

EDITOR'S CORNER

Last January, at the annual Friends of the Plains Dinner, Professor Pat O'Brien was presented a plaque in honor of the silver anniversary of the founding of the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University. Pat, now retired and living in New Mexico on the western fringes of the Great Plains, became the first director of the Center when it was granted official recognition by the Kansas Board of Regents in 1977, thus bringing to fruition an idea that he had nurtured for at least three years. It was in 1974 that he assembled a group of us from a variety of disciplines in the arts, humanities, and sciences at the now defunct Red Lion Tavern and outlined a plan for establishing the Center.

Since that time the program of Great Plains Studies, through such things as radio and television productions, on- and off-campus classes, workshops and seminars, and concerts and lectures, has affected the lives of literally thousands of citizens of Kansas, the Great Plains, and beyond. Certainly it has had a determining and a positive effect on the direction my own professional career has taken.

In further recognition of Dr. O'Brien's contributions to the enhancement of the study of the Great Plains, we are dedicating this issue of *Heritage of the Great Plains* to him. Included are musings about the establishment of the Center and Pat's role therein from four former deans at ESU, John Peterson, Kendall Blanchard, DeWayne Backhus, and Lendley Black, and from journalist George Neavoll.

The articles in this issue provide us with close-up views of scientific studies in Kansas and the process for and construction of Carnegie libraries. The discovery of a family diary led Mary Faith Pankin on her research trail into the "Yale Scientific Expeditions in Kansas." Andrew Carnegie, using his enormous wealth, enabled communities all over the United States to create "Temples for Books." Susan Booker details the numerous Carnegie libraries in the state of Oklahoma.

Best wishes to Pat and Yvonne in their New Mexico home as we back here on the eastern fringes of the Great Plains continue the work he initiated a quarter of a century past.

Jim Hoy



Pat O'Brien
Director, Center for Great Plains Studies
1977 to 1992