



GRADUATION PHOTO (above), taken in 1880, is the only known portrait of Ernest Cowell. He was president of his junior class, and a member of the baseball, football, rifle and track teams.

Ernest Cowell's remarkable revolving-fund scholarships

ERNEST VICTOR COWELL '80, son of early California land and cattle baron Henry V. Cowell, is best known to University students and alumni for his bequest of \$250,000 to establish a student infirmary at Berkeley. Today, Cowell Memorial Hospital houses Berkeley's student health services, providing treatment for some 24,300 University students every year.

Little is known about the life of Ernest Cowell. He was the only one of Cowell's five children to marry (Alice M. Bovyer '79), but, apparently had no children of his own. Ernest joined his father and only brother, Samuel "Harry" Cowell, in the operation of the family's lime and cement company after his graduation from the Berkeley campus in 1880.

Seven years before his death in 1911, Ernest Cowell undertook a unique project. He had given a great deal of thought to a dilemma: How can one provide for the immediate goal of a college education for a needy student without endangering the recipient's long-range moral attitudes and ambitions?

His answer: A self-perpetuating scholarship program, the benefits of which were not to be gifts; rather, they were to be long-term, interest-free loans of \$250 a year—or, \$1,000 per recipient, over a four-year period.

Officially known as "The Ernest V. Cowell Scholarships of the University of California," one scholarship was to be awarded each year, with preference given to graduates of Santa Cruz High School.

Until Cowell's death, the scholarship benefits were paid by Cowell, himself, through a board of five trustees which he picked. At the rate of \$250 a year—\$125 a semester—per recipient, Cowell planned to invest a total of \$20,000 in his program.

At their first meeting, in November, 1903, the five original trustees adopted a set of by-laws which were to become the criteria in determining students' qualifications for Cowell's scholarships: "Good character, high aims, and industrious habits. While scholarships will be a necessary element in making the award, the award must not be made as a prize for honors in examinations, and it is further understood that, without this assistance, a University course would, in each case, be impracticable."

A NOTE, appended to the original by-laws in 1916 and signed by Trustee Lillian A. Howard, further states that "Mr. E. V. Cowell, in many conversations with me on the subject of these scholarships, stated emphatically that the scholarships were established for boys. And, other requirements being equal, boys who were interested in athletics should be preferred. We have always respected his wish."

In a letter to the late W. E. Lynam '06, the award's first recipient, Cowell said:

"I am convinced that I have chosen a board of trustees who will do their utmost to develop the thinking powers and energies of those in their charge. If later on in your career, you can see that the opportunity given you has made you of some use to the world, may you take such an interest as would cause you to assist another in like way. That is all I ask."

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of Cowell's scholarship program was the fact that, although the perpetuation of his project depended upon repayment by the recipients, *no pledge was extracted to insure such repayment.*

Cowell, himself, was emphatic: "I believe that I am right, even against the judgment of others, when I do not pledge them to return the funds, or expect them to pay interest, but leave the matter and time entirely to them."

Open-hearted generosity and faith in their fellowman was a Cowell trait, and Ernest was no exception. "I saw and I knew the eagerness of others before I was ten years old. During my own time at Berkeley, as well as since, I have known and watched the struggles of many who have succeeded, and never, in all these years, has there been a year in which I have not known of some young man or woman who deserved the help which I am only too glad to bestow."

Once, on being told that recipients of his awards were hesitant to contact him directly, Cowell wrote: "I have been told more than once that the boys want to write or see me, but are rather afraid as they think I am too busy a man. I am never too busy to hear from them, or inquire



FIRST COWELL scholarship recipient was the late W. E. Lynam '06 (left, above). Carroll M. Lucas '10 (right, above), second scholarship winner, lives in Lafayette. At right, Dr. Ernest W. Cleary '09 holds a copy of the history of the Cowell Scholarships, compiled by Amos Elliott '12, upon which this article is based. With Dr. Cleary, during a recent reunion of Cowell Scholars held in Santa Cruz, are current scholarship holders, Alfred H. Yokota '67 (left) and Brock Elliott '67.

as to their welfare, and they are mistaken if they think they are forgotten on my part."

Cowell did not live to see the realization of his goal to personally invest \$20,000 in his scholarship fund. He died, while still in his early forties, only seven years after initiating his Santa Cruz scholarship program, and financial support temporarily ceased. The program resumed in 1917, six years after Cowell's death.

It is indefinite how much Cowell had personally invested in his project when he died. It probably was not more than \$7,200. Cowell's will provided an additional \$10,000—in addition to funds which financed the infirmary at Berkeley.

Cowell's faith in the "stamp" of his scholarship recipients was well placed, however, and amply justified. During the past 60 years, no less than 36 Cowell scholarships have been granted. Of these 36 recipients, 26 have received University degrees, three are currently on campus, and two others have temporarily dropped out.

As far as is known, not one award recipient has failed to repay the funds he received, even if it took him 20 or 30 years to do so. And, although there have been a total of 33 years in which no scholarship was given, for lack of available funds, this has been partially compensated for by awarding two scholarships in subsequent years. The fact remains, however, that Cowell's initial \$17,200 has financed \$36,000 worth of education for individuals who otherwise never would have gone to college.

It also is interesting to note that, although Cowell originally envisioned that the entire principal amount would be used as a revolving fund, recipients' returns to the fund and sound investments by the trustees have per-



Vester Dick

mitted accumulation of a total current principal of more than \$28,000, which provides an income of more than \$1,100 a year to support the program. This income, together with recipients' returns, enable the fund's current trustees to use the principal "as little as possible," and occasionally to add to it. The amount of each annual scholarship also has increased—from the original \$250, to \$450 a year.

Ernest Cowell had very definite ideas regarding qualifications for success. "The right kind of spirit," he said, "is bound to succeed, and whoever would give way easily is not of the kind that rises above the ordinary."

And, it would seem, Cowell's trustees have had a knack for picking "the kind that rises above the ordinary."

CARROLL M. LUCAS '10, second recipient of a Cowell scholarship and the oldest Cowell Scholar still living, studied electrical engineering at Berkeley, but, following graduation, joined his father in Idaho, where he helped in the family bank and newspaper. He became an accountant, and moved back to California, where he and his wife operated one of the state's first school-homes for handicapped and sub-normal children. He lives in Lafayette.

Ernest W. Cleary '09, with whose help much of the material in this story was obtained, is now 84 years old and lives in Burlingame. Dr. Cleary—subject of a book,

"Saga of a California Surgeon"—received his M.D. in 1912, and says his \$1,000 Cowell award was "a big boost toward my college education." From being the best oil well driller in California—at the age of 19—Cleary's career led him to become one of the nation's leading orthopaedic physicians and surgeons, and an avid wildlife conservationist.

William Leslie '10, now deceased, became one of the nation's great actuaries, and general manager of the National Bureau of Casualty Underwriters, during a career of more than 50 years.

Roy V. Crites '13 studied architecture at Berkeley, as well as participating in freshman and varsity track—specializing in the broad and high jumps. "This scholarship, which carried me through three years of college, up to its suspension due to the untimely death of its donor, was of inestimable value to me, and was directly responsible for my graduation as an honor student in architecture," he recalls.

Alfred Paget '22, a resident of Redondo Beach, is retired after 27 years as an accountant and administrative assistant with Union Oil Company.

Thomas Prescott '23, returned to Soquel, where he operated a resort for 21 years. He entered the real estate business in the Santa Cruz area in 1944 and still is active there.

Thomas Kimball '25 is currently listed as a "petroleum executive" in "Who's Who." Since 1960 he has been executive vice president and director of Sinclair Oil Company's parent (holding) company with responsibility for "all operations—foreign and domestic—including oil and gas

THIS ARTICLE is based on historical and biographical material collected by Amos Elliott '12, with the assistance of Dr. Ernest W. Cleary '09. Bound copies of this material have been given to Santa Cruz high school and Bancroft Library.

production, pipe lining, manufacturing, sales, petrochemicals, research, etc." Kimball lives in Connecticut.

L. Chace Grover '28 lives in San Francisco. He is organizer and owner of Chaver Trading and Chaver Mining Companies. He is director of the San Francisco Mental Health Association and of the Catholic Youth Organization. His career has included positions as assistant manager of American Express Company offices in Hong Kong; assistant director, Foreign Economic Administration; and conducting an economic survey of Pacific Trust Islands as a member of Admiral Chester Nimitz's staff during World War II.

Benjamin W. Viney '32 has spent the last 28 years with the California State Employment Service, 16 years of which has been as a Veterans Employment Representative in Inglewood.

Eugene "Tom" Cureton '34 has pursued an athletic coaching career, including four years (1942-46) as boxing coach at Berkeley. He currently is director of physical education and athletics at Fremont High School in Sunnyvale, a position he has held since 1951. "I have had a very full life, very happy — and somewhat successful. Thanks to Cowell."

Robert K. Moore '34 began his studies in education at Berkeley during the depths of the Depression. He has pursued a teaching career in Hawaii, and is principal of Waianae Elementary School.

Donald D. Hoover '32 studied agriculture and received his M.S. at Davis in truck crops. He worked for various seed companies until June 1952, when he was recalled to active duty with the U.S. Air Force. He is scheduled for retirement from the Air Force in 1967.

Dr. Earl S. Marshall received his D.D.S. from the University's College of Dentistry in 1938. He is currently practicing in San Fernando.

Arthur R. McLaughlin '39 received his bachelor's degree from the College of Commerce at Berkeley, as well as a Naval Reserve commission as an ensign. Recalled to active duty in 1940 and assigned to the heavy cruiser Astoria, he was promoted to lieutenant. Aboard the Astoria, he took part in all South Pacific naval engagements, except the Battle of the Java Sea. He was killed with all of his men at his battle station in 1942. The flag which draped his body was presented to Santa Cruz High School, where he had been an honor student and president of the student body.

Donald L. Stone only completed two years of University studies, dropping out for financial reasons. After a wartime career on limited military duty in radar operations and electrical engineering, he entered the real estate business in 1945. He is currently a successful homebuilder, realtor, mortgage banker and developer in Santa Clara County.

Ned R. Reed '42 received his B.S. in chemistry and worked as a research chemist on the Manhattan District Project under Glenn Seaborg and Wendell Latimer. From 1946-50, he taught chemistry as a methodist missionary representative in an American-type school in India. Re-

turning to the U.S. in 1950, he taught chemistry at San Francisco State College and physics at Piedmont High School. In 1953 he became a general contractor, and in 1958 returned to teaching as a chemistry instructor at Oakland City College.

Guy D. Mancarti '44 joined the California Division of Highways after receiving his civil engineering degree in 1947. Specializing in bridge design, he has worked on numerous Bay Area freeway structures and bridges, including the underwater Webster Street Tube in Oakland. He is currently a Senior Bridge Engineer, living in La Canada.

William F. Yockey '52 entered the University in 1940, but left college in 1942 to join the Naval Aviation Cadet program. Returning to Berkeley in 1949, under the G.I. Bill, he graduated in 1952 with a degree in civil engineering, and went to work for Douglas Aircraft Company, assigned to the missile testing program at White Sands, New Mexico. During the next ten years, he participated in the development of the nation's missile defense system.

Robert P. McCombs '52 is a partner in Hepner & McCombs, certified public accountants in Reno, Nevada.

Keith D. Bull '59 graduated with a B.S. in civil engineering and received his M.S. in structural engineering in 1960. He is currently engaged in structural designing in the Bay Area.

Kenneth J. Olsen '60 is currently serving with the United States Army in Europe.

Michael P. Kuffel '61 received his bachelor's degree in math at Berkeley and continued his studies toward a master's degree in business administration operations research. In addition to his Cowell scholarship, he worked his way through Berkeley by programming computers at Berkeley's Computer Center.

Roy N. Miyoko has dropped out of his electrical engineering courses in order "to earn money for school."

Noel DeDora '63 majored in zoology and was a member of the Cal Band for "three interesting years." He is working as a butcher and part owner of a meat market in Santa Cruz; however, he still has his two-year ROTC obligation to fulfill.

Ronald L. Budworth entered the Berkeley campus in 1959, but spent only one year there. After a year at San Jose City College and a year at San Jose State College, he is currently in his second year at San Jose State.

David Childers '65, Brock Sterling Elliott '67 and Alfred H. Yokota '67 are currently enrolled on the Berkeley campus. Raymond Lowry, the June 1962 recipient, is attached to the Military Police at the U.S. Army Training Command, Fort Gordon, Georgia.

Ernest Cowell's unique scholarship program was conceived in optimism and faith in the moral integrity of those he felt worthy of University educations. "While I may have mistaken human nature," he said, "I shall never consider the money lost. What better or safer foundation can you find than one established by an education granted to a deserving person, who otherwise would have gone without." His faith was not misplaced. ◀