


Kate Galt Zaneis: First Lady of Education  
in Oklahoma

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## CHAPTER I

### Kate Galt Zaneis, The First Lady of Education in Southeastern Oklahoma

Kathrine Benton Galt was born to James Edward and Miriam Otis Galt on February 17, 1887, in a brick house near Springplace, Georgia. She was the fourth of eight children. The young couple had been married in Springplace but had moved to Oklahoma during Indian Territory days. Each time Miriam Galt became pregnant, she returned to Springplace to have her child, which was the custom of the Galt family. Once the child was born, mother and child would return to their home in Ardmore, Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup>

Kate Galt's ancestry goes back to Sir Francis Drake on her maternal side and to the Galts of Denmark on the paternal side. Her grandfather on the Galt side was Edward M. Galt, former commander of Company I, First Georgia Regiment of the Confederate Army. The E. M. Galts were pioneer residents of Ardmore, and many family members became prominent citizens. Judge John Lafayette Galt, Kate's uncle, was the first mayor of Ardmore and a member of the Oklahoma Legislature. His son, Edward M.

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret Lee Harrington, personal interview, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 23, 1975. Other members of the Galt family include, from oldest to youngest; Ann Elizabeth Dennis, John McDonald who died when he was thirteen, another boy who died an infant, Kathrine Benton, Mattice Jennett who lived only six months, Margaret Lee Harrington, Andrew Tabor, and William Thomas.

Galt, cousin to Kate Galt became a leading figure in the Oklahoma Oil industry.<sup>2</sup>

James Edward Galt was a carpenter and contractor. The family lived in the town and kept several animals and a garden. Since the home was a short distance from the railroad yards, the Galts established a boarding house for railroad employees and served meals to many who did not room there.<sup>3</sup>

Kate, as a young girl played with and made dresses for dolls which had been handmade by her father. She helped her mother with the baking, cleaning, and other homemaking tasks. Having been an instructor before marriage, Miriam Galt was able to give her children a basic education at home. Much of their early learning was received while seated around the kitchen table at family gatherings.<sup>4</sup>

It was during this early period that Kate Galt became interested in education. Her favorite game was to line up the neighborhood children on chairs in the backyard and instruct them in the three "r's". Should any of the other youngsters desire to be the teacher, young Kate would turn the position over to them and leave the group, apparently showing little interest in playing pupil. Her association with the neighborhood children

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and It's People (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1929), III, pp. 467-468.

<sup>3</sup>Harrington interview. The Galts ran the boarding house for approximately ten years.

<sup>4</sup>Robbie Pitts, "Kate Galt Zaneis," Ardmore Rodeo Program, July, 1972, p. 27.

in play school may have given her the experience which was responsible for her desire to become a political leader.<sup>5</sup>

On entering public school Kate Galt gained a reputation as a top student. She engaged in many school activities which included acting as the librarian since the school could not afford to hire one. She also served as editor of The Criterian, the Ardmore High School newspaper, and worked in the English Department.<sup>6</sup>

Kate Galt was active in drama and forensics. She won first place for her class in the Moot Congress Debates, this enabled her to represent her school at the regional contest held in the Robinson Opera Hall. During her senior year she played the lead role of "Ida" in Lord Alfred Tennyson's "The Princess".<sup>7</sup> Although active in such events, she volunteered to work with the younger students at the school and was given the job of substitute teacher.

Because of Kate Galt's interest in education, Dr. Charles Evans, Superintendent of Schools, presented her with a special gift from the faculty and student body for her graduation in 1907. After explaining to Kate that the gift represented the school's appreciation for her interest in school affairs and her time spent with extracurricular

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<sup>5</sup>Andrew Tabor Galt, personal interview, Norman, Oklahoma, June, 1975.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Evans, A Grief Review of the Life, Educational Activities and Public Service of Kate Galt Zaneis, Mimeograph, n.d. Dr. Charles — Evans notes on the title page that he was a former prssident of Central State College and of Edmond and Kendall College in Tulsa, which is now known as Tulsa University. He was the editor of the Chronicals of Oklahoma and a life long follower of Mrs. Zaneis. As director of the Oklahoma Historical Society he traveled extensively giving lectures and writing articles.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

activities, Dr. Evans then stated to the audience that "teachers were born and not made and Kate Galt was one of those who was born to lead."<sup>8</sup> Evidence of his belief in this statement is to be found in the fact that he offered her a fulltime teaching position without requiring her to enter college.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to being a good student and active in social events, friends described her as having "extreme good looks." According to one account, she was a "tall statuesque blonde with long hair done up in a braid but fluffed in the front" and "was well-proportioned and wore heavy blues that accented her hair." This same observer also noted that her "flamboyant style made her look like a model."<sup>10</sup> Attesting further to her good looks was the story told by her brother of a carnival coming to Ardmore while she was in high school. According to the account, one of the carnival workers was exceptionally handsome, and all the girls decided to make a game out of seeing who would be the first to get a date with him. Kate Galt won the honor, but she was unable to fulfill her commitment to the young man because her father, having learned of the episode through her brother Tabor, refused to let her keep the date and, instead, gave her a stern lecture about "keeping to her own kind." He further warned her that "she would end up married to the same type person that she dated."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Tabor Galt interview. This was possible in 1907 since the state did not require a degree to teach in the public schools until many years later.

<sup>10</sup>Marion Severance, personal interview, Durant, Oklahoma, June 23, 1975.

<sup>11</sup>Tabor Galt interview.

Kate Galt did get married, but the union was terminated shortly. She met her husband, Hiram Prince Zaneis, in 1910 while he was coming to the Galt home for his meals. He was working on the Rock Island Railroad as a fireman, and she was living at home but teaching school in Carter County. They did not get married immediately, however, but waited until three years later when she was in Knoxville, Tennessee. They then returned to live in Wirt, Oklahoma, where Hiram Zaneis worked in the oil fields, but the marriage ended in divorce after two years.<sup>12</sup> There were no children and Kate Galt Zaneis, as she continued to call herself, returned to teaching.

Except for her sojourn with marriage, Kate Galt Zaneis continued to be associated with education. Her first teaching job had been at Lincoln Ward School in Ardmore where she served as the principal, janitor, and teacher. Her younger brother Tabor was in her English Expression class and she frequently used him to keep discipline in the class by bearing down on him harder than the others. When Tabor complained of this to his mother, his sister admitted that she was making an example of him with respect to the rest of the class. "I really did not mind," Tabor related later in life, as "I knew how she was; school was her whole life."<sup>13</sup>

Kate Galt Zaneis became known not only as a good disciplinarian, but one who loved her students and would do anything she could to help them learn. This fondness for her students was reflected in poetry as she,

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid. Hiram Prince Zaneis was born in Illinois to a railroad family. His father had been a maintenance man on water supply for the T.P.W. railroad. Neither Hiram Zaneis nor Kate Zaneis remarried. Hiram Zaneis died of cancer in 1939.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.



quite often, wrote a poem in which she recalled some pleasant experience with a student.<sup>14</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis taught in Carter County for seventeen years. Her first full-time position was at Lincoln Ward School. From there, she moved to several positions within the county, teaching English and Spanish in the Ardmore and Healdton schools. In 1915 she became superintendent of Lone Grove High School and Rexroat Consolidated School, both small school districts within the county.<sup>15</sup> At this time various normal schools had a policy of using guest teachers during their summer school terms. They would extend invitations to superintendents of area schools to come to the campus to teach one class. The visiting superintendents usually brought several of their followers with them. It was hoped that they would recommend potential students and thus increase enrollment.<sup>16</sup> This was the practice at Southeastern State Normal School when Kate Galt Zaneis was invited in 1917 to teach a course in school law. She accepted and became so impressed with the school that she later selected Southeastern to do her undergraduate work.<sup>17</sup>

On returning to Carter County, Kate Galt Zaneis became active in politics. Her brief visit to the college campus had broadened her horizons. She realized that many changes in the educational design were necessary if Oklahoma were to raise its level of education. She

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>Allen Crutcher, Southeastern Teachers College 1935-1936 Handbook (Durant, Oklahoma: Southeastern Teachers College, 1935), VII, p. 8; Tabor Galt interview.

<sup>17</sup>Tabor Galt interview.

recognized the disadvantages of the one-room school and campaigned in favor of consolidation, which many parents disliked because of the idea of sending their children away from their homes on a school bus.<sup>18</sup>

Public anger became evident when an election was held to determine the consolidation of a school near Wilson and Healdton. Mrs. Zaneis, as an advocate of consolidation in the area, discovered that she was unpopular. Threats were made toward her, and the sheriff found it necessary to send deputies to stand guard and insure her safety. Nevertheless, she continued her drive to combine several schools into one. She became the "virtual mother of the consolidated school system in Carter County."<sup>19</sup> Her groundwork was the forerunner in eliminating the one-room schools from the state.

Running on the Democratic ticket, Mrs. Zaneis was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction for Carter County in 1920. Opposition to electing a lady superintendent was great. One man asked her what she would do if a large boy should give her a problem. In response to the question, an observer, in recalling the event years later, stated that she drew herself to her full five feet, nine inches and asked him: "What would you do if you had a problem with a girl?"<sup>20</sup>

Once in office, she fought for equal rights for Negroes. At the time when most blacks were not considered worthy of an education, she was striving for equal toilet facilities and school buildings.<sup>21</sup> As

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<sup>18</sup>Eugene Slaughter, personal interview, Durant, Oklahoma, June 2, 1975.

<sup>19</sup>Pitts, "Kate Galt Zaneis," p. 27.

<sup>20</sup>Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, March 4, 1973.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

superintendent she displayed extraordinary skills in handling her school board. Members of the board, who shared the conservative views of that time, refused to consider any teaching candidate that displayed the current trend of bobbed hair.<sup>22</sup> Although the Superintendent's long blonde hair had never been cut, she was not disturbed by an applicant with short hair. When a particularly promising prospect with short blonde hair placed her application, Mrs. Zaneis took her aside. She explained the feelings of the board about bobbed hair and made a suggestion. It seems that a few years earlier Mrs. Zaneis had been ill and a lot of her hair had fallen out. Her mother had saved a large quantity, and it was nearly the same color as the young teacher's hair. With the help of Mrs. Galt, the three were able to fashion it into coils. When the young lady was introduced to the school board, her bobbed hair was concealed and they hired her. She spent the next two years teaching in Carter County; and, as far as anyone knew, the schoolboard never realized she was wearing a hairpiece at the time she applied for the job.<sup>23</sup>

Dealing with a conservative school board was just one of the tasks which Mrs. Zaneis encountered. While serving as Superintendent of Schools in Carter County, she was appointed to the Citizens Committee on Education for Remedial Legislation, becoming the only teacher on the five member panel. The group made trips to other states to study various kinds of educational systems. In so doing, they combined their findings obtained in other states with their study of school conditions in Oklahoma and then recommended changes in the school laws. An example of their work as well as a definite contribution toward better school financing was their

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<sup>22</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

help in framing House Bill 212 which ended noncashable warrants. While a member of the committee, Mrs. Zaneis also initiated the school lunch program which instigated the training program on mass feeding techniques at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.<sup>24</sup>

The study made by the Citizen's Committee gave Mrs. Zaneis the fundamentals needed to assist in the consolidation of schools in Carter County where she spent many eighteen-hour days working towards redistricting the area schools. In the initial redistribution, she organized and helped thirteen high schools to receive accreditation. One of the schools she organized covered sixty square miles and was named Zaneis School in her honor. When the school was opened to the public, in November of 1921, H. E. Kimbrell, Director of Consolidated District Number 72, addressed a letter to the community in which he stated: "In naming our school 'Zaneis', we do it out of appreciation to Mrs. Kate Galt Zaneis, County Superintendent, whose earnest and untiring efforts have not only brought to the children of our district, but to our entire county a higher standard of schools."<sup>25</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis worked to keep the new districts running smoothly. She used her position as Superintendent of Schools to keep the public informed. In this respect, she designed a book similar to a yearbook that would benefit the image of the newly consolidated districts. She created a journal that could be used as an advertisement to convince other counties to consolidate as well as an avenue of expression for the Carter County Schools. The book was titled The Journal of Carter County Schools and

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<sup>24</sup>Charles Evans, ~~A Brief~~ Review, p. 4. —

<sup>25</sup>Kate Galt Zaneis, Journal of Carter County Schools (Dallas: Hargreaves Printing Co., 1923), p. 10.

contained a collection of materials gathered while she served four years as Superintendent. In the preface she wrote her reasons for publishing the book. She said she wanted "to show that Carter County's greatest investment was not its oil, but the boys and girls for whom the Oil King was helping to prepare future citizenship;.. ."26

The journal , published in 1923, gave evidence that centralized schools benefited all people. It gave concrete examples with photographs of fully organized and accredited schools such as Berwyn, Fox, Rexroat and Zaneis. Money to cover the \$10,000 publishing costs for the journal came from twelve Carter County citizens.<sup>27</sup> To those people she dedicated a poem called "Gratitude" from which the following passages are taken:

The Teachers' Association met in the Fall  
 Endorsed my publishing the book and that was not all--  
 They added some stories, pictures and rules  
 In completing the Journal of Carter County Schools.  
 Then followed the Clubs--Chamber of Commerce with aid,  
 Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and Ryonis Maid  
 Sent words of approval , endorsement and said,  
 "We help--publish the book--and you'll make no mistakes  
 To mail copies to other Counties and States."  
 Then individuals the purpose read  
 Believed in the Foreword and sincerely said:  
 "Publish the Journal, we've encouragement to give  
 To the interest of schools as long as we live."  
 Merchants and firms brought smiles to our faces  
 When they asked for advertising spaces.  
 Thus from these sources and the sale of the book  
 Funds were realized and we undertook  
 What somebody said couldn't be done,  
 You--have helped--the victory is won! ....  
 We sum it all up in our humble "Thank you,"  
 And lay it at the feet of not a few  
 Who have seen in this educational theme  
 Encouragement for many a noble dream.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>~~Ibid.~~, Preface. The original of the Journal was given to Joann Baum, Ardmore, a long time friend of Mrs. Zaneis. A copy can be seen in the Ardmore Public Library.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.; Pitts, "Kate Galt Zaneis," p. 27.

<sup>28</sup>Zaneis, Journal. For the complete text of the poem see Appendix I.

Following her term as Superintendent of Carter County Schools she enrolled in Southeastern Teacher's College in 1922. She continued her college work until she graduated in 1926 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.<sup>29</sup> During this time she was active in the Oklahoma Education Association, becoming a life member in 1931.<sup>30</sup> She also took part in the functions of the National Education Association and gave speeches on the topics of education.

In addition to furthering her own education, Mrs. Zaneis became a member of the County Excise Board and continued to assist the local schools in every way she could. At the same time, she did not neglect her work with the Methodist Church. Having been a member since her youth, she continued to take part in the evening service. She also attended all the church conventions and taught Sunday School.<sup>31</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis's father died in February of 1924, and it was at this time that she established a relationship with Pearl Brent, a young girl who was to become a major part of her life. Kate Galt Zaneis was teaching school at the time and, upon discovering that the young lady had a great desire to learn, suggested to her mother that they hire her as their housekeeper. Kate's mother readily agreed, and they became so attached to "Miss Pearl", as they fondly called her, that they wanted her to become a permanent part of the home. They were able to convince the girl's mother that she would be able to attend a better school if she were to

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•• Transcript, Administrative Office, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, Oklahoma.

<sup>30</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup>Harrington interview.

come and live with them. After James Galt's death, the three women resided together at the family home at 117 Stanley, with Pearl becoming a nurse and companion to the two women.<sup>32</sup> As their housekeeper she also helped make it possible for them to live in the formal style they desired such as setting the table with linen and fresh flowers. Even at breakfast she used linen napkins and formal settings.<sup>33</sup>

Pearl was more than just a household servant to Mrs. Zaneis as she, in time, became her best friend and confidant. An acquaintance of the two commented that Pearl Brent "worshipped the ground that Mrs. Zaneis walked on being a literal slave to her." Believing Kate's work was "too important to be bothered with such mundane things as house cleaning," Pearl did all the cooking and even washed out Mrs. Zaneis' underclothes.<sup>34</sup> The association of the two lasted forty-two years, and Pearl Brent tried to keep things running smoothly by assisting Kate in her capacity as a teacher, student, school superintendent, and in her involvement in politics.

After her graduation from Southeastern in 1926, Mrs. Zaneis continued to teach in Carter County, being there in 1934 when the effects

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<sup>32</sup>Tabor Galt related the particulars of his father's death in February of 1924. James Galt had attended a memorial service for his brother earlier in the day. On returning home, he set out to do the chores. After milking the cow and delivering milk to a neighbor, he returned home feeling ill. His wife called the doctor who could find nothing wrong and suggested that depression over the memorial service might be the problem. As James Galt began to undress for bed he stopped with one arm still in it's sleeve, turned to his wife and said "goodbye" and passed away.

<sup>33</sup>Joann Baum, personal interview, Ardmore Library, Ardmore, Oklahoma, June 3, 1976.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

of the depression caused the school finances to become very unstable. Teachers were being paid with warrants which were issued by the school system as a promise to pay when funds became available. Such warrants were not negotiable in the community, and banks, being the only clearing houses available, charged a discount percentage.<sup>35</sup> This made a deep cut into the already small salaries of the state's teachers. On becoming frustrated with attempts to cash such warrants, Mrs. Zaneis made an impromptu speech on Main Street in Ardmore in which she condemned the use of warrants for almost one hour. She urged people to put a governor in office who would do something for the educational system. E. W. Marland was running for governor, and she felt that he would serve the teachers' needs.<sup>36</sup>

This speech was brought to the attention of the gubernatorial hopeