Dr. C.L. Sonnichsen for a Nova Quarterly story about him to commemorate his 90th birthday on September 20. She had, it turned out, the last interview with UTEP's most eminent and beloved professor and man of letters.



TOWARD THE END

There are 210 writers, editors, publishers, literary agents and other book people attending this 38th annual Western Writers of America convention and not one of the delegates is more distinguished than my companion in the Sheraton's beehive of a coffee shop.

He is an old man, medium in height,

slim and slightly stooped and he has refused my arm as we thread our way through the tables, coffee-pot-poised waiters, and humming conversations. He is dressed in soft gray slacks and an off-white shirt open at the neck and he sits easily on the red plastic booth seat, his hands folded in his lap.

Almost sixty years ago, Charles Leland Sonnichsen arrived in El Paso, Texas, to take up his duties as an Assistant Professor of English at the Texas College of Mines.

Now in his 90th year, this eminent Southwestern historian, scholar, and teacher is a legend.

Affectionately known as "Doc" by vast numbers of people from all walks of life, he's the author or coauthor of 22 books and the editor of eight more. He's written dozens of articles for scholarly journals and popular magazines and delivered hundreds of lectures to national, state and local historical societies and gatherings of all kinds.

His collection of Western fiction now resides in the UTEP library, totalling over 2,000 items and growing yearly. Since his 80th birthday in 1981, Dr. Sonnichsen has become a specialist in Western humor, editing a series of anthologies beginning with *The Laughing West* (1988) and evolving into a state by state record: *Texas Humoresque* (1990), *Arizona Humoresque* (1992) and *New Mexico Humoresque* (under contract).

That the humor of the West continues to occupy his mind and his work, is evident at the beginning of the interview.

"Human beings have the gift of laughter," he says. "And it's one of the great tools for keeping things under control. You can understand the early migration westward through its humor.

"We don't see much laughter today, except in Washington where newspaper columnists take off after an erring senator and run him into the Potomac River. As human beings, we need this kind of thing because we're fallible—we all make mistakes, we all take things for granted, and we all want something for nothing. I think humor keeps us in line because ridicule is the thing we fear the most."

The relationship between history and humor has been the subject of many a speech Dr. Sonnichsen has made. On this day, he chooses the great philosophical debates of western civilization to outline his theory. In a couple of exquisitely simple statements, he explains:

"There was a little contest you know, between Freud and Jung about what human beings crave the most. Jung thinks it's not sex, but public approbation. We all want to be accepted; and I think a sense of humor reminds us that if we're going to be accepted, then we'd better stay in line."

Toeing the traditional line in academic scholarship, has not, however, been a hallmark of Dr. Sonnichsen's career.

Like the thousands of Americans who bucked the traces of their circumstances and migrated westward in the past, this Harvard-trained professor moved west in 1931, and found himself on the frontier of Southwestern literature, what there was of it. Steeped in the classics of Western civilization, he set about teaching Milton and Chaucer to students at the Texas College of Mines, then four small buildings perched on a pile of rocks overlooking the Rio Grande. Following the instructions of his superiors to teach a course on Southwestern literature, he was appalled at the scant material upon which to build a course in this subject.

"Human beings have the gift of laughter," he says. "And it's one of the great tools for keeping things under control. You can understand the early migration westward through its humor."

"It's hardly surprising," explains Brian Woolley, *Dallas Morning News* feature writer, UTEP graduate and Dr. Sonnichsen's student in the late 1950s. "After all, frontier societies in general were not societies of writers; they were groups of simple people struggling for survival amidst typhoid and malaria, floods and droughts. It's unlikely these ordinary people returned home to an evening of reading books and writing down their experiences.

"Doc, fortunately for all of us, recognized the value of Southwest history and set about recording it while its participants were still alive. If he hadn't interviewed those people, we'd be without 'Roy Bean, Law West of the Pecos' and 'Ten Texas Feuds,' for instance. It would have all been lost because he was the only person doing this work west of Austin."

The development of the mythical heroic West easily grew out of these

dynamics; simple people, largely illiterate, struggling to form a sense of place in a harsh environment.

"There was an absurd side to the Western migration," states Dr. Sonnichsen. "People without supervision make fools of themselves. If you lose track of this fact, you become too serious about things. We've had the Western myth of the sagebrush savior and the heroic West on the one hand. In reaction to this, on the other hand, you find the development of the violent adult Western. Now, we're in a phase where writers and publishers are busy de-sexing the West and re-sexing the novel. And their runs on the bank are all legal."

Following the trend of complete disillusionment with the traditional hero of white civilization in general, we now "downgrade the army, the missionaries; we feel we are a wasteful, consciousness people," he says, pausing and looking up, straightening his back a bit, then adding: "Truth is a collection of facts people agree to accept. People lead their lives based on assumptions arising out of the facts they've agreed to believe in. This is folklore.

"We dance with wolves now," he says, tapping his glasses up on the bridge of his nose. "There's a lot of truth to this, of course. But it's also human nature to take the truth too far."

Ten feet away at a table meant for four people, a waiter is refilling coffee cups for the umpteenth time. Loren Estlemen, a Michigan novelist, is deep in conversation with Dale Walker, author and Director of Texas Western Press. Shelly Ritthaler, an Upton, Wyoming, ranch-wife who will receive a Golden Spur Award tomorrow night at the Spur banquet in the Cowboy Hall of Fame for her deceptively simple short fiction book, *The Ginger Jar*, is listening to Missourian Jory Sherman, author of over 100 books, and Richard Wheeler, Big Timber, Montana, novelist and editor, discuss the vagaries of the writing life.

Max Evans, famous for his 1960's book, *The Rounders*, recalls his association with Dr. Sonnichsen. Evans, the son of a Choctaw Indian, spent the 1950s and 1960s painting and writing at Taos, and actually met Dr. Sonnichsen 16 years after the latter first mentioned Evans' books, along with those of Benjamin



competition the way we have. Take the 'new' Western historians. They feel the entire Western movement was wasteful and tragic because it destroyed so much, based as it was on all that racism and sexism.

"So we're at the other extreme now. A complete reaction from the romantic West which nobody believes in any more.

"...he's a tall figure, a pathfinder in his own life. We're all busy telling the stories of the west in novels. But we have to climb on the shoulders of people like Doc Sonnichsen to see where we're going..."

A great illusion, we're told," he chuckles. "Well, this notion is just as much an illusion as the heroic West. If we had a sense of humor about all of this, we wouldn't be so tragic about it. One could review it with a tolerance and compassion, taking the bad and the good and everything in between."

As I listen, I realize why so many people whose lives he has touched, love him. He makes you feel as if you are the most important person in existence. When I relate this experience to Joyce Gibson Roach, author of the 1979 Sonnichsen biography, she tells me not only that she had a similar experience, but that everyone else she's ever talked to about meeting Dr. Sonnichsen says the same. People invariably describe him as kind *and* tough, hilariously funny *and* deadly serious, a pitiless but inspiring critic—a quintessential Renaissance man.

A discourse on the causes of this seemingly never-ending dive into a guilt-ridden world-view follows.

"Multiple causes, probably," he says. "But one is that we've been too prosperous recently. Here we are in a coffeeshop, like many others in America, eating and drinking, while others are starving.

"We always feel guilty when we have

Capps, in an article for the journal, *South Dakota Review*.

"We've been friends for a long time now," says Evans. "But back then it was important to me that someone of his education and standing would even consider my work on its own merits. It turned out that we both strongly believe humor to be a constant in the settling of the West." Evans was raised by old timers, some of them going as far back as 1870, and remembers as "a little tot," a tough life in a harsh environment. "Doc's always been right about this because without laughter, I don't think we would have survived."

"To us younger guys and gals," explains Jory Sherman, "he's a tall figure, a pathfinder in his own life. We're all busy telling the stories of the west in novels. But we have to climb on

the shoulders of people like Doc Sonnichsen to see where we're going...

I couldn't write anything about Apaches, for instance, without running into Doc's work in a library. And, I don't think Doc Sonnichsen gets enough credit for his work—from us popular writers or from his literary peers."

The coffee shop conversation moves briskly to a discussion of why the current trend in historical scholarship seems to find so little redeeming value in the actions of the settlers of the West.

"Almost every civilization I've ever heard of always thought itself the be-all and end-all, imagined that it was superior to every other civilization existing at that time," says Sonnichsen. "But I don't know of any civilization which has kicked itself out of the

more than other people," he says gently. "And I think that's why we're trying to give it all back to the Indians because we took it away from them. Leaders throughout history convinced people that it was necessary to fight to survive. This leads people to push, to exceed, to do their best. And then they settle down and say, en masse, 'we've got it made.' Groups of people in such situations begin to question the sins of their fathers and, ultimately, their own sins—their right to be where they are. It's unavoidable because we have a conscience and although assigning one cause to a set of problems will prove to have been too simplistic, off the top of my head I think that too much prosperity accounts for a lot of our present malaise."

I ask Dr. Sonnichsen to comment on the proliferation of books dealing with pioneering Westerners like women and blacks; he replies:

"These memoirs were always around, of course, but it took the women's movement to get them published. I think we're about through with pioneering women though. We've had the army women and the sod-house frontier, as well as the black cowboy...and we've probably made them out to be much more important in the history of the West than they actually were. And I think maybe the trials and tribulations of the women in the West have been played up out of proportion. Is there any period in

the country's history when women were not having a hard time? Today's pioneering woman is the single mother. During the settling of the West, a woman had to deal with life in the absence of her husband for long periods when he was off hunting buffalo or shooting Indians or something. The pressures of her life were similar to the stress which single mothers undergo now as they try to live alone."

Dr. Sonnichsen's ability to weave seemingly disparate facts into that panoramic blanket which is the ongoing history of man in all its colors is perhaps the mark of his uniqueness. This concoction of ideas on the human condition, presented in such a way, is of course, the hallmark of a superb teacher because the juxtaposition of ideas encourages the listener to question commonly held assumptions.

"Uncut intellectualism is hard to take," says Loren Estlemen, "Doc Sonnichsen may be the first writer to bridge the gap between intellectualism and western Americana. He serves us pure history with a spoon of sugar and makes it palatable."

Dr. Sonnichsen's 41 year contribution to the institution now called UTEP are landmarks in the history of the University.

"He left us a memorable legacy of excellence in teaching, scholarship and administration," says President Diana

Natalicio. "And he still has a that personal magic. When he walks into a Golden Grads luncheon during Homecoming, the entire room just lights up. That's a very special quality for an individual to have."

My big book, *Don't You Cry For Me*, is looking for a home right now," he suddenly says. "I expect it'll find one pretty soon. It's about the humor of the entire pioneer

West and it'll be my best work and it'll be my swan song. It's amazing how much poetry there is in the Westward migration, how much singing."

Over the hum of the coffee shop, Dr. Sonnichsen sings the sixth verse from "Sweet Betsy From Pike":

*They soon reached the desert,
where Betsy gave out,
And down in the sand she lay rolling
about;
While Ike, half distracted, looked on
with surprise,
Saying, "Betsy, get up,
you'll get sand in your eyes."*

We laugh as he explains this is part of the folklore of the pioneer West, a wry commentary in verse.

"The great western humorists like Bill Nye and Mark Twain don't make it heroic or regrettable. Their work embodies the spirit of the West, and that's what my anthologies are all about," he adds.

Where does his energy come from? I ask.

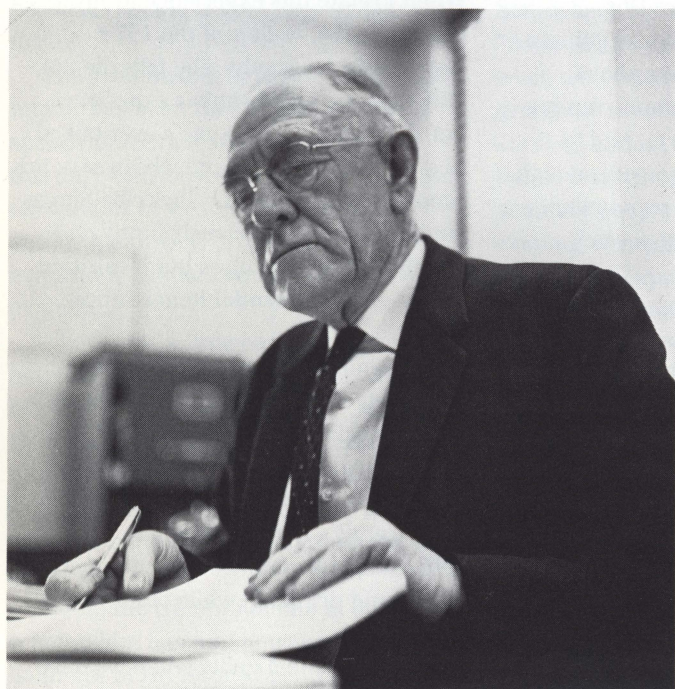
"Well, I think it comes quite possibly from the fact that I started off with almost nothing." Explaining that his parents were not well-off and that his future depended upon whatever he could scramble to make it, he says:

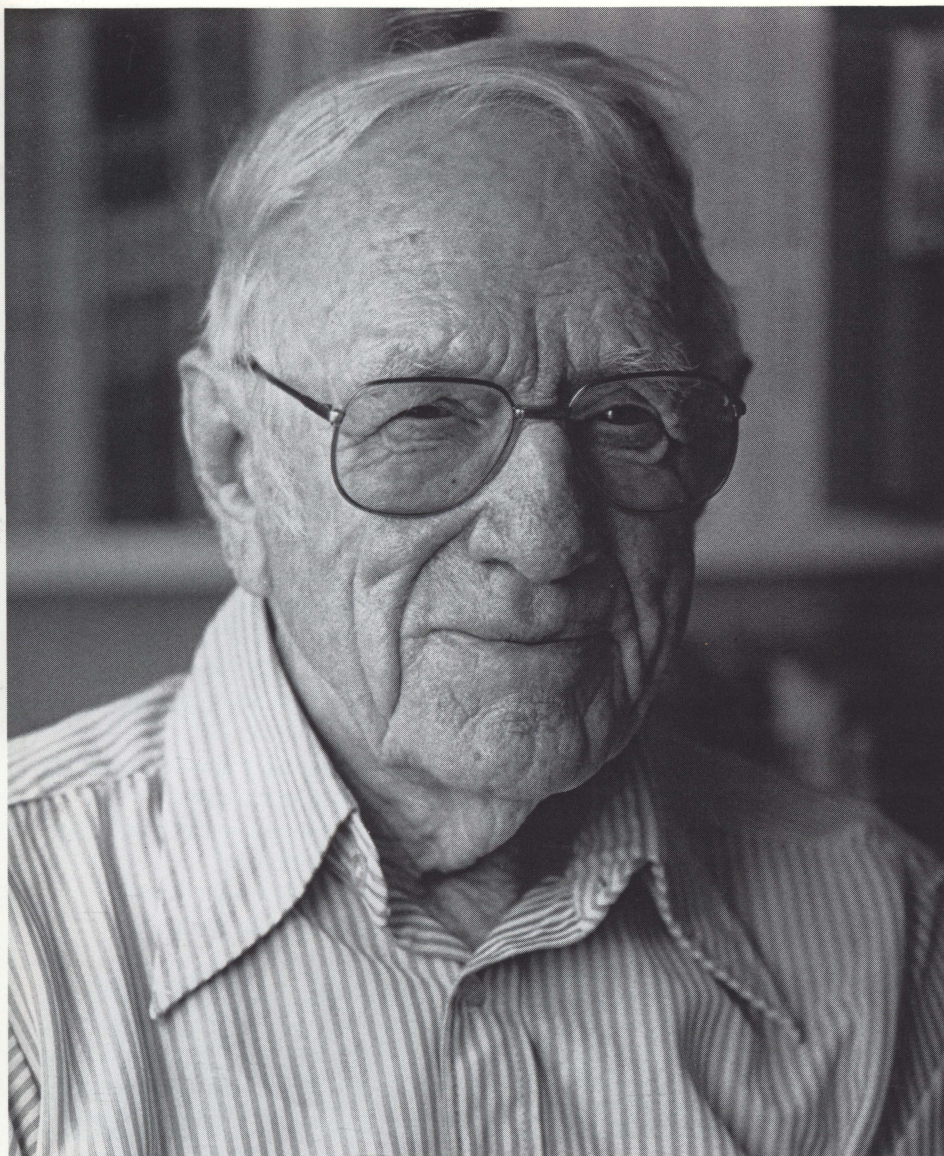
"I really think that the people who start at the bottom don't know when to stop—they reach a plateau and then look for another one—it's like a disease. If I'm not over-committed, I think there's something wrong. This is sometimes awfully hard on your wife." (Dr. Sonnichsen has been married to Carol for 35 years.)

"I'm very lucky," he says. "She's got other things she wants to do and the kind of drudgery I have to do—settling down for hours at time at a desk—doesn't appeal to her."

In the pause that follows, I notice the coffee shop is nearly empty. I ask about the responsibility of novelists and historians of the West.

"This is what I'm going to talk about on the panel tomorrow in the five minutes they'll let me talk," he says. "Humor allows us to take a balanced view and the best writers—people like Steward Edward White—had this vision."





Dr. Charles Leland Sonnichsen (1901-1991)

I see Dr. Sonnichsen on Thursday about mid-day. He is sitting on a lobby couch waiting, with some trepidation he says, to meet some second cousins for the first time.

"What are you doing?" he asks.

"Going upstairs to take a nap," I say. He waits.

"There was an animated discussion about the adult Western going on in the bar last night," I tell him.

"Good, I hope it was fun."

Later that evening, as the 38th WWA convention comes to a close, I ask Dr. Sonnichsen if he will inscribe my copy of Dale Walker's *Grassroots Historian* which I had forgotten to bring to the autograph party earlier in the week.

"Don't let writers sign their work on the title page," he says. "Carl Hertzog always said that's a good way to ruin a

book. Have them sign it on the half-page," he says, bending over the book.

Everyone went home the next day, which was Friday. On Saturday morning, June 29, 1991, Charles Leland Sonnichsen died while gardening at his Tucson home.

The inscription in my book reads:
"For Gail with blessings and good will!
C. L. Sonnichsen, Ok. City, June 27,
1991." ■

Editor's note: Individuals who had correspondence with Dr. Sonnichsen or who have other written materials in their possession may wish to donate copies to the C.L. Sonnichsen Collection. Send copies to Robert Seal, UTEP Library, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas 79968 or call (915) 747-5683.

Doc's Last Book

by Dale L. Walker

Director, Texas Western Press

In mid-June, two weeks before the Western Writers convention in Oklahoma City, I called Doc in Tucson to get a title for the book of his we were publishing, to be released just before his 90th birthday on September 20.

We'd had fun with book titles over the years. Both of us had been beaten out of our clever titles by editors who didn't like them and who offered compelling reasons why they were no good. Now I was Doc's publisher, had his manuscript in page proofs in front of me—without a title page.

"What about 'Harvard on the Border'?" he said, referring to the title of one of the essays in the book. "It'll sell in El Paso."

"That's the problem," I ventured. "I'd like it to sell in Peoria."

"Well, I like 'The Folklore of Academe,'" he said, referring to another piece in the book.

"Can I resist that one, too?" I asked tentatively. "Some people won't get it."

Then I played my last chip.

"The final piece in the book is titled 'Harvest,'" I said. "I love that word 'harvest,' and this book is a harvesting of some of your first-person essays. What about 'Harvest' with a subtitle?"

It took a beat or two for him to answer and, typically, he improved on my idea.

"How about 'Late Harvest'?" he said. "Nobody can argue that it's a harvest or that it's late..."

"It's perfect," I interrupted.

"...Or, we could call it 'Final Harvest,'" he said, and chuckled.

"Not 'Final,'" I said. "You have other books to write. Let's go with 'Late Harvest.'"

He came home to Tucson from Western Writers on Friday and the next day, Saturday, June 29, he died.

He had a wonderful time among those writer friends, that legion of admirers, in Oklahoma City, and he died at home at the age of 89 years and nine months, leaving behind a loving wife and family and 27 important and lasting books.

The 27th will be titled *Final Harvest*.

Arm outstretched, palm turned toward the clear, bright sky, he recited his name as if, though obviously a Muslim, he knew the mantric power of the sacred sound, the sound of sounds...

"I am 'Om'. Give me one chance. We see everything. You be happy." He had continued to pedal while speaking, his hard, thin, greying legs pushing the rickshaw through the traffic of Jaipur, India's magnificent "Pink City."

I was moving from the train station toward the walled portion of the old town. I had just arrived from Delhi on the "Pink City Express" and had only seven hours until my return. There was much to be seen, but first I had to get rid of this pestering fellow who had insisted on keeping pace with me for the last five blocks.

"Halloo... Uncle... Give me one chance..."

I hadn't really chosen to come to India. Like migrant-workers following the harvest, however, scholars go where symposia convene. Thus, I had found myself two weeks before (one must here recognize the high-serious whimsy often assumed by Indian events) attending a *mid-winter* philosophical meeting atop Mt. Abu, at the *summer* palace of His Excellency the Governor of Rajasthan.

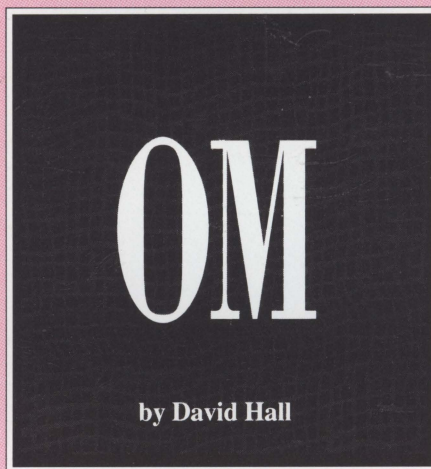
Here, amidst the decaying opulence of the Raj Bhavan, 15 scholars from the United States, Europe and the USSR would spend six shivering days, vigorously debating arcane philosophical issues, but perhaps even more intent on ecological concerns such as, "Is this *really* bottled water?" or "Is the ice cream safe to eat?" — each of us attending to the occasional rumble of his or her intestines with the earnestness of a soothsayer interpreting the entrails of a chicken.

Our host, His Excellency the Governor of Rajasthan, stationed behind a hand lettered sign announcing, "H.E. The Governor" much loved to speak. Hardly an instant's silence would be permitted before H.E. could be heard loudly inhaling the chilled air, preparing to weave it into convoluted sentences which he would then thrust from his mouth as if rolling a plush red carpet forward to receive his guests.

The woman the governor had asked to serve as hostess was a middle-aged

former American, now professor at an Indian university, who had made India her home since the day, as a young student studying at Jaipur University, she had fallen in love with her teacher. She endured the gaucheries of her now-foreign guests with a saintly graciousness which I fully appreciated only after catching her scent of wan nostalgia, and seeing the vague sadness in her eyes.

The staff of servants constituted a uniformed, perpetually ready, cast of thousands who bowed and cooked and scraped and cleaned; who arrived in



teams every morning at a pre-arranged minute to serve each of us "bed tea;" who always met our comments and queries with a broadening smile and a curious "S curve" nod of the head that could equally well mean "yes" or "no."

Finally, there was the Head of Household Staff, a disenfranchised *Rajput*, rumored (a rumor we all conspired to believe) to have once owned a mansion and lands rivalling those which he now tended with such humbled dignity.

In spite of the circumstantial improbabilities, this motley gathering spent an enjoyable and productive six days. New friends were made, new alliances forged, new publications were planned. But now the international community of scholars that had descended upon the Raj Bhavan like a scanty horde of timid locusts was preparing to move down the mountain to discover the *real* India.

Not the *really* real India, of course; not the raw presence of that cultural chaos which even the most prodigious of Indian intellectuals and artists, foreign or domestic, have failed to reveal— we sought only that measure of reality any tourist seeks: the reality of a close encounter, an extra-touristical event.

"Give me one chance. I will take you. You happy, I happy. You will be today my money-uncle." Leaning toward me from his rickety rickshaw, sad-eyed Om tried to hand me a card. I ignored him. "Tell me where we will go. Please tell me, uncle. Rambaugh Palace! You will like. Very pretty. What do you feel? Yes?"

"Please go away. I want to see the city for myself. You're a nuisance."

"What is nyu-sant, uncle? Come. Get in. Give me one chance."

"Listen to me— I want to walk."

"Bad place to walk, uncle..."

Om was right. I found myself suddenly surrounded by beggars, women, each of them making the familiar hand to mouth gesture and moaning "Baksheesh," "Baksheesh." The trouble started when one woman came close and began to touch my arm in a manner obviously disturbing to the men watching from a nearby shop. The men shouted — apparently not at me but at the women... and at Om.

"You win, Mr. Om. But I don't like it." I jumped into the rickshaw, resisting the urge I always feel when entering a taxi—the urge to say, "... and step on it!"

Our escape was painfully slow. As we approached top speed, Om raised a hand upward, his eyes gradually following.

"A good day, today, uncle. We are happy."

I wasn't happy.

"Where will we go, uncle?"

"Just take me to the gate of the walled city."

"Which gate, uncle. There are many."

"The closest one."

"No... *uncle*. We will make the day together. You happy... I happy."

"Give it a rest, Om."



The rickshaw moved through the stalled motor traffic like a sailboat tacking against the wind, the vessel creaking as it leaned from side to side. The captain was singing. I was trying to think. I needed to assess my predicament.

I had, I believed, every right to be perturbed. After all, as a tourist I was a licensed *voyeur*, Baudelaire's *flaneur* — a disengaged stroller, a professional window shopper, a visual consumer who travels anonymously (and, therefore, invisibly) about the museums, temples, shops and streets.

I recalled how, two days before, I had wandered about the city of Lucknow, listening to the sounds of rioting coming from nearby streets. I had felt safe. Being neither Muslim nor Hindu, I knew I would not be involved.

The *flaneur* moves through the city looking, watching, taking note. He is

always looking for *signs* — street signs, traffic lights, mileage markers, warnings, bargains, cathedrals, temples, mosques and monuments, historic sites, The Men's Room. Signs are so continually a part of his immediate concern that very soon everything is transmuted into signs... scenery.

Sign-reading is far from a worthless enterprise. At the very least it can be the source of great entertainment. I encountered my all-time favorite sign in the window of a used magazine shop in the U.S. (I can't remember the city). It was drawn in dark pencil on an irregularly shaped piece of corrugated cardboard. To discerning customers, the sign carried both an invitation and a warning:

TATTOOS UPSTAIRES

Of course, one gains more than simple amusement from sign collecting. Signs display the ethos of the people who erect them. And invariably the signs of a culture range (as do the Indian signs below) from the foreboding:

WOMEN IN THEIR MONTHLY
CYCLE ATTEMPTING TO ENTER
THIS TEMPLE MAY SUFFER.

to the ridiculous:

BATHING IS PROHIBITED
SURVIVOR (sic!) WOULD BE
PROSECUTED

to the sublimely ridiculous:

GATEWAY TO PARADISE —
PLEASE RING BELL

Unfortunately, as outsider, bystander, onlooker, the tourist is encouraged to treat whole cities, entire countries, the complete planet, if he wishes, as just so many signs — to be seen, noted, collected... and recollected in tranquillity.

Of course, the detached freedom of the *flâneur*, as I now realized, is an extremely fragile one. If the rules are broken, if the tourist is forced to become a part of the events he wishes merely to record, he is rendered helpless, utterly dependent. He might then find himself, as I now found myself, subjected to humiliation, held captive, pedalled about the streets of some foreign city, forced to serve (if only for a day) as somebody's money-uncle.

By crassly ignoring the tacit agreement upon which polite tourism depends — namely, that “local color” must always remain part of the scenery — this skinny trickster with the twisted smile, this thin-boned swindler, Om, had leapt out of the set dragging me with him. Suddenly, this was life. This was real.

“I’m hungry, Om.” I shouted over the traffic.

“Yes, Uncle. You wish to eat.” He smiled with easy comfort, silently raising his hand, palm upward. “I know a place.” We were welcomed by the brisk nod of the waiter, ushered upstairs to a loft overlooking the main floor of the spacious cafe. I felt awkward, but managed a smile. “Mutton curry?”

“Oh, uncle, you are good to me. And whiskey?”

Not a very good Muslim, I thought. “If you like. Why not?”

The waiter arrived with the curries and a half-pint of “Red Duke” whiskey. Om’s face shone in anticipation. As did mine. I put fifty rupees on the table and stood up.

Om immediately knew... “Uncle, What do you feel?”

“I’m leaving, Om.”

Shuddering with the disbelief of a rudely abandoned lover, he pleaded: “No, Uncle, give me one...” His voice trailed to silence. He looked at me. At the steaming curry. Reality crashed down upon him.

He must have known I would pause before leaving the cafe, for he allowed me to walk down the stairs and move toward

the door, waited until I turned to look up at the loft, at the thin silhouette seated before two plates of curry and an untouched bottle of whiskey, before he said, without turning his head: “You are bad, uncle. Om says you are ... BAD.”

Om’s last words hovered long enough in the cavernous dining room to celebrate my victory and my shame, then surged into the streets to be absorbed into the pandemonium which impounds the sacred sounds of India.

On the train back to Delhi from Jaipur, my “private” compartment was commandeered by soldiers who, not without purpose I thought, ostentatiously displayed their rifles before placing them under the seat. But I didn’t retreat to the public car, as they surely thought I would. I sat with them and we gestured and grimaced grudgingly at one another. This was, thanks to Om, my country, too.

And the next day, on the way to the Delhi airport, when my taxi driver twice pulled over to the side of the street to demand that I respond to his “Why does America Hate Iraq?” and (shaking his fist) “Why do you come here, American?” I was (Om be praised) free to shout and shake my finger and throw up my hands, as well. And when we finally arrived, I haggled over the tip, indifferent to our former dispute, as if, as my driver certainly believed, business ought be separated from ideology.

At the airport I learned that my flight, and many others, had been canceled. A British fellow standing in a nearby line declared in an irritated tone, to the testy assent of those about him, “America must have bombed Baghdad.” My rather caustic response that, were the rumor true, America and Britain had bombed Baghdad drew only sullen stares. The day declined from that low point.

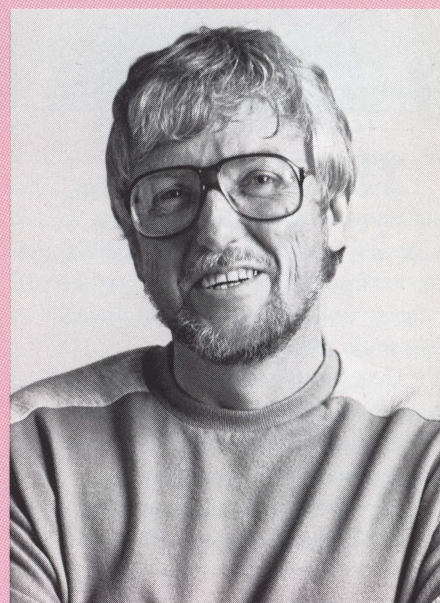
Twelve unsettling hours in the airport were followed by two long nervous flights from Delhi to Hong Kong to San Francisco, and the mercifully short hop home to El Paso. Contending with images of exploding aircraft (mine) and with the real presence of automatic weapons in the Hong Kong and San Francisco airports, there was no room for India in my thoughts.

From the window of my descending plane, I watched as the desert soil was

instantly transmuted into the familiar adobe, concrete and glass. I scanned the irregular urban crescent, more than thirty miles long, that wrapped itself around the foot of the huge, bare mountain, then stretched my eyes beyond the points of the crescent into the desolate spaces.

Opposite the mountain the crescent line is formed by the Rio Grande—the *Rio Bravo*. Unlike towns that radiate outward from a center, El Paso is squeezed between two inviolable boundaries and so is forced to stretch thinner and thinner as it winds around the base of the mountain. It is a thin city, this desert metropolis — a narrow, crescent island riding on a gritty sea.

The jolt of the wheels touching the runway added emphasis to my unspoken utterance, “I’m home.” Taxiing to the gate, preparing to rise and join the ritual push for the exit, I had my first thought of India since leaving more than thirty hours before. Not a thought really, an image—it was of Om. He was seated before two empty plates, a nearly depleted bottle in his hand, poised as if stoically waiting for me to bring him to mind. He had, I could see, saved the last sip of “Red Duke” to toast his vanished money-uncle.



David Hall is a professor in the UTEP Philosophy Department and Coordinator of the Religious Studies Program. “OM” earned the 1991 John and Vida White Award for Best Travel Essay among faculty and staff contributors. The award competition is sponsored by the UTEP English Department.

FASHION YOUR FALL MINER STYLE!

CAP
(Leather Strap)
CUE-18
\$10.50

JACKET
JAC-1
\$56

CAP
(Leather Strap)
CUE-18
\$10.50

CAP
CEM-16
\$9.25

SWEATSHIRT
SWS-4
\$19.75

T-SHIRT
TES-13
\$14.75

SWEATSHIRT
SWS-6
\$20

the UNIVERSITY
bookstore
First floor union east

First Floor Union East
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas 79968-0620 (915) 747-5594

SOLD TO:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

SHIP TO: (Only if different from "Sold To")

Name _____
C/O _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Discover ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

As shown on Credit Card

Qty.	Cat No.	Size	Color	Each	Total

- Prices subject to change without Notice,
- Please - No shipments overseas
- No Post Office Boxes - Street Addresses only.

SHIPPING, HANDLING & INSURANCE

IF ORDER \$0- \$20- \$50-
TOTALS \$20 \$50 \$100 \$100+

ADD \$2 \$4 \$6 FREE

SUB TOTAL

Texas Residents add
8 1/4% Sales Tax
Shipping, Packing and
Handling & Insurance

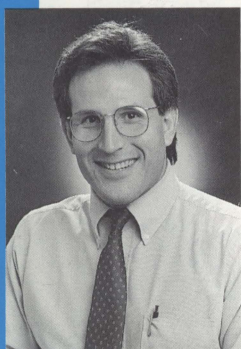
TOTAL

Returns and Exchanges - Our merchandise is of the highest quality. However, should you for some reason not be fully satisfied, please return the merchandise with 30 days of receipt. We will promptly refund the purchase price, or if you desire, replace the product free of charge. Merchandise should be packed and taped securely. Please include the packing slip and a note of explanation. Items must be returned prepaid and we suggest you insure the shipment.

HIGH LIGHTS

GEM Fellowships

Fourteen UTEP engineering students achieved an important milestone last March when they won prestigious GEM fellowships, making UTEP the country's leading producer of Hispanic GEM Fellows.



Manny Pacillas

GEM fellowships, awarded by

the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering Inc., are worth from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for master's degree candidates and \$60,000 to \$100,000 for Ph.D. candidates, depending on the institution.

Awards received by the four UTEP GEM Fellows on the Ph.D. level — Patricia Keaton, Delfina Dominguez, Melissa Dorrance and Laura Ortega — typically cover tuition, fees and a stipend of \$12,000 a year for three years.

"These students often work at companies like Boeing on summer internships which pay handsomely," says Manny Pacillas, UTEP director of engineering programs.

Other major companies that participate in the GEM program include IBM, Mobil, Motorola, Shell, Exxon, General Foods, Chrysler and Apple Computer.

Nationally, UTEP tied this year with Howard and North Carolina A&T as leading producers of GEM Fellows, surpassing MIT, UCLA and Georgia Tech.

Border Health Care

A UTEP-sponsored project to improve health care in El Paso's Lower Valley was awarded a \$6 million grant in June by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan.

The project, co-sponsored by UTEP, Texas Tech Health Science Center in El Paso and El Paso's

Lower Valley Task Force, is to establish the El Paso Institute of Community Health.

The institute's mission is to improve health care services in the Lower Valley and to develop a community-based educational program for professionals in nursing, allied health, medicine and dentistry.

The project was one of seven chosen by Kellogg from 110 applicants nationwide as part of the foundation's effort to help turn around the decline in students choosing primary health care careers and to improve public access to health care.

The institute's primary goals include:

- Recruiting students from communities served by the institute, educating them in medicine, nursing, allied health and dentistry and encouraging them to return to their home communities as health care professionals.

- Increasing the number of Hispanic students entering the health professions.

- Providing students with extensive, practical health care learning experiences in the community.

- Promoting and coordinating health issues of the U.S./Mexico border region and its largely Hispanic culture.

- Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration in health care-related research, education and service delivery.

- Bringing health care workers and community people together to resolve health care issues.

The institute will establish academic health centers for teaching and delivery of primary health care services at four sites, two in Fabens and one each in San Elizario and Socorro.

Nurses and allied health faculty from UTEP will work and teach at the centers, supervising undergraduate and graduate students. Texas Tech medical students will work and learn at the

centers. And UTEP Medical Technology students will test for water and food-borne diseases prevalent along the border, such as hepatitis, diarrhea and shigella/giardia.

Also contributing will be the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, which will assist in establishing an advanced education in general dentistry residency program at R.E. Thomason Hospital, with a satellite clinic in one of the centers in the Lower Valley.

In addition, El Paso Community College dental hygiene and dental assisting students will complete clinical practicums at a Lower Valley clinic. EPCC medical records students will help design and implement a system for maintaining records at Lower Valley clinics.

With help from El Paso's La Fe clinic, the institute will also offer health care education to Lower Valley residents to encourage them to take responsibility for their own health care.



Rattlesnake venom research is one area supported by MBRS funds

MBRS Grant

From studying cancer to exploring the healing powers of rattlesnake venom, UTEP faculty and students have done important health research in the last two decades. A major reason for this is the grants the university has received through the Minority Biomedical Research Support program (MBRS), sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

And that funding will continue. UTEP was recently awarded a \$3.5 million four-year renewal of its MBRS grant. The money will be used in research being conducted by nine faculty members and their students.

Their research

projects include the relationship of the repair of genetic material to cancer and the potential use of rattlesnake venoms in medicine.

New VPAA

Border health issues and community affairs are two important concerns at UTEP.



Dr. John G. Bruhn

Those are two strengths that Dr. John G. Bruhn brings to his new job — vice presi-

dent of academic affairs.

Dr. Bruhn was previously dean of the UTEP School of Allied Health Sciences and special assistant to the president for community affairs at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

"Dr. Bruhn's extensive administrative experience will serve as a strong foundation for the responsibilities he will undertake at UTEP," said President Diana Natalicio. "We're particularly pleased about his background in allied health...I think he will be of great assistance in developing programs and fulfilling major commitments in this area during the 1990s."

Born in Norfolk, Nebraska, Dr. Bruhn earned a B.A. in zoology and an M.A. in sociology and history at the University of Nebraska, followed by a Ph.D. in medical sociology at Yale in 1961. He has authored or co-authored nine books and published 147 journal articles.

BEING TRUE TO YOUR SCHOOL . . .

Means knowing something about it.

UTEP: A Pictorial History

by Nancy Hamilton

\$30 (cloth)

UTEP: 2001

edited by R. Milton Leech

\$10 (cloth)

Diamond Days

edited by Martin and Craver

\$10 (paper)



Texas Western Press
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas 79968-0633
(915) 747-5688

NOVA

The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas 79968-0522