

GRADUATION '89

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Commencement of yesteryear differs from present ceremony

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My, how things change in 111 years.

If the ghosts of the first graduating class at the University were to visit commencement exercises this year, they would probably be amazed by the school's transformation over time. The school has not only grown in terms of students, it has also sprouted a new landscape and new architecture.

The class of 1878 was the first to graduate from the University (the school opened in 1876). A total of five students proudly received their diplomas at a ceremony held in Deady Hall, the only building that existed on campus. Ellen Condon, the only woman in the class of 1878, served as valedictorian. The other graduates were M.S. Wallace, J.C. Whitaker, Robert S. Bean and George Washburn.

Campus life was quite primitive in the early days of the University. Each day, students had to take a piece of wood with them to class, so they could supply the woodstoves in Deady Hall with fuel. Lanterns were the only light source in the building, and a water well and outhouses could be found outside. Although these students had to deal with rustic conditions, the price was right; tuition back then was \$20 a term.

The first commencement exercises were held on

the top floor of Deady Hall, which was referred to as simply "the building" until Villard Hall was built in 1885. There were no sidewalks or streets on campus in the early days, and the only trees to be found were two oaks which grew where Villard Hall now stands.

As the University gained in population and reputation over the years, graduation ceremonies became more elaborate. By 1916, 99 seniors received diplomas from the school. The May 18, 1916 issue of the Oregon Emerald listed the names of every graduate, their major of study and their addresses.

A complete list of this year's 2,555 graduates would be a bit too massive to include in the Oregon Daily Emerald, unfortunately. Among the degree candidates are 1,850 completing requirements for bachelor's degrees, 467 for master's degrees and 83 for doctoral degrees. An additional 155 candidates for law degrees took part in a separate ceremony, held on May 21.

The rest of the class of 1989 will hold commencement exercises on Sunday, June 11. The event will take place at Autzen Stadium, 2700 Centennial Blvd, beginning at noon. University President Paul Olum will serve as commencement speaker.

In his address, Olum, who retires June 30 as the University's 13th chief executive, will offer a personal message about the importance of higher education.

Following the commencement address and the conferring of degrees, Olum will present the University's 1989 Distinguished Service Awards. Afterwards, graduates and their

guests will move from Autzen Stadium to their departmental and school receptions.

Although most customs and traditions of the University's first graduating classes seem traditional and uneventful, the class of 1916 initiated an interesting ritual for their ceremony. According to a May 13, 1916 issue of the Oregon Emerald, the senior class of that year planned to don Indian blankets and "squat around a campfire" and "smoke the pipe of peace with the junior classmen."

Maybe students around the turn of the century weren't so different after all.

