

3-2017

Captured Memories from Dr. Jernigan

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Recommended Citation

Jernigan, William, "Captured Memories from Dr. Jernigan" (2017). *History*. 1.
<https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/history/1>

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Captured memories from Dr. Jernigan – March 2017

During my 52 years at Oral Roberts University I could not have accomplished anything without the help of some beautiful people.

In January 1965 I found an ad for a librarian at a new college in Tulsa Oklahoma. I answered the ad and in March of 1965, met with Dr. Messick and on June 7, 1965, I started my work at the university as Director of Libraries. My first office was in the downtown building of the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association.

Juanita Walker, Mrs. DeWeese and Ruth Peel had done a great job of starting the purchasing of books for the University Library. In September of 1965, we moved 30,000 books to the Learning Resources Center and placed them around the wall because we had no shelves at that time. In November 1965, we got shelves and with the help of Gene Eland's family, we got the books arranged on the shelves.

To begin with, the University Library consisted of the third and fourth floors of the LRC. The fifth floor was not used.

Dr. McClendon had been working hard to create a new dial access system while working and outfitting all the classrooms with overhead projectors and audio tape machines.

In 1966, Dr. Messick asked me to take over the dial access information retrieval system (DAIRS) and electronic maintenance along with being director of the library. Jack Martin and I had wonderful time keeping the DAIRS working due to the fact the university was generating its own electricity and the computer operating the dial access system was very sensitive to power fluctuations.

The DAIRS was serviced by the Center for Instructional Services. The staff of which, worked closely with the faculty in preparing courses for the DAIRS.

In early 1967 I was called to come to Dr Messick's office. When I got there, all seats were full except the one behind the desk. I was told to take the seat behind Dr. Messick's desk and then was told that I was to direct the program for the investiture of Oral Roberts as president and the dedication of the university which occurred on April 2nd. As usual, I had a great group of people to help me. Collins Steele did the crowd control. George Woodin did the filming. Gene Eland directed the choir and the band, during the service he had to shift students from the band to the choir for lack of students to participate.

In preparation for graduation of the first class of 1968, Dr. Bowden and Dr. McClendon did the ground work and I was in the background of that first service. I have been responsible for every graduation since then.

In January of 1966, I flew to Phoenix, Arizona with President and Mrs. Roberts and attended a Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship. It was at that meeting that I received the prayer language.

While working with the faculty to prepare their courses for the DAIRS, Dr. Hamilton, who had taken over as head of academic affairs from Dr. Messick, felt the faculty should have course syllabi. As a result, I was responsible for taking over meetings that prepared the faculty for the preparation of syllabi which had

to include manageable objectives and learning outcomes. It was felt that the student, when they enrolled in the course, should know what would be expected of them during the course. It was no small task in helping the faculty to switch gears in preparing syllabi. With these additional responsibilities, I also received the title of Dean of Instruction and became responsible for summer school and January mid-terms.

My involvement in the academic procedures of the university was enhanced with my involvement with the Regents and Oral Roberts Ministry. For years I recorded planning meetings for many of the buildings on campus, where those attending were asked to put there largest bill on the table as a seed for the next building. I also recorded and operated the public address system for many regent meetings.

I was requested by Oral Roberts to move on campus into one of the university houses in 1967. Dr. Hamilton, Dr. Ervin, Ken Trickey, Bob Eskridge and Ron Smith were my neighbors along with the "house on the hill" that Oral Roberts occupied. There were a number of time times, while living on the hill, Oral Roberts would take walks and I would join him in walking down to the university and reviewing the progress. Some of the buildings were the Mabee Center and the concrete footings of Christ Chapel. I was involved in the ground breaking of most every building on campus. The last of which was the City of Faith. When President Oral Roberts revealed the plans for the City of Faith, we were all quite surprised. I have received a gold plated shovel for that ground breaking.

I had the pleasure of attending two of Oral's crusades and observed how he prayed for the sick. He then ceased crusades and started having partners meetings. I flew with the team to a number of partner's meetings held throughout the U.S. President Roberts urged me to get more faculty involved in the partner's meetings. So Dr. Mauldin Ray agreed to accompany us to a meeting in Portland, Oregon. On our flight out to Portland, Bob DeWeese, Jr. was the pilot and Bob DeWeese, Sr. was the copilot. Everything was going well until a fire appeared in one of the engines. Mrs. Roberts went up the isle saying "the plane is on fire!" The situation occurred when the de-icing on one of the engines was inadvertently turned on and caused some fire which was extinguished when it was turned off (Dr. Ray did not go to any more partners meetings).

President Roberts started having partners meetings on campus and remodeled the Timko Barton building to have a cafeteria on the north section and constructed Howard Auditorium to hold crowds too big for Timko Barton. At that time, the Mabee Center was in the process of being constructed and then was used instead of Howard Auditorium and the kitchen in the north section of Timko Barton was not used. Partners meetings were later regularly held in Christ Chapel and prayer lines extended all the way around the chapel into the lobby. During this time I had the privilege in working with Oral Roberts to lay hands on the partners. Many other administrators did the same.

Richard Roberts became more involved with the university. I began to work closely with him when he felt the Lord calling him into a healing ministry. His team, of which I was a part, would leave on Friday evening for a meeting in one city on Friday night, another one on Saturday and another one on Sunday. We would return home and be prepared to go to work on Monday morning. By traveling with him, it took me to many cities in the U.S. and Canada, ultimately taking me to the Caribbean, United Kingdom, and Africa.

When Richard Roberts had partners meetings on campus, Dr. Voight was in charge of the Holy Spirit Room and I was in charge of the Salvation Room. When Richard Roberts started the daily television program, I was responsible for the prayer team that took phone requests and reports of miracles.

When President Oral Roberts announced the establishment of a Medical School, Law School, Dental School, Nursing and Theology Schools (schools that reach into every man's world), I became closely involved with the dean of each school in building the library necessary to support each school. I travelled with Dr. Hansen, the Dean of Dentistry, to the University of Michigan, at which time I saw my first gross anatomy lab. I also traveled with Dr. Kothy, the Dean of the Law School, to build a very strong law library. I also traveled with Tomine Tjelta in determining the needs of the College of Nursing.

The addition of all these colleges required the building of the Graduate Center and the remodeling of the Learning Resource Center. I was closely involved in the planning of the Learning Center and the electronic installation of equipment in the Graduate Center.

Dr. Hamilton left the university in the early '80s and I was requested to take his position. I worked closely with President Roberts. It was during the '80s when I was Vice President of Academic Affairs that the Medical School, Law School and Dental School closed.

President Roberts and I went to Vanderbilt University for a law school accreditation meeting. The committee was gracious, but voted against accrediting of the ORU Law School. Shortly thereafter ORU closed the Law School. The library for the Law School was given to Regent University. The medical library was given to Bishop Idahosa's school in Nigeria.

During my first year as Vice President of Academic Affairs, President Roberts felt that Christian high schools around the nation needed some source to validate them and to provide leadership. As a result the Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship was established and provided, with the help of Dr. Don Petry and Dr. David Hand, then Dean of the College of Education, conferences and ultimately accreditation standards. I had the privilege of travelling to a number of these conferences and meeting with Christian educators. I had the privilege of working especially with a group in Mexico, England, and Africa.

Ultimately I went to Africa 21 times and was there when Bishop Idahosa passed away.

In the late '80s, Dr. Hamilton, thank the Lord, returned to the university and I requested to be relieved of Vice Presidential status and became the Dean of Learning Resources (which I never released while I was Vice President of Academic Affairs). In 1998, it was felt that we needed some outreach to other countries for the university. As a result, Dr. Hamilton visited a church in England and a ministry in Sweden, to establish what would be extensions of the university in those two countries. I then started working with both programs and became the Director of International Programs along with what I was already doing.

I had the privilege of working with some talented people in Brentwood, United Kingdom. ORU placed directors of the program in Brentwood. Two of which were Dr. Hayden and Dr. Sam Thorpe. The extension in Sweden was under the auspices of Ulf Ekman Ministries. I had the privilege of attending a number of graduation services over the years. When student population became very small we decided to close the two schools.

When I came in 1965, my office was on the third floor just inside the front door of the Learning Resources Center. When I asked to be relieved of the Vice Presidential title, I returned to that office on the third floor until the university decided to reorganize the third floor for other purposes so I moved to an office complex on the fourth floor which I occupy to this date.

During my 52 year at ORU, as I mentioned in the opening statement, I have had the privilege of working with some wonderful people who have made my work a joy and a blessing. As a result of not only being involved with the university but with the ministry I have had the wonderful privilege of praying for probably two or three thousand wonderful people.

I consider the 52 years of my life as a seed into the future of ORU; which has produced thousands of graduates that are scattered around the world fulfilling the call of Oral Roberts. I feel a part of them and receive the blessing for everything they do for the Kingdom.