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## CHAPTER I

Commencement (in schools, universities, and colleges) is (1) the ceremony of conferring degrees or granting diplomas at the end of the academic year; and sometimes (2) the day on which the ceremony and/or ceremonies near or related to the degree conferring take place.

This writer was asked to describe the development of Southern Methodist University's commencement. We will, thus, examine the university's or its supporters' activities producing or enhancing the ceremonies of conferring degrees or granting diplomas for the completion of given courses of study or those honorary and conferred for distinction. (Military commissioning has been included with the ceremonies when requested during wartime.) The need for additional ceremonies (according only to definition 1 above) of necessity often involved activities on up to four separate dates and locations in one year.

In our culture early respect for the ceremony called commencement seems to have been high—without reservation. From the beginning and through World War II, supporters of colleges and universities have been generous in their efforts to preserve this respect and love for these institutions and their formal appraisal of special prescribed educational achievements as vital entities in everyone's life. This has been done through their accompanying dinners, specific campus events, and resources.

Following World War II and well into the sixties, with the increase in the number and variety of students graduating from colleges and universities, there has appeared to be a general tendency for diminishing the ceremony's importance for the "getting of a degree," because it's so

common: “everybody’s doing it.” You know: “It can be a meal ticket!” The result often was student denigration of and absence from commencement, decoration of regalia, drinking during the service, catcalls (shouts such as “play ball” after the playing of the national anthem), and random participants’ departures during ceremonies—often from limited attending groups, and from greatly extended ceremonies. All of this has occurred at many institutions—but, thankfully, in small numbers at Southern Methodist University.

SMU has continuously tried to promote to both students and their families the long-standing tradition that commencement is an important occasion for dignified recognition of high-level personal growth. Efforts to help participants appreciate the music, symbols, colors, and times for reflection supporting an orderly commencement ceremony (def. 1) will be described; however, in recent years, common enjoyment of the days and hours surrounding that formal ceremony has caused these times to be included in the “commencement” label. We will here assume that commencement includes not only the occasion of the awarding of degrees but also generally all programs both before and after that occasion that are associated with it. (Figure 1 is a 1946 example of the inclusion of seven extra programs.)

Preparing for the first day of the awarding of degrees, called “Convocation Day” in 1916, those primarily responsible for the program of that day (and thus, as it happened by tradition, of subsequent years), established a high level of concern for the dignity of the ceremony, its formality, the value of precedent, the recognition of student sensibilities and awareness, and respect for parents who appreciated and trusted the university. A study of dozens of the Minutes of president-and-faculty meetings during the period September 7, 1915 to June 13, 1916 supports these views.

## SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

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*The Thirtieth Annual  
Convocation*

1945

## SUNDAY, JUNE 24:

- 9:15 A.M.—Convocation Sermon, McFarlin Memorial Auditorium, Bishop William C. Martin, B.D., D.D.
- 4:00-6:00 P.M.—Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings, Fondren Lecture Hall.
- 5:00 P.M.—Organ Recital, Jane Manton and Sam Parker, Organists, Zerda Lee Adams, Soprano.
- 7:45 P.M.—Seniors Vespers, Steps of Dallas Hall, Umphrey Lee, Ph.D., D.D., Litt.D., LL.D., President of Southern Methodist University.

## MONDAY, JUNE 25:

- 10:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.—Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Ralph Rountree, Mary Lou Thomas Sanford and Anne Toomey of the Class of 1920, Fondren Lecture Hall.
- 4:00 P.M.—Regimental Review, Navy V-12 Units, Central Quadrangle.
- 5:00 P.M.—President's Reception, honoring the Class of 1920, Silver Anniversary, Fondren Library.
- 7:45 P.M.—Thirtieth Annual Convocation, McFarlin Memorial Auditorium. Address, Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs, U.S.N., D. Eng., LL.D., Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 1  
Commencement Programs in 1945

A quotation from “SMU Reflections, 1986” will make the foregoing come alive.

On a recent visit at Commencement I found certain traditions established which we began at the first Commencement in June 1916. At the lunch table one day President Hyer said to me, “I want you as Chaplain to work out the plans for Commencement.” When I came to him with the plan, I suggested that we must make use of the cap and gown. The President decided to bring this matter to the attention of the faculty. To my very great surprise the faculty voted against the use of caps and gowns. Since it means so much to me I can recall almost every detail of the discussion. When the decision was made I told the President that my plan for Commencement was wrecked. With the marvelous tact he possessed, the President asked me to wait until the next faculty meeting. At that meeting he made a statement something like this, “You have voted against the use of caps and gowns. That is your privilege. Those who march in the academic procession must have caps and gowns and the rest of you may sit in the audience.” So at the first Commencement we used caps and gowns for the academic procession and have continued to do so ever since.

Ivan Lee Holt

## CHAPTER II

As the basis for some appreciation of the commencement developments, it seems appropriate to reproduce two first-commencement programs in 1916. After them in chronological order and detail two days later was the ceremony awarding recognitions (commencement, def. 1). What is surprising here is that the University, chartered in 1911, opened in September 1915--only 10 months ahead of the commencement. There appears to be no record of the formulation of requirements for classes or credits to provide a basis for the awarding of the degrees and honors listed. The (first) minutes of meetings of the President and his 11-member faculty begin in September, 1915.

To quote from Minutes of meetings, SMU, 9/17/15 – 9/26/23

“The Faculty met at the call of the president” (There were 11 faculty present)  
“The faculty entered upon its formal organization.” Ten committees were appointed, including one on Boarding Houses; another on Student Activities.

But attendance at the beginning worship service and later that day at Vespers apparently (from the Minutes) was required of the students.

## *THE CONVOCATION SERVICE*

*Sunday, June 11, 1916*

**The Processional Hymn**—"When Morning Gilds the Skies" (No. 32). (The congregation will stand as the procession enters).

**The Invocation Prayer**—

The Minister: My friends, I pray you, as many as are here present, to accompany me now, with a free heart and humble voice, unto the throne of the Heavenly Grace.

The Minister and the Congregation: Almighty God, Father of all mankind, trusting in Thy loving kindness and tender mercy, we invoke Thy help and blessing, as we worship Thee today. Purify us, we beseech Thee, from all guile, unite us in the bonds of love and peace; pour down upon us Thy spiritual gifts; and sustain our hearts in the glorious hope of the triumph of Thy love.

**The Doxology.**

**The Apostle's Creed.** (Let all join in the reciting):

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**The Morning Prayer**—The Rev. Caspar S. Wright, LL.B., Vice-President of the University

**Male Chorus**—Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand.....Schnecker

**The Responsive Service**—Led by the Rev. Prof. Paul B. Kern, A.M., B.D.

Minister: The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Congregation: For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Minister: Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place?

Congregation: He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully.

Minister: He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Congregation: This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek Thy face, O Jacob!

Minister: Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Congregation: Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Minister: Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Congregation: Who is this King of glory? This Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

**The Reading of the Scripture**—By the Rev. Bishop E. D. Mouzon, D.D., LL.D.

**The Offering.**

**The Offertory Solo**—The Lost Chord.....Sullivan  
Prof. Kirk Towns.

**The Sermon**—The Rev. Bishop Eugene R. Hendrix, D. D. LL. D.

**The Recessional Hymn**—“Hark! Hark! My Soul”(No. 621).  
(The congregation will remain seated until the choir sings the Amen.)

## *SENIOR VESPERS*

*Convocation Sunday at 7 p. m.*

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**The Processional**—(The Senior Class will enter as the congregation stands and the choir sings, “Now the Day is Over.”)

**The Prayer**—The Chaplain of the University.

**Quartette**—“Lead Kindly Light”.....Dudley Buck  
Messrs. Gardner, Moreland, Glenn, Lightfoot.

**The Reading of the Scripture.**

**Duet**—The Passage Bird’s Farewell.....Hildach  
Miss Margaret Vaughan and Prof. Kirk Towns.

**The Message**—The Rev. Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon, D. D., LL. D.

**The Recessional**—(As the Senior Class leaves, the Choir will sing “O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee.” The audience will remain until the Choir sings the Amen.)

## *CONVOCATION DAY*

*Tuesday, June the thirteenth,*

*Nineteen hundred sixteen.*

**The Academic Procession**—(The Orchestra will play the “Triumphal March” from “Aida.”)

**The Prayer**—The Rev. Prof. Ivan Lee Holt, Ph. D., Convocation Chaplain.

**Solo**—“A Song of Thanksgiving”.....*Allitsen*  
Miss Margaret Vaughan.

**The Address**—Governor-Elect Charles Hillman Brough, Ph. D. (Johns-Hopkins), the Governor-elect of Arkansas.

**The Southern Methodist University Ode**—(The Ode was written by Prof. Olin D. Wannamaker, Head of the Department of English, and set to music by Prof. Harold Hart Todd, of the Fine Arts Department.)

**The Annual Statement**—President Robert Stewart Hyer, LL. D.

**Violin Duet**—“Navarra”.....*Sarasate*  
Prof. and Mrs. Walter J. Friend.  
(Prof. H.H. Todd at the Piano.)

**The Awarding of Honors and the Conferring of Degrees.**

**The Recessional March**—(March From Tannhaeuser)—The Orchestra.  
(The audience is requested to remain seated until the Academic Procession has passed out of the Auditorium.)

**The Academic Procession Will Enter in the Following Order:**

The Sophomores chosen by the Seniors to assist in the conferring of the degrees.  
The Junior chosen by the M.A. candidates to assist in the conferring of the degrees.  
The Seniors.  
The candidates for the M.A. degree.  
The Members of the Faculty.  
The Vice-President of the University and the Secretary of the Faculty.  
The President of the Board of Trustees and the Convocation Chaplain.  
The President of the University and the Convocation Orator.

*Degrees and Honors*

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**Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts:**

HAL CHAPMAN BROWN	RAYMOND W. MATTHEWS
JULIA COE	HENRY GRADY MAY
ANNA MALYN DICKINSON	JULIA ELIZABETH MOUZON
JOE DAVID DOTY	JENNIE BYRD ROUSSEAU
MARY LOUISE GATLIN	LENA BELLE SLOAN
ZOE GLENN	HAZEL STRAW
WILLIAM AUGUSTUS HEARON	MAVIS LOUIS TERRY
MERLE KINGSBERY	MARY LENA WATSON
R.A. LANGSTON	ALINE WHITEMAN
FLORA ELLIS LOWERY	KATE ELEANOR WILSON
EVERETT HOMER LYON	ROBERT BONNER WYLIE
	EVA GREEN

(Adelyne Matthews, Reba Uarda McMinn and Cluster Q. Smith have almost completed the work required for the degree.)

---

**Candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts:**

JAMES AUGUSTUS JOHNSON	MRS. LEONA CAROLINE HOLT
LISLE CECIL JOHN	UMPHREY LEE
ROBERT W. GOODLOE	BESS DICKINSON THETFORD
GEORGE F. WINFIELD	

---

**Candidate for the Degree of Bachelor of Divinity:**

ELISHA WALTER BRIDGES

---

**Candidate for the Certificate of Graduation in the School of Theology:**

J. Coy Williams

*Alma Mater*

*O Alma Mater, see they children throng  
To utter forth thy praise in joyful song!*

We gather here  
This glad mid-year  
From all the wide Southwestern plains--  
From leagues of prairies rolling far;  
From farmlands where our riches are  
In blooming cotton and growing grains;  
From fields where wealth of gas and oil,  
Stored deep beneath our fertile soil,  
Gush forth that darkness may be light  
And winter may with warmth be bright;  
From Oceanside  
Where ships of commerce ride--  
From all the breadth of our broad land  
We gather here at thy command,  
O Alma Mater!  
Within thy halls they children stand,  
United in a joyful song!  
To utter forth thy praise in song!  
To sing the praises which to thee belong!

Thou standest crowned upon an hill,  
The prairies round thee like a sea;  
And thou like these unchanging art,  
And thou like these art broad and free!

The years shall surely make thee glad  
With noble sons and daughters wise--  
Thou shalt become a name to love  
Beneath the wide Southwestern skies.

For in thy face,  
Behold, we trace  
Compassion for all humankind—  
Deep pity for the poor and weak  
High honor for the pure and meek,  
True sorrow for the deaf and blind,  
All joy in innocence and youth,  
And reverence for light and truth,  
Unfailing zeal for just and right,  
And wisdom like the morning light!  
Yes, every heart  
Rests its firm faith on what thou art,  
And, looking down the distant years,  
We banish fears and banish tears,  
O Alma Mater,  
Lend to our voice thy listening ears—  
Behold thy children how they throng  
To utter forth thy praise in song!  
To sing the praises which to thee belong!

Thou seest the pageant of the years  
Unveiled before they distant gaze;  
The harvest of the rolling suns  
And reapings of the distant days.  
And thou with wisdom from of old  
And vision of the ever new  
Shalt usher in the gladder age  
And guide us to the good and true.  
--Olin D. Wannamaker.

*Members of the Chorus Singing the Ode*

Sopranos:

Misses Wilson  
Duensing  
Cabe  
Dyer  
Lloyd  
Barrett  
Lindsley  
Henry  
Baker  
Vaughan  
Ewing  
Williams

Tenors:

Messrs. Rippy  
Smalley  
Gardner  
Haynes  
Fuller  
Andrews  
Moreland  
Pugh  
White

Altos:

Misses Furneaux  
Grimes  
Bump  
Pendleton  
L. King  
F. King  
Shook  
Patterson  
Mrs. Todd.

Basses:

Messrs. Sone  
Strother  
Glenn  
Gibson  
Lightfoot  
Baker  
Buehrer  
Martin  
Davis  
West  
McIntosh

**PROF. KIRK TOWNS, Soloist**

Quartette:: Misses Frances Henry, First Soprano; Nell Graham, Second Soprano;  
Erma Baker, First Alto; Ouida Shook, Second Alto.

Students and faculty enabled support and enhancement of this first and successive commencements as recorded by the following recollections from several subsequent “SMU Reflections.”

Our graduation exercises I remember dimly, recalling only endless hours of rehearsals to learn the words and music to a Commencement Ode. We scouted around in the Johnson grass to hunt for wildflowers which we cut and put in buckets and tubs to decorate the stage of the chapel, now Arden Hall. There was a reception in the parlor of the Woman’s Building for the graduates, parents, and faculty following the 11 a.m. giving of diplomas.

Flora Lowrey

And Miss [Mary] McCord at each Commencement would present a play by Shakespeare. I recall that very well because usually she asked me to have one of my students to sing whatever songs Mr. Shakespeare had written in that particular play. One would shower himself with sulphur before the evening of those performances because the folding chairs were set out in the grass and one would be eaten alive with chiggers or redbugs, if not covered with sulphur. So one resorted to the sulphur.

Elise Hay (Mrs. J. Roscoe) Golden

Mrs. McIntosh never attended Commencement exercises, at which Dr. [John S.] McIntosh was marshal; instead, she stayed home to prepare a buffet luncheon for all comers. The McIntosh table would be crowded with sandwiches and salad and fruit, with a big pitcher of ice-cold milk. The family kept a cow in the backyard, milked by Dr. McIntosh at night and morning. We always thought the rosy cheeks of the whole family might be due to the butter and cream and vast quantities of milk the Jersey produced.

Goldie Capers Smith

### CHAPTER III

Some general statements can be made about the programs for each ceremony called commencement (def. 1). The order and nature of the events has been essentially identical through all the years. It is the changes and developments that will be discussed.

The order as seen in the first program follows: academic procession, prayer, music, the address, the SMU Ode, President's statement, music, awarding of honors and conferring of degrees, the benediction, and the recessional. A listing of the order for the academic procession, which started near or following the recessional, moved to the beginning position by 1921 and has remained there.

The above activities constituted "Convocation Day" from 1918 through 1926. Thereafter this program for commencement or for activities associated with the time of commencement on each of the days and/or times-of-day in any given year was headed by the title "X-teenth Convocation." This title was extended to the religious service usually preceding the commencement: giving support to the idea that "convocation" literally meant "a calling together" of those who comprise the institution, support it, provide new ways to enhance its educational mission, receive new recognition from it, and, finally, a farewell and final encouragement from it.

The time of the beginning of this commencement service in the first two years is not known; however, in 1918 those activities beginning at 10:30 a.m. were preceded at 10:00 a.m. by the unveiling of a tablet in honor of the donors of one thousand dollars, or more, to Southern Methodist University. From 1916 through 1923 these commencement exercises took place at 10:30 a.m. in the third floor auditorium of Dallas Hall. Then, after two years in the university gymnasium, the site was McFarlin Memorial Auditorium from 1926 through 1932 with 10:00 a.m. or 8:00 p.m.

beginnings common. From 1933 through 1940, one June service was held in McFarlin Auditorium at 7:30 p.m., and an August service was held on the steps of Dallas Hall at 8:00 p.m. A third service was added in 1943 in Fondren Library Auditorium

Some specific details on these commencement ceremonies from 1927 through 1940 are given next, preceded by a listing of the symbols used both here and subsequently.

1. Procession: M—Marshals; UO—University officials followed by deans; F—Faculty; C—candidates for degrees; CL—class; HD—honorary degree candidates; TR—Trustees; OR—Orator; UVP—University Vice President; RP—Retired Professors
2. Processional Music: O—organ; P—piano; PV—piano and violin; TC—Tower Chimes (from nearby HPUMC); HPUMC—HPUMC “Carillon”; SMUSB—SMU Symphonic Band; SE—Symphony Ensemble; SWE—Symphonic Wind Ensemble; SB—Symphonic Band; USB—University Symphonic Band; SMUS—SMU Symphony
3. Locales: McF—McFarlin; DHS—Dallas Hall steps; K—chapel of Kirby Hall (Perkins degrees only); N—Navy; MFS—McFarlin steps; OW—Ownby; CO--Coliseum

		“Convocation Marshals”		
		<u>Of The University</u>	<u>College Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
1927	McF	4	7	8
1928	McF	4	5	5
1929	McF	4	5	6
1930	McF	7	8	9
1931	McF	3	6	5
1932	McF	3		5
1933 June	McF	7		9
Aug.	McF	2		6
1934 June	McF	7		11
Aug.	McF	4		6
1935 June	McF	4		10
Aug.	McF	6		10
1936 June	McF	6		10
Aug.	DHS			7
1937 June	McF	8		10
Aug.	DHS			4
1938 June	McF	6		10
Aug.	DHS	2		4
1939 June	McF	6		11
Aug.	DHS	2		2
1940 June	McF	6		6
Aug.	DHS	2		4

The order and location of the exercises have been described, but some modifications appeared useful and/or necessary.

From the 1918 commencement program: “At the close of the service, the senior class will present a gift to the university.” In 1919 through 1926 the program stated “At the close of the exercises the Seniors will present their caps and gowns to the Juniors.” This event has never re-appeared.

During the ceremonies from 1930 on there appears to have been a regular gift from the President and Secretary of the Ex-students Association. Such class representatives began to be included in the opening procession in 1929, 1930, and 1933, and from 1942 on through 1954, then 1960 and several times until becoming regular in 1982; however, their presence was generally ignored in the procession list even though they had a part in the program and a gift.

A benediction was included in the program for the first time in 1922, preceding the recessional. In 1923 through 1925 it followed the recessional, was omitted in 1926 and 1927, but returned ahead of the recessional and has remained there.

The president’s early insistence upon orderliness and dignity was evident from the beginning, each year specifically requesting the audience to remain seated through the recessional. He did yield to a little advertising at the end of the 1924 program with the bold letters “Come back next June (1925) to a four-day celebration of the University’s completion of its Tenth Year of Instruction.” Although he surely had help from the faculty acting as marshals during the “years of instruction,” they were not listed in the program until 1927. The so-called “College Marshals” were used for only five years thereafter. Before that year the management of the students and participants seems to have been obtained by “Sophomores Chosen by Seniors,” who led the academic processions.

