In Memoriam
Chief William T. Jones
December 2, 1922 – May 10, 2009
Chief of Police from 1968 to 1988 at the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus

The University of Oklahoma Police Department, as we know it today, came into being in the fall of 1968 as a modernization of the OU “Fire and Safety Office”. William T. “Bill” Jones was hired as the Chief of Security on September 1, 1968 with a mandate to develop a professional police department. Chief Jones would go on to build one of the premiere campus police agencies in the United States.

The late ‘60s were a time of great unrest on college campuses across the country. Demonstrations against the War in Viet Nam and the government were commonplace and violence was beginning to crop up on some campuses. At the same time, there was upheaval in the form of civil rights advocacy, and diversification came to campuses which were completely unprepared for this radical change.

A campus-wide review, conducted for the transition of the OU presidency from Dr. George Lynn Cross to President Elect Herbert Holloman, concluded that OU’s existing security department was wholly inadequate to meet the emerging challenge.

Professor Sam Chapman put forth Jones’ name when a national search to fill the Chief of Security position was initiated. Chapman, formerly the Undersheriff of Oregon’s Multnomah County, had been brought to OU in 1967 to establish one of the nation’s first Law Enforcement Administration degree programs. Chapman founded the OU program, and guided it until 1991, when he retired. Jones had worked under Chapman as a supervisor at the Multnomah County, Oregon, Sheriff’s Office (MCSO).

Jones had served with distinction in the 41st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army in the South Pacific in World War II, having been seriously injured in Buna Mission, New Guinea, and spent nine months in a body cast in Darwin, Australia. Released from the service, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he began his 44-year law enforcement career at the City of Portland Police Bureau, where he served from 1943-45.

He then joined the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office police force in 1946, where he worked as a police officer and detective until 1968. As a detective at Multnomah County, after serving a tour in the homicide unit Jones worked as a Detective Sergeant in charge of Vice and Narcotics Enforcement, Bill was widely regarded as one of the top narcotics detectives in the Pacific Northwest. He was an exceptionally experienced and well-trained professional. His last posting at the MCSO was a Lieutenant in charge of the combined intelligence and vice unit.

Before joining OUPD Jones was hired in February of 1968 as a professional police consultant by the city of Pasco, WA to begin an organization and management study of the Pasco police department in response to a dramatic racial upheaval in Pasco.
Once at OU, Jones approached his campus job as one of service rather than repression. In a massive change in operation and philosophy, the 50-man OU force began to stock its patrol cars with jumper cables, emergency gasoline for stalled cars and first aid equipment, presenting a helpful mien to students. When the occasion called for a less confrontational approach, officers donned red blazers in lieu of traditional uniforms, identifiable but not provocative. Jones impressed upon his officers the concept expressed as a slogan on OU’s distinctive red-and-white patrol cars: “To Serve and Protect”. It was an affirmation of Jones’ overarching philosophy for OUPD.

Instituting rigorous officer assessment and qualification programs, Jones gathered the best available police officers, including recruiting students out of Chapman’s Law Enforcement Administration program. In fairly short order, the entire agency underwent a remarkable transformation and became one of the most progressive campus law enforcement agencies in the country.

Jones attracted not only exemplary students of law enforcement, but also a talented mix of individuals who brought exceptional intellect, skill and enthusiasm to the agency. He strongly encouraged innovation, change and initiative, which was rather radically different from traditional law enforcement management.

His recruitment was proven exceptionally sound when numerous officers who had served at OUPD went on to very successful careers in municipal, county, state and federal law enforcement as well as administrative and management positions with other campus law enforcement agencies and a number of quite successful private enterprise careers.

Bill Jones guided the OU Police Department for twenty years, retiring as Director of Public Safety at the University of Oklahoma in February, 1988.
The University of Oklahoma Police Department

1972
Okie Miles, VP Gene Nordby, and Bill Jones

One of the many memorable Bill Jones pre-game football inspections, this one attended by VP Art Elbert and CLEET Director K.O. Rayburn.
Chief Jones with Mike Duff and Connie Duffield of OUPD sponsored Explorer Post 218.