Preludial and processional music for these specific services were provided for the first three years by “the orchestra,” playing a commonly enjoyed (in those years) rousing elegant “Triumphal March” from “Aida.” From 1919 and through 1923 it was played by one or two pianos. Organ music was used continuously thereafter through 1940 for McFarlin services, with portable organ music substitution on the steps of Dallas Hall.

After the prelude, procession, and an invocation, the address of the day followed through 1920 ceremonies. Then the “Southern Methodist University Ode” shown earlier as “Alma Mater” moved ahead of it and continued to follow the invocation through 1927, when it was omitted for two years. In 1930 it was given prominence in the printed program and sung that year and from 1933 to 1940 in the McFarlin programs. What we now know as the University Hymn, Varsity, was sung late in all ceremonies beginning in 1928 and continuing through 1983. From 1984 through 2007 a beautifully arranged Varsity (music only) is enjoyed by all silently but with most Coliseum lights extinguished.

The Annual Statement by the President was usually given following the Ode. A break for music came next. It was followed for many years by honors and awards presentations. Degrees were conferred thereafter, followed by Varsity, the Benediction, and then the Recessional (with the organ).

## CHAPTER IV

Beginning in 1933 there was a need for more than one of these commencement ceremonies (def. 1). By 1943 there were three, with one in Fondren Auditorium, and by 1945 there were five. From 1944 through 1946, there were at least four per year, and three each in years 1947 through 1953, usually in February, June and October in McFarlin, and on Dallas or McFarlin Hall steps in August. Ownby Stadium held two ceremonies annually in June and in August in 1954, 1955, and 1956. Thereafter, all ceremonies were held in the Coliseum, and they will be discussed later. The ceremony in May or June seemed the one most important; and the use of McFarlin at those times always provided for the larger participation, for the use of the organ, for special awards or presentations, and for farewell to emeritus faculty.

Ownby Stadium had to suffice as a site for 1954 through 1956 Spring commencements until the Coliseum became available in 1957. Other similar ceremonies were held in January, February, August, September, or October as needed, calling upon places like Dallas Hall steps, McFarlin steps, and Ownby, with Kirby Hall twice for Perkins graduations only.

More specific details on these ceremonies follow:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Locale</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Processional</u>		<u>Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
				<u>Music</u>	<u>Order</u>		
1941	June	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,C	26	10
1941	August	McF	6:45	O	M,UO,C	2	10
1942	June	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,F, Rep. CL 1917,C		
1942	August	McF	7:45	O	M,C,UO	2	4
1943	May	McF	7:45	O	M,UO,F, Rep. CL 1918,C	6	10
1943	Sept.	McF	7:45	O	M,C,UO	2	4
1943	October	Fondren	8:00	O	M,UO,C	2	4
1944	February	McF	8:00	O	M,UO,F,C	2	
1944	June	McF	8:30			10	10
<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Locale</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Processional</u>		<u>Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
				<u>Music</u>	<u>Order</u>		

1944	August	DHS	7:45	O	M,C,UO	2	
1944	October	McF	8:00	O	M,UO,F,C	2	
1945	Febr.27	McF	8:00	O	M,UO,F,C	3	
1945	June 1	K	8:00	O	M,UO,F,C	2	6
1945	June 25	McF	7:45	O	M,UO,N,F, Rep. CL1920, C	8	14
1945	Aug. 18	DHS	7:45	O	M,C,UO	3 (M.S.L.)	
1945	Oct. 27	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,F,C	2	
1946	Feb.	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,F,C	7	6
1946	May	K	7:30	(?)	M,UO,F,C	2	6
1946	June	McF	8:00	O	M,UO,F,C	7	15
1946	August	DHS	6:45	O	M,C,UO	2	4
1947	January	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,F,C	8	7
1947	June	McF	8:00	O	M,UO,HD,F, Rep. CL 1922	7	12
1947	August	DHS	6:45	O	M,C,UO	1	6
1948	January	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,F,C	7	8
1948	May	McF	6:15	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1923	7	12
1948	August	McF	6:15	O	M,UO,C	5	9
1949	January	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,C	5	14
1949	May	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1924	7	15
1949	August	McF	6:15	O	M,UVP,OR, UO,C	5	7
1950	February	McF	7:30	O	M,UO,HD,C	5	12
1950	June	McFS	6:00	O	M,UO, Rep. CL 1925,C	5	10
1950	August	McFS	6:00	O	M,UO,C	5	7
1951	February	McF	7:30	O	C	11	17
1951	June	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1926,C	12	16
1951	August	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,C	4	7
1952	February	McF	7:30	O	No procession	7	15
1952	June	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1927	10	16
1952	August	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,C	7	8
1953	January	McF	7:30	O	No procession	8	14
1953	June	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1928,C	10	15
1953	August	McF	6:00	O	M,UO,HD,C	10	10
1954	June	OW	5:30	TC&O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1929, C	12	11
1954	August	OW	6:00	TC&O	M,UO,HD,C	9	12
1955	May	OW	5:30	TC&O	M,UO,HD,C	10	13
1955	August	OW	6:00	TC&O	M,UO,HD,C	9	6

Beginning in 1941 and continuing thereafter, the procession “colors” were listed in the commencement program, usually at the end. This listing became Degree Colors, then Academic Colors, and then in the 1977 Opening Convocation program, The Academic Procession. After 1986 a considerably revised version of The Academic Procession was used.

The Ode was sung regularly by the students through 1943, and then heard only from soloists in McFarlin through 1952.

## CHAPTER V

The considerable stabilization of commencement's annual location, date, and time beginning in August, 1956 began to make possible extensive planning, site improvements, organization of marshal activities, and inclusion later of alumni and others in the ceremony exercises. See the following:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Locale</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Processional</u>		<u>Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
				<u>Music</u>	<u>Order</u>		
1956	May	OW	5:30	TC&O	M,UO,HD,C	7	17
1956	August	CO	6:00	TC&O	M,UO,HD,C	3	7
1957	June	CO	5:30	TC&O	M,UO,HD,F,C	9	18
1958	June	CO	5:30	TC&O	M,UO,F,C	10	13
1959	June	CO	5:30	TC&O	M,UO,F,C	11	10
1960	May	CO	5:30	TC&O	M,UO, Rep. CL 1935,F,C	11	11
1961	May	CO	5:30	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1936,F,C	10	17
	(Monday)						
1962	May	CO	5:30	O	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1937,F,C	8	17
1963	May	CO	5:30	O	M,UO, Rep. CL 1938,F,C	8	21
1964	May	CO	5:30	SMUSB	M,UO,HD, Rep. CL 1939,FC	7	22
1965	May	CO	2:30	SMUSB	M,UO,HD, RP,F,C	7	29
	(Sunday)						
1966	May	CO	2:00	SMUSB	M,UO,HD, RP,F,C	7	30

Figure 2 shows the August 1956 ceremony underway on the Coliseum's canvas-covered basketball court floor. The stage faces north. Figure 3 shows the 1961 ceremony stage facing east, but the exercises are quite obviously still being held on a basketball court. Some comments about the data above (taken directly from commencement programs) need to be made.

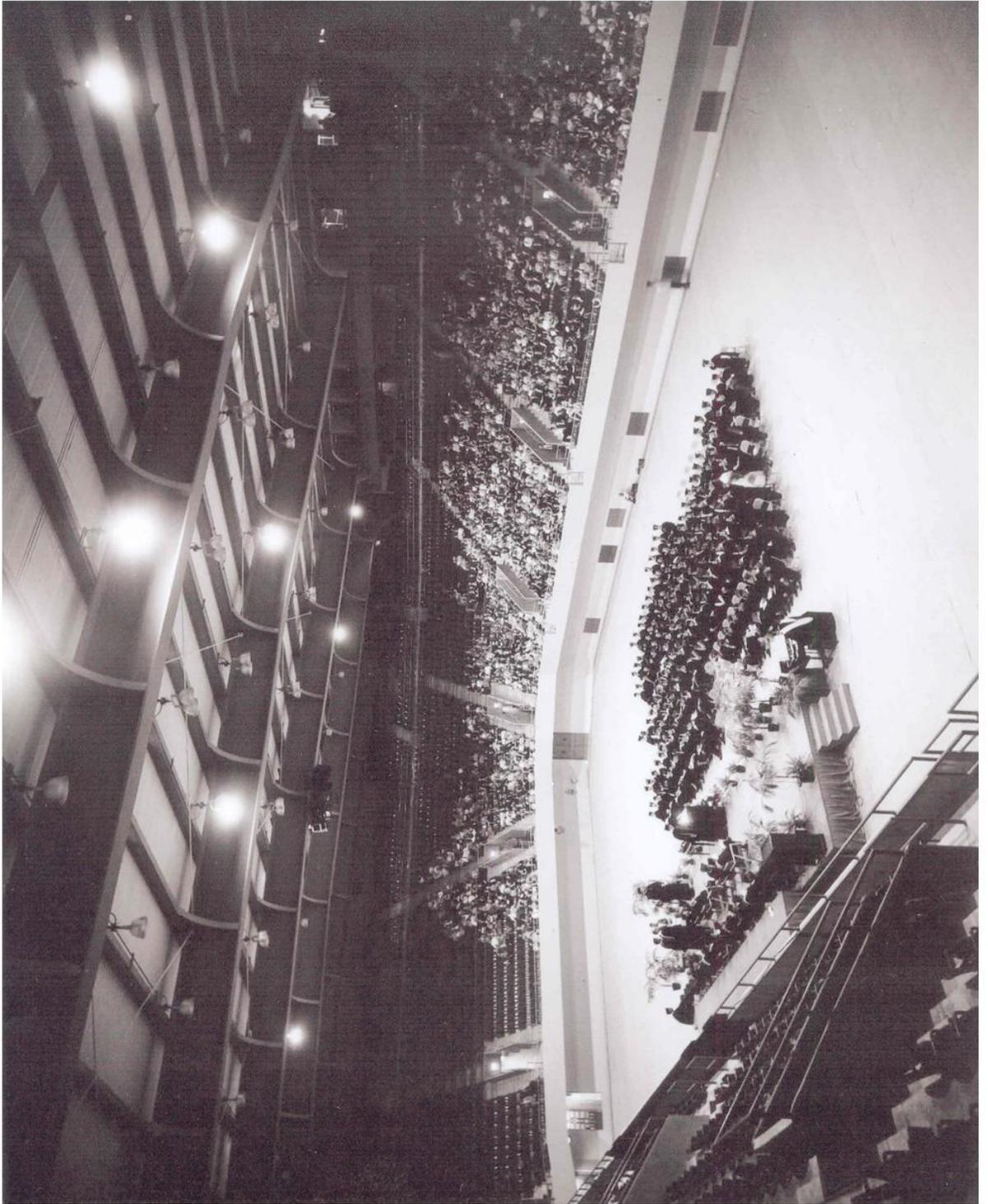


Fig. 2 Commencement 1956

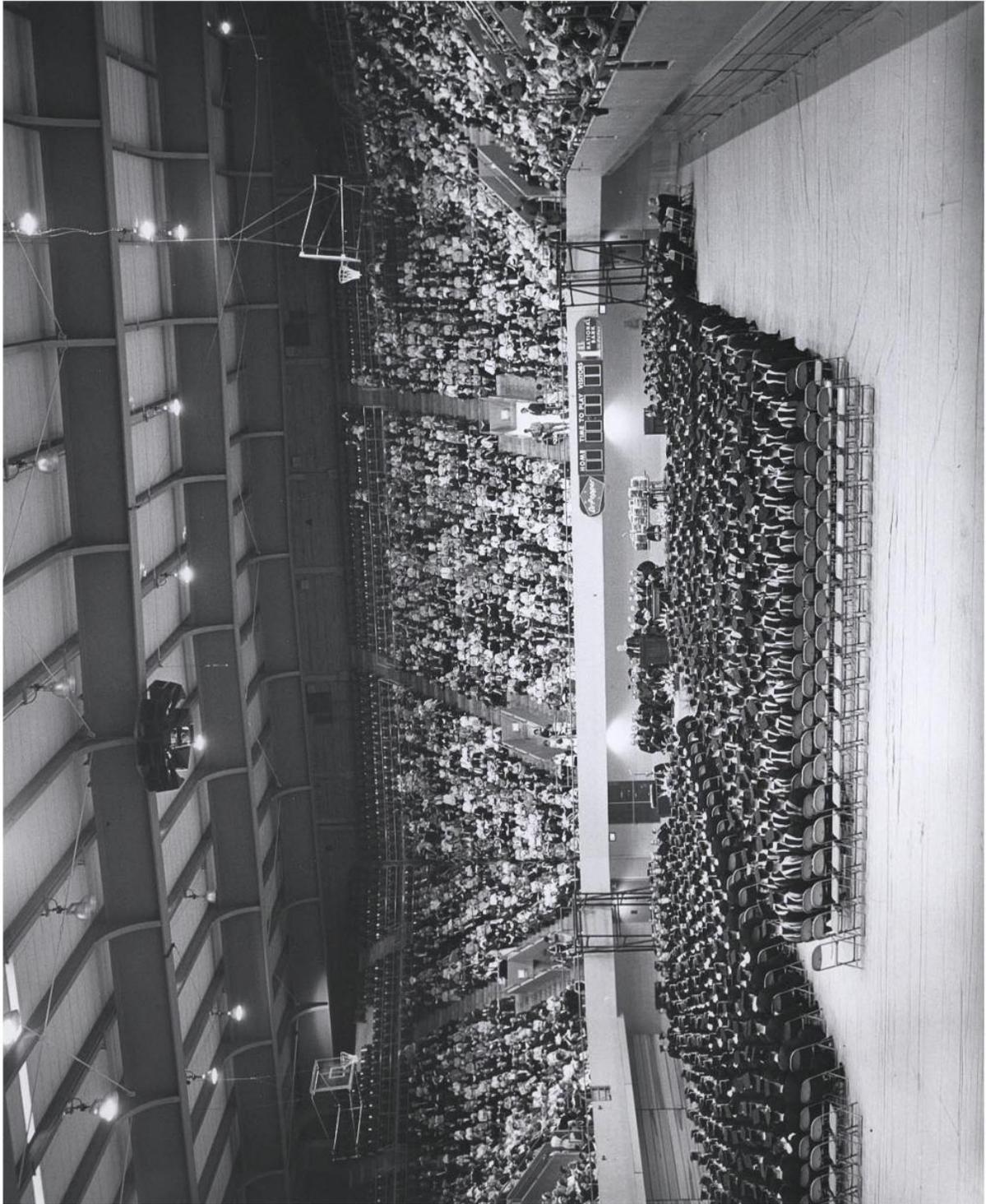


Fig. 3 Commencement 1961

Figures 2 and 3 have introduced us to first uses of the Coliseum, probably extending unchanged through 1961, with staging, now moved to the west end of the canvas-covered basketball court, complete with organ, mace, diplomas, and flowers. 1961 use of the Coliseum enabled the president to have a “robing tea” in the Lettermen’s room. Such a room continues to be used regularly for stage-party robing and continental breakfasts ahead of the commencement ceremony.

The stage was still in the west end in 1963, but by 1964 it was moved to the east end, and the SMU symphonic band was added on the west end and behind the main assembly of graduating students. Although the stage was in the east end of the court, what appeared to be a makeshift bar supported a square banner with the SMU seal thereon hung behind the band.

In 1964 class representatives were in the procession for the last time until they returned in the form of 50-year alumni in 1982, and in addition, as Senior Class representatives in 1984. By 1965 retiring professors were in the procession for the first time, remaining there only through 1968; but, were back again in 1976.

From 1957 through 1965, Monday was the usual day of commencement in late May or early June at 5:30 p.m. In 1966 the service was moved to Sunday at or near 2:00 p.m.

Moving commencement to Sunday in 1966 made it somewhat difficult for visitors to park, then to go to Baccalaureate at 10:30 that day, find their lunch afterward, and then get to a parking place, and then to commencement in Moody by 2:15. By 1972 a luncheon was provided at Umphrey Lee for \$2.40 for both seniors and parents to provide some assistance (reservations could be arranged ahead of time through the Alumni Association).

In 1966, the stage for the Sunday commencement services was now permanently located in the east end of the basketball court. Banners designating sections of candidates from various schools

appeared for the first time. Also in 1966, a massive system of bars and ropes supported a black-curtain backdrop framing a beautiful pleated white curtain behind and extending beyond the stage ends. Dark and white alternating panels hung from just short of the middle of the white curtain, while the SMU banner previously mentioned graced the center of that curtain, high over the stage. This display was the first effective attempt to provide major commencement relief from the basketball court ambience (Fig. 4). The faculty appears to be seated in five rows off to the right of the stage. The SMU Symphonic Band played on the west end in 1964, 1965, and 1966 behind the candidates. Public-address system speakers flanked the stage on both sides.

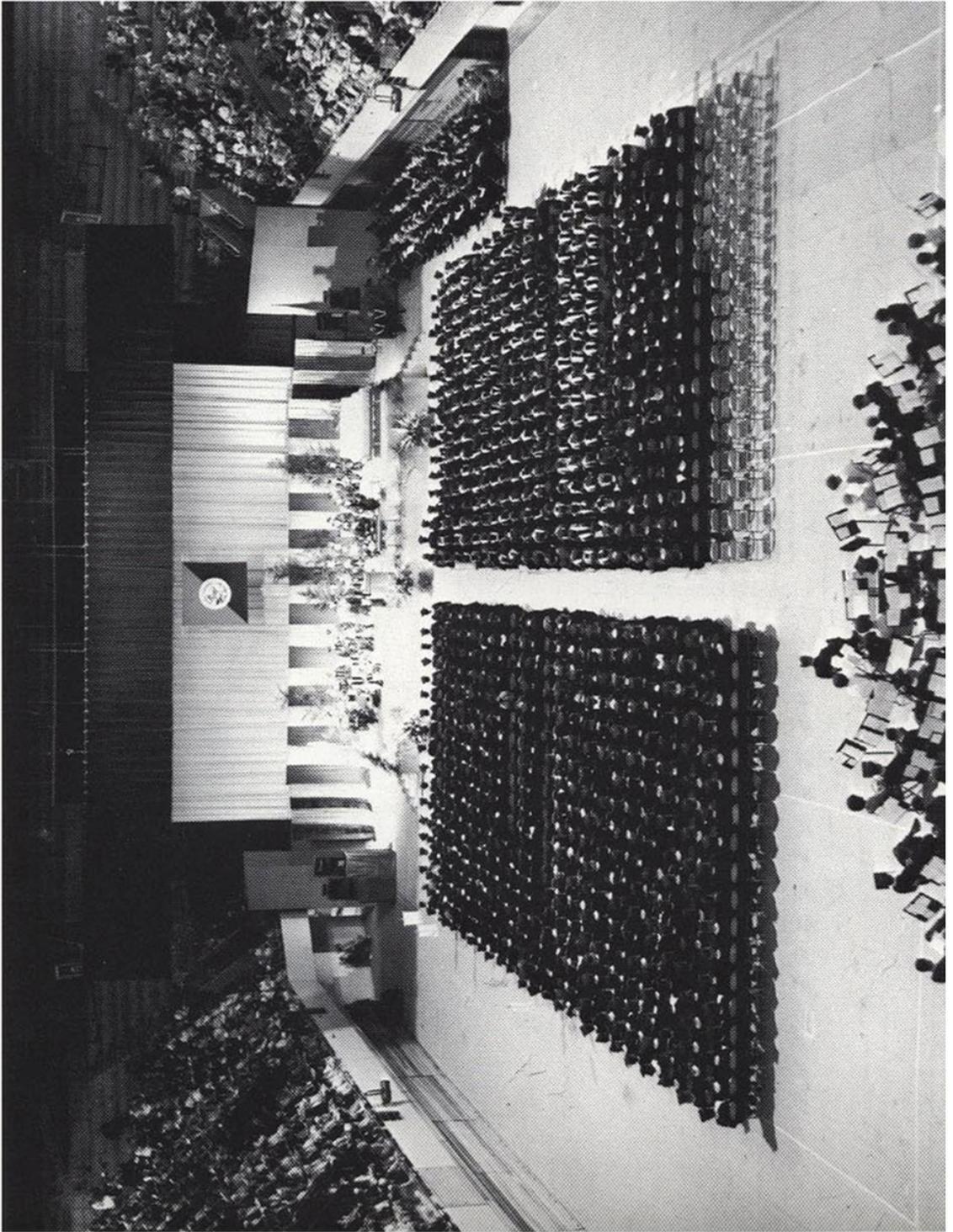


Fig. 4 Commencement 1966

## CHAPTER VI

In 1967 the SMU Symphonic Band was replaced by the SMU Symphonic Ensemble, which continued to provide processional and special music, alternating with the SMU Wind Ensemble and Band through 1973. By 1974 the University Symphonic Band became the regular music provider.

The effect of predictability of place, date, day, and time was a great help in improving commencement and planning. (See below after the continuation of the previous listing of service details.)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Locale</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Processional</u>		<u>Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
				<u>Music</u>	<u>Order</u>		
1967	May	CO	2:15	SE	M,UO,HD, RP,F,C	8	12
1968	May	CO	2:15	SE	M,UO,HD, RP,F,C	7	22
1969	May	CO	2:15	SE	M,UO,HD,F,C	7	24
1970	May	CO	2:15	SE	M,UO,HD,F,C	8	21
1971	May	CO	2:15	SWE	M,UO,HD,F,C	7	31
1972	May	CO	2:15	SB	M,UO,HD,F,C	7	32
1973	May	CO	2:15	SB	M,UO,HD,F,C	6	29
1974	May	CO	2:00	USB	M,UO,HD,F,C	5	28

A general discussion of three specific commencement events other than the commencement (def. 1) itself beginning in 1915 is given next. The nature and order of each event has been essentially identical through all the years, with University rules on mandatory student attendance at the first two of them or at strictly defined substitutes.

One of those events, always at 10:45 a.m. on the Sunday just ahead of the commencement ceremonies, was the Convocation Religious Service (CRS). It consisted (in this order) of a processional, hymn, invocation prayer, Doxology, Apostle's Creed, morning prayer, music, responsive reading, scripture, offering, music, sermon, hymn, and recessional. By 1930 (perhaps as

yielding to a little enjoyment of the CRS) a traditionally allowed line of picked Seniors kept together by a daisy chain preceded the hooded Seniors in the lead of the procession.

The offering was dropped after two services. The CRS, which had added the Doxology in its first three services, dropped it in 1920 and substituted the Gloria Patri. The Gloria continued in the service through 1979; however, by 1967 the reciting of the Apostle's Creed was gone. The printed program for CRS doubled in size from 1929 through 1941, allowing for the printing of the hymns, the composition of the Convocation Choir, and occasionally other information. The label on the CRS was changed to Convocation Sermon (CS) in 1944, after which the label became Baccalaureate. Marshals, Ushers, and Convocation Choir have been listed continuously in its printed program.

The second event, Student Vespers (SV), included a processional, prayer, music, scripture, music or hymns, message, music, and recessional. The event lasted only through 1949; it resumed again in 1958 for only six years.

The third event, begun in 1936 and labeled Organ Recital, was usually at 4:00 p.m. in McFarlin ahead of Vespers (SV) at 6:30 or 6:45 p.m. on DHS. It was often musical, including organ, voice, and/or violin or piano. This event disappeared after 1948.

These three events must always have enhanced the commencement (def. 1). But it appears that the university may have thought that the concerns and goals mentioned herein earlier would be better served and accepted by combining them together with commencement (def. 1) into only two events both easier to facilitate and more attractive. The development of those two events along with useful and extremely helpful ancillary programs or changes aiming toward earlier stated goals of enjoyment, appreciation, and respect will be described next.

To begin with, the vespers and organ services had been eliminated by 1958, leaving only the Convocation Religious Service and the Commencement (def. 1) as the two expected useful programs. Each locale, Moody Coliseum and McFarlin Auditorium, provided adequate space and facilities for these events.

We will neglect developments in a relatively unchanging Baccalaureate service in McFarlin through 1982 and concentrate on Moody's role in improving commencement toward goals proposed earlier. Archival photographs together with the observations and records of the writer as chief marshal will help us to trace and understand that role, almost year by year.

## CHAPTER VII

Ceremony details by year follow (new PP is a symbol for President's party):

PP—President's Party; EF—Emeritus Faculty; R—Registrar; ASP—Alumni Association President; PS—President, Senior Class; PVPS—President and Vice President, Senior Class; RF—Retiring Faculty.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Locale</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Processional</u>		<u>Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
				<u>Music</u>	<u>Order</u>		
1975	May	CO	2:00	USB	M,UO,HD,F,C	5	35
1976	May	CO	2:00	USB	M,C,F,RP,OU,PP	16	32
1977	May	CO	2:00	USB	M,C,F,RP,UO,HD,PP	15	33
1978	May	CO	2:00	USB	M,C,F,RP,UO,HD,PP	15	34
1979	May	CO	2:00	USB	M,C,F,RP,UO,HD,PP	16	31

The order in “the opening procession” from 1941 on through 1975 appears to have represented the wishes of the presidents through 1975: that the university's authorities and mentors had higher rank and should come in ahead of the students. (Interestingly, this was not the order designed by the first president.) If one considers the practical effect of such an ordering, the marshals leading the procession would have seated the president and his officers upon the stage where they would sit and watch while hundreds of degree candidates filed in and stood!! Commencement pictures through 1971 confirm that this is exactly what took place through the years. This order of the processional was discontinued after 1975. The president and deans were appropriately honored by trumpet fanfare after the candidates were in and standing, awaiting their mentors' arrivals.

In 1977 the Symphonic Band continued to play in the west end and behind the students. But that year brought two more very helpful changes. First, students graduating, who formerly usually

lined up outside of Moody were now directed to line up (out of the sun or rain) in the basement of Dedman Center. Here the marshals (one for each line of two abreast) had much easier contact with the entire group from a given degree program or school. Each group constituted one line only and was in a relatively confined space where there were fewer distractions. It was also possible for the Chief Marshal to have quick access to all of the marshals for communicating last minute changes in procedures, or places or times—not an inconsequential or seldom-used advantage!

In addition, the 1977 inauguration of a formal annual Marshal's Luncheon well ahead of commencement (def. 2) has proven vital. This annual luncheon has been increasingly useful for distributing and discussing plans for the current year's Baccalaureate and Commencement to both new and continuing marshals. These plans usually include detailed building, floor, marching, and seating layouts, as well as entries and exits. Also included, when possible, is as much timing and anticipatory information as available.

In 1978 the Symphonic Band moved to the east end and in front of the stage, thus providing a secondary enjoyment source for most (Fig. 5). The public address systems now were well away from proximity to, distraction from, and interference with movements to and from the stage. White class banners indicated the SMU school from which the adjacent candidates had come. The school signs were now gone. The trapezoidal scoreboard was covered in blue. By then the floor was all blue except for green areas near the sides. Now a blue covering hung from the balcony to the floor all around the former basketball court, providing a red and blue SMU image for the students and their families. Templates had provided precision seating arrays on the floor. On the stage attractive colorful comfortable chairs enhanced the red décor.

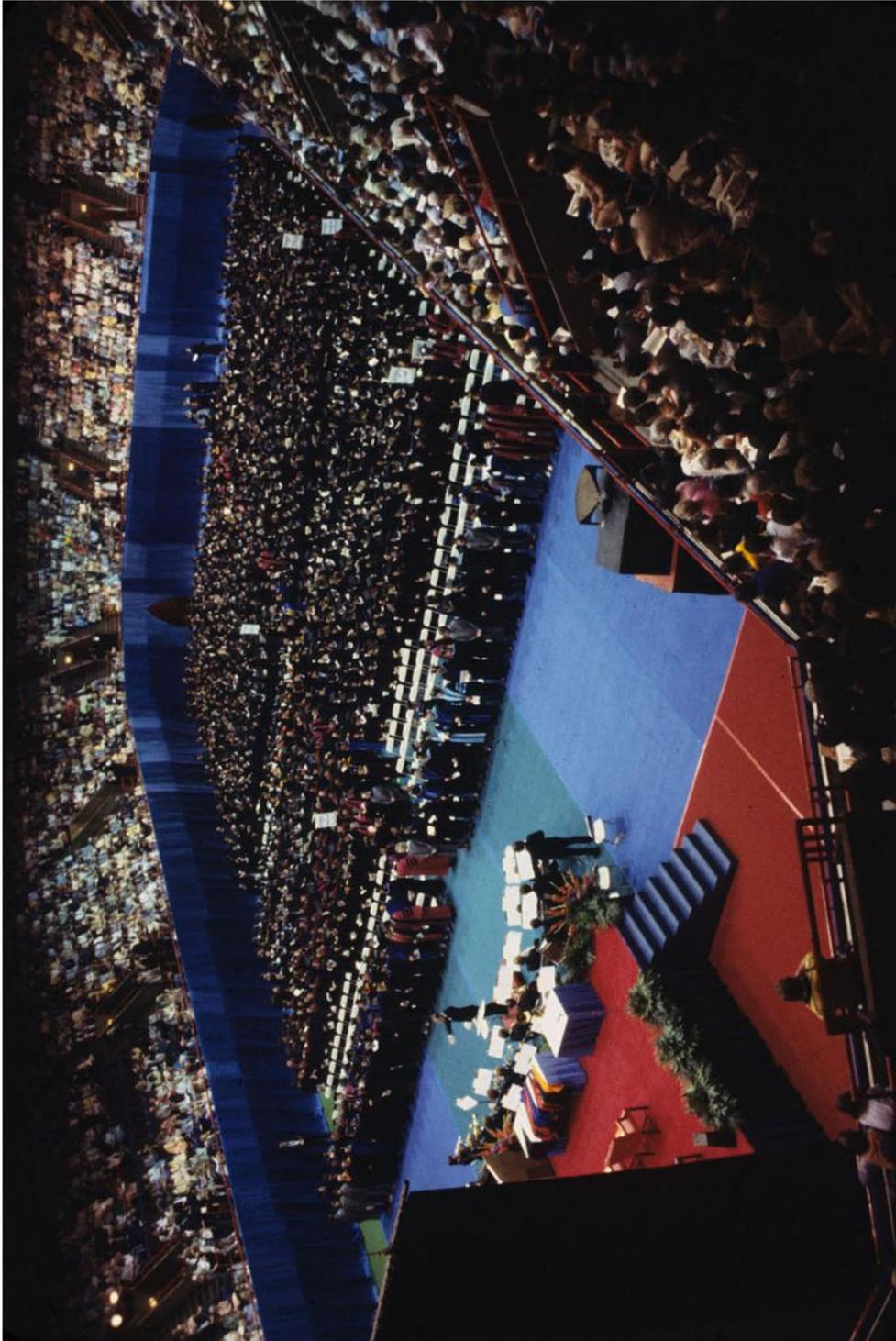


Fig. 5 Commencement 1978

But 1978 brought the major change in the ceremony. This was the welcome relief from the previous overwhelmingly long process of handing out diplomas. In 1978 this ceremony (for each school) was shifted to a time after the Moody recessional and, depending upon the degree, to another campus location. The appearance of Moody began to change thereafter. The floor cover was improved and made uniform. Flowers and plants, as usual over the years, were always plentiful in front of and on the side and rear of the stage. But the side and back walls and hanging scoreboard in 1978 still said “basketball court” to all. The floor was in the process of being covered with blue by this time, and its availability had to be assured by the space manager annually; but SMU and other conference school signs still hung on the balcony through 1977.

In 1979 a large replica of the Southern Methodist University seal beautifully executed by the Theater Department was hung in front of the white curtain above and behind the stage. (Fig. 6, and shown in enjoyable detail in Fig. 7). This essentially completed changing the nature of the commencement ceremony surroundings. The administration was pleased with both the change in surroundings and with the ceremonies, and asked for a continuation of the same pattern in the ‘80s.

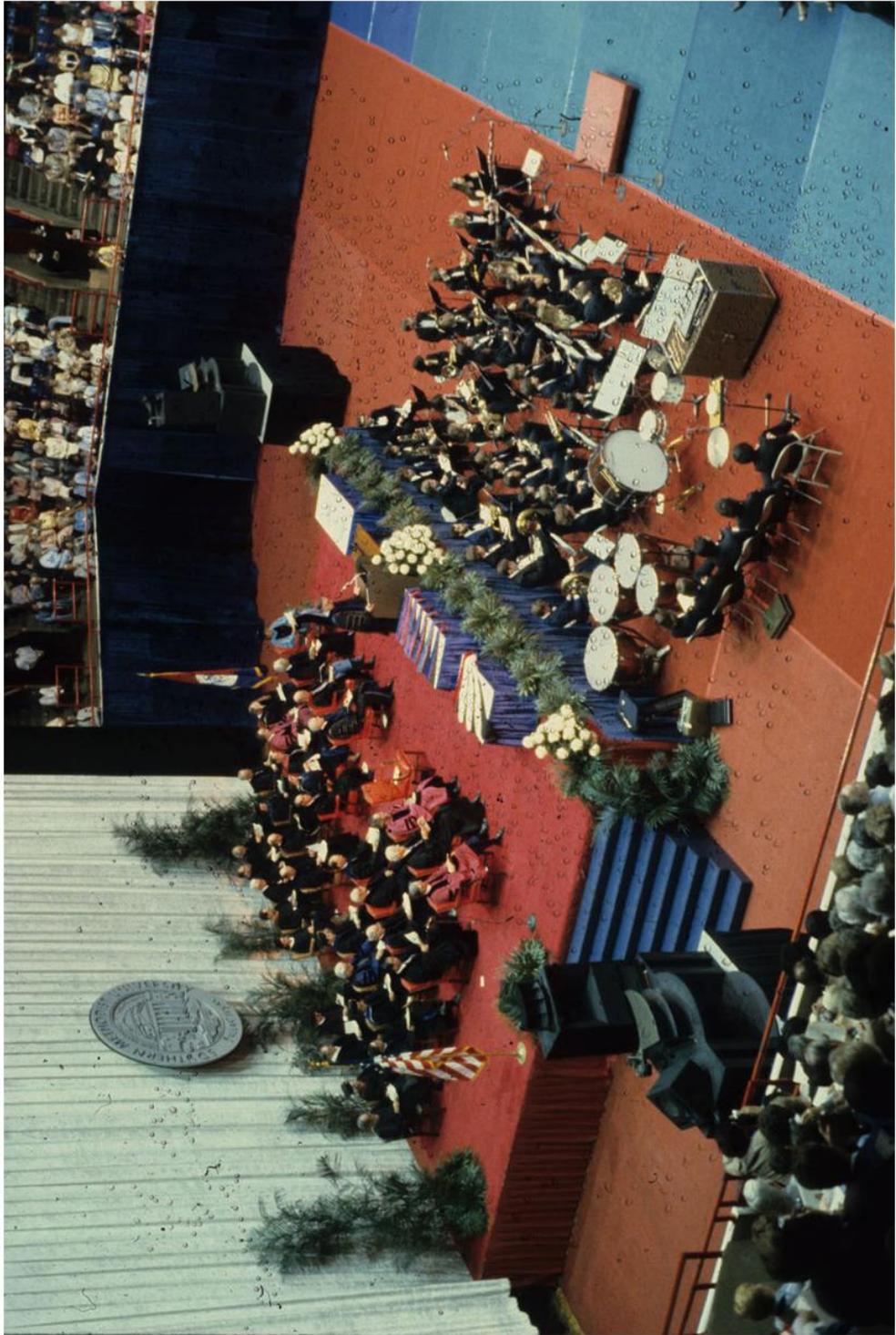


Fig. 6 Commencement 1979, stage area with new seal

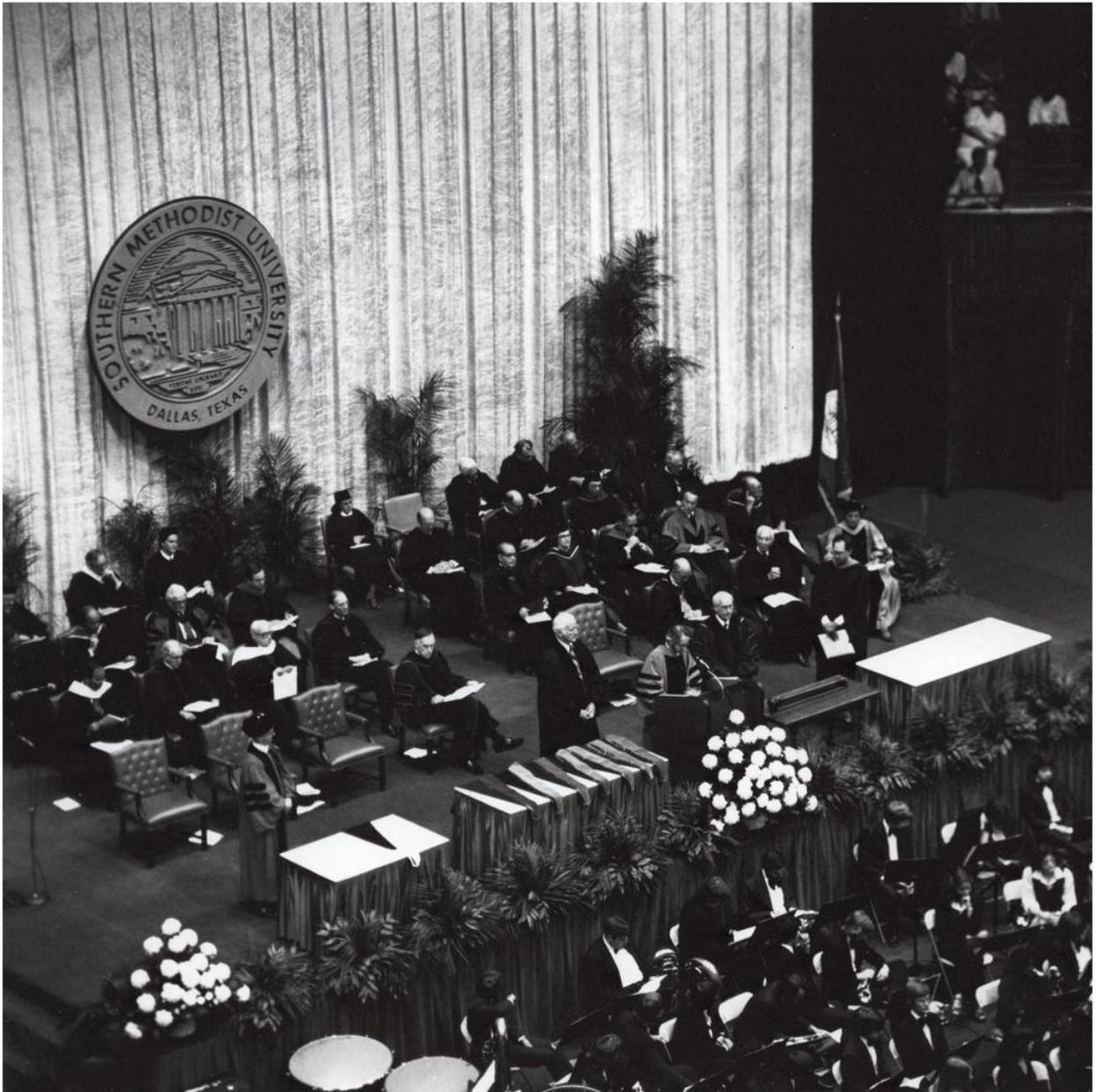


Fig. 7 Commencement 1979

## CHAPTER VIII

The services from 1980 through 1984 changed very little. But carillon music from Fondren tower both before and after the Commencement considerably warmed the campus ambience beginning in 1982. In 1983 the attendees were greeted by a trumpet choir outside Moody as they arrived, and then excited inside by the SMU Symphony and by a series of fanfares announcing the entry of various sections of the procession. Each of these sections was preceded by an honor student carrying a beautiful new banner designating the nature of the section (Fig. 8). (Fig. 9 provides better appreciation of the new banner details.)

A list of some useful additional symbols useful to follow subsequent processional changes is given:

PP—President's Party; EF—Emeritus Faculty; R—Registrar; ASP—Alumni Association President; PS—President, Senior Class; PVPS—President and Vice President, Senior Class; RF—Retiring Faculty.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Locale</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Processional</u>		<u>Marshals</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
					<u>Music</u>	<u>Order</u>		
1980	Sun	May	CO	2 p.m.	USB	M,C,RP,F,UO,HD,PP	16	34
1981	Sun	May	CO	2 p.m.	USB	M,C,EF,F,RP,UO,TR,HD,PP	16	34
1982	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	USB	M,C,CL32,EF,F,RP,UO,TR, HD,PP	16	34
1983	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	SMUS	M,C,CL33,EF,F,UO,TR,HD,PP	17	36
1984	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	SMUS	M,C,CL34,EF,F,PVPS,AAP,R, UO,TR,HD,PP	16	37
1985	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	SMUS	M,C,CL35,EF,F,PVPS,AAP,R, UO,TR,HD,PP	15	29
1986	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	SMUS	M,C,CL36,EF,F,PS,AAP,R,UO, TR,HD,PP	16	41
1987	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	SMUS	M,C,CL37,EF,F,PVPS,AAP,RF, R,UO,TR,HD,PP	16	37
1988	Sat	May	CO	10 a.m.	SMUS	M,C,CL38,EF,F,PVPS,AAP,R, RF,UO,HD,TR,PP	17	30

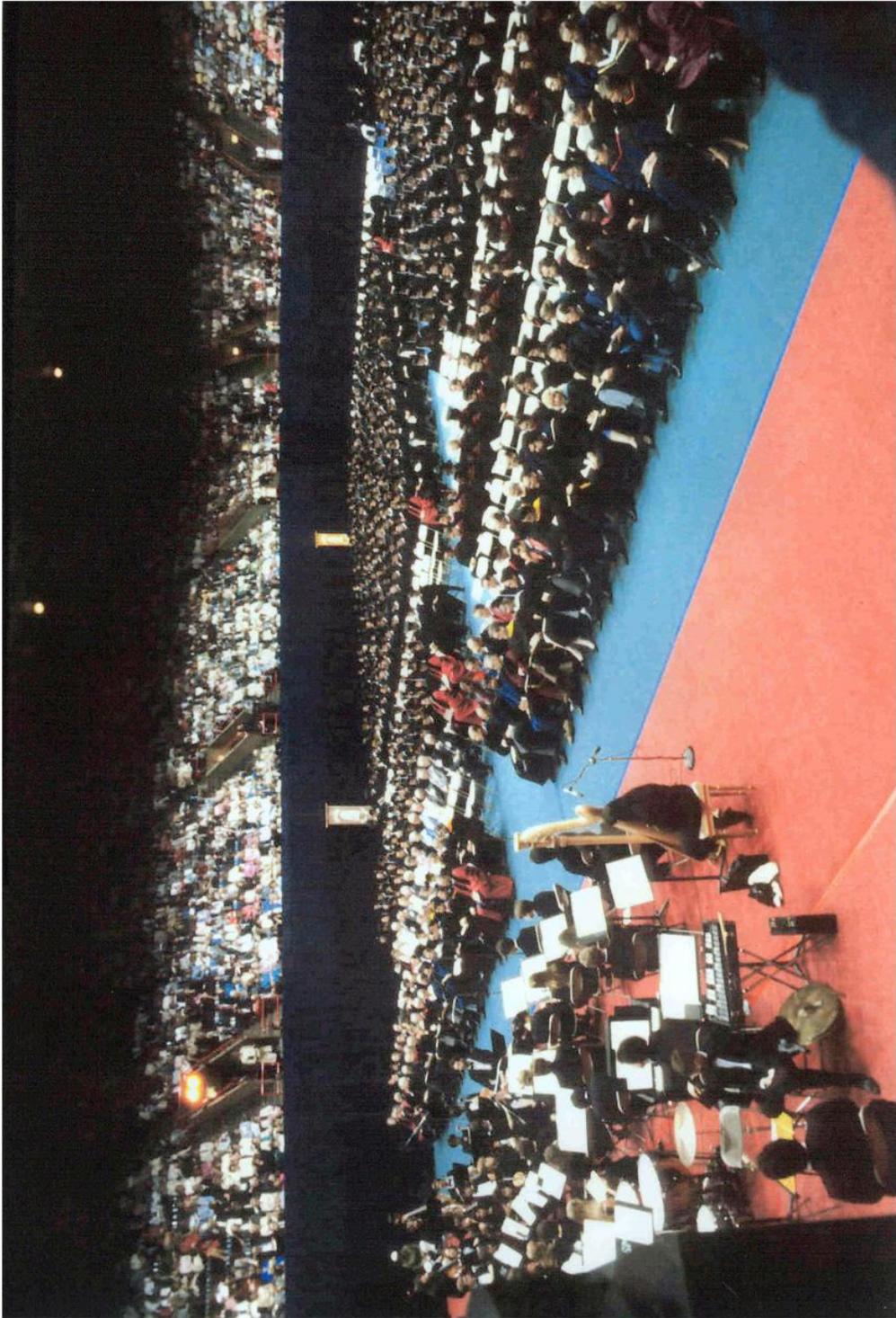


Fig. 8 Commencement 1983

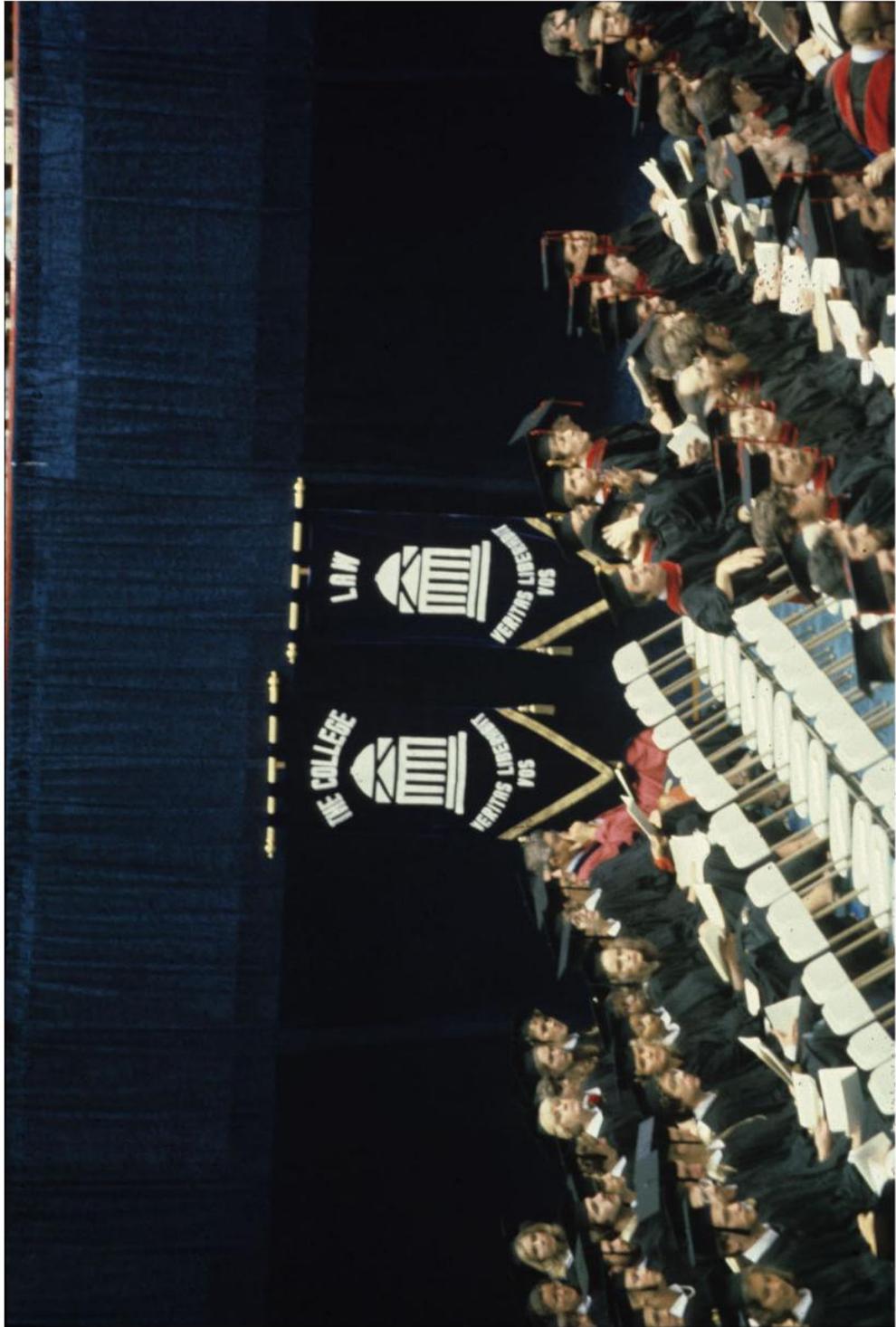


Fig. 9 Commencement 1981

Processional changes are listed in the compact presentation above. 1981 brought the Trustees into the procession, and the President and Vice President of the Senior Class as well as Registrar and President of the Alumni Association were added in 1984. Our music source was permanently upgraded to the SMU Symphony (in formal attire since 1980) (and with two harps!) in 1984 (Fig. 10).

But the size of the foregoing ceremony operations, needing 48 marshals and ushers and expanding that number to 57 in 1986 had called for extensive detailed planning. Many more volunteers and a nurse were obtained, indicating increased concerns 1) for larger numbers of family and student attendees, and 2) for their needs such as what chairs and safety. The move from a Sunday service to one on Saturday seemed only to increase the attendance (and the challenges).

More detailed planning was clearly necessary. This extended to program timing. An example is given in the Program Order that appears on page 41 just preceding Chapter IX. Not included therein but outstanding in the writer's records were ancillary orders by responsible parties for more detailed attention to the inner and outer appearance of Moody and Dedman. Such details had given us a beautiful setting and enhancements for commencement 1988.

The end of the 1984 ceremony was dramatic. The presiding officer reminded the students that they had sung Varsity enjoyably many times, and that now they were asked merely to recall those great times silently. At this instant most of the coliseum lights were turned off (see Fig. 10 again). Then the orchestra played the University hymn—at the end of which the lights were turned back on. The Benediction followed. This drama has seemed delightful and worth continuing indefinitely as a fitting climax to commencement (def. 1).



Fig. 10 Commencement 1984, *Lights Out!*

We have completed the major developments of commencement (def. 1) through 1988 and need to focus on the development of the Baccalaureate after 1982. We will focus first on student honors as they probably affect commencement, then Opening Convocation after that.

PROGRAM ORDERSMU COMMENCEMENT EXERCISESSaturday, May 19, 1984

<u>9:35 A.M.</u>	Pre-Processional Concert – SMU Symphony Orchestra	<u>Approx. 20 Minutes</u>
<u>9:55 A.M.</u>	Proclamation Fanfare – Herald Trumpets	<u>Approx. 1 Minute</u>
<u>9:56 A.M.</u>	Fanfare for Common Man – Trumpet Choir	<u>Approx. 3 Minutes</u>
<u>10:00 A.M.</u>	Processional (Graduates) – SMU Symphony Orchestra	<u>Approx. 16 Minutes</u>
<u>10:16 A.M.</u>	Ceremonial Fanfare – Herald Trumpets and Trumpet Choir	<u>Approx. 1 Minute</u>
<u>10:17 A.M.</u>	Processional (Faculty) – SMU Symphony Orchestra	<u>Approx. 6 Minutes</u>

Invocation

National Anthem – Herald Trumpets and Trumpet Choir

Presentation by Senior Class

President's Statement

Introduction of Speaker

Commencement Address

Special Program Music – SMU Symphony Orchestra

Approx. 5 Minutes

Conferring of Degrees

Honorary Degrees

Proclamation Fanfare One – TrumpetsApprox. 15 Seconds

Law Degrees

Perkins School of Theology Degrees

President Confers

Proclamation Fanfare Two – TrumpetsApprox. 15 Seconds

Meadows – Graduate Degrees

Cox -- Graduate Degrees

Dedman -- Graduate Degrees

SEAS -- Graduate Degrees

President Confers

Proclamation Fanfare Three – TrumpetsApprox. 15 Seconds

Meadows – Undergraduate Degrees

Cox – Undergraduate Degrees

Dedman – Undergraduate Degrees

SEAS – Undergraduate Degrees

President Confers

Proclamation Fanfare Four – TrumpetsApprox. 15 Seconds

Most Lights Out

University Hymn – SMU Symphony Orchestra

Benediction

Recessional – SMU Symphony Orchestra

Approx. 10 Minutes

## CHAPTER IX

Beginning in 1983 the Baccalaureate service was always held in McFarlin on Friday night at 8:00 p.m. It was a considerably expanded one laid out in a 3-page foldout giving recognition to ushers, and Marshals for the last time. This enlarged service is compared with the previous ones below:

Previous: Prelude, processional, hymn, faculty, prayer, music, responsive reading, gloria, scripture lesson, speaker intro, sermon, benediction, recessional.

1983 change: prelude, processional, words of welcome, call to worship, litany of confession words of beatitudes and assurance, responses of thanksgiving, prayers for the illumination of scripture, first lesson, music, second lesson, introduction of the preacher, sermon, responsive prayer of thanksgiving and commitment, hymn, benediction, recessional.

Such a change used considerable wording understandable and readily applicable to students of these times even though continuing biblical stories with their times and settings. Much of this big change was continued.

The year 1983 brought a pleasant after-Baccalaureate addition: President's Farewell to the Class of 1983, with the symbolic (illumination of the incoming class's lantern, then the extinguishing of the outgoing class's lantern) passing of class leadership, and the singing of Varsity on the steps of Dallas Hall. The 1983 program continued through 1988, with a brass choir for music before the President's Farewell following the service. A reception in an open tent in front of Fondren Science building with music from the bells in the tower above enhanced the farewell, as they had warmed the call to the Baccalaureate service earlier.

## CHAPTER X

We are coming to closure on developments in Commencement (expanded def. 2) through 1988. But before closure, to the surprise of the writer in intense archival examination, it seems that perhaps we should not fail to add to the joys of Commencement (expanded def. 2) the public display (through Honors Day) of the students' honors. It is a surprise because it seems that most of us do not consider it (Honors Day) to be part of the expanded definition, yet surely the university has seen it as another effort to make the University attractive.

From the beginning most of the commencement programs at SMU had a section in which at least some of the graduates were "honored". Beginning in 1935 a separate convocation intended as an opportunity to honor the top-performing students started. Through 1940 this may have meant being listed as qualified at some level to graduate (of course the students so honored needed to attend commencement in that year to have the degree conferred), acceptance in a fraternity or sorority, receiving an award, or earning a scholarship without a stated standard other than "course" completions. A luncheon for seniors as Guests of the University followed. The 1948 program gave a scoring generally like: 2.75, A-; 2.7, high honors; 2.5, B+; 2.0, B with honors. The 1949 Honors Day program began the change of the scoring to the one in current use having a 4.0 GPA as the standard top score. By 1956 it was in general use. There were Honors Day convocations through 1971. From 1965 through 1972 there was an Honor Graduates insert in every Commencement program. An annual spring Honors Day program (not labeled a "Convocation") which began at least as early as 1976, and continued through 1982 was largely displaced later by Honor Graduates sections in the Commencement program, and in the Robert S. Hyer Society (formed in 1983) recognition honoring only University-wide awards and at the same time recognizing also those

students with GPAs of 4.0 for undergraduates. Individual schools were to be responsible for school or departmental awards at their Commencement-time ceremonies or (in 1983) at a special ceremony. These same standards continued in use through 1984 and 1985. But the 1985 Honors Day for students and parents was held in the Grand Ballroom with dinner, Meadows String Quartet, welcome, Provost remarks, and presentation of awards. By 1989 the Commencement program was full of all types of degree awards and included an insert displaying 1989 Honor Graduates! (“Back up insurance of public honoring.”)

## CHAPTER XI

We return to Opening Convocation developments beginning in 1977. The writer has detailed records of this particular and several successive opening sessions in the University's life. One cannot help but admire and applaud the substantial extra commitment of time and effort on the part of many faculty members toward supporting the opening convocation program aspirations to be described, i.e., enticing the new students to learning in a real sense.

The 1976 Opening Convocation program in McFarlin: prelude, processional, invocation, anthem, welcome, speaker presentation, address, benediction, and recessional—seems to have followed earlier patterns. The 1977 service added Varsity and opening Brass music and a program page including a presentation of The Academic Procession—a considerable expansion on the Colors section presented over many previous years.

The Orientation Committee of the Faculty Senate near the closing of the 1977 academic year made a proposal for better utilizing the 1977 Opening Convocation. The following is a paraphrase of the proposal, approved by the Senate, sent to the entire faculty, and planned for.

The Committee has two purposes in mind in suggesting this change: First, it is desired to make this “assembling of the University” the logical academic climax of the Freshman orientation program. Second, a late afternoon timing will enable us to follow up the Convocation itself with supper-and-discussion groups in the Student Center. The purpose of these groups will be to involve faculty, students, and administrative staff in the consideration of themes of common academic concern. They will sit down at separate tables in groups of some eight students and one or two faculty or staff, be served box suppers, and carry on their discussion session for perhaps an hour and a half.

It is the opinion of your Senate that the foregoing program is a worthwhile academic proposal from the Orientation Committee and that it deserves support. We hope you will agree. The Senate was pleased to learn that this activity is to replace former requests made on faculty time and effort during orientation week. We are advised further that the University will rent academic regalia for faculty. Details and instructions will be sent to you in August.

Of course, we all know that these events “succeed” sometimes and that sometimes they do not. When they do, we begin to build the spirit that enables students to appreciate our reasons for being here. When they don’t—well, experimentation is a major part of our academic lives! If this experiment does not work, we will not do it again.

There were over 110 faculty volunteers, most of whom were enthusiastic about continuing this facet of Opening Convocation. It was continued through 1981. By that year an upperclass student was included in each discussion group. Background reading ahead of time was also urged. Also in the invitation to the Convocation each student found a Walter Lippman article together with some questions about it for possible group consideration.

The year 1982 saw a continuation of the discussion-group sessions. This year the occasion was highlighted by 20 minutes of prelude music from a string ensemble on the McFarlin stage. Outside, a brass quintet just east of the Student Center played and provided a fanfare as a much different type of procession arrived south of the fountain en route to McFarlin.

This procession was developed by having students (1982-83 President’s Scholars) march in a column of twos to a designated spot just south of the fountain and stop. Then having the individual columns separate to allow an oncoming faculty column of twos to pass between the separated columns to the head of the column of students, and then stop. At that fanfare junction each student might link arms or walk along with the adjacent faculty column member, and thus form a column of fours. After a fanfare this column proceeded to McFarlin (See Fig. 11) as such a column, being separated into students and faculty groups at the entrance. Preliminary camaraderies would have been formed, if but for brief friendly moments. It seemed like a good thing and went well. The printed program listed 1982-83 Presidents Scholars.



Fig. 11 Opening Convocation Procession 1982

This listing disappeared in subsequent programs, but a new tradition was inaugurated in the 1983 Opening Convocation. The Presidents Scholars and University Scholars for 1983-84 marched and sat with the Faculties of the University as representatives of the incoming class of 1987. They were joined by upper-class students and graduate students with distinguished academic and leadership records. Columns of four (student, faculty, faculty, student) as in 1982 were formed as before. To enhance the ceremony, flags of the states lined the walkway and were carried into McFarlin appropriately by the honor students.

The writer observes that considerable progress has been and continues to be made toward realization of the goals that seemed evident from the start of this university and as mentioned in the introductory statements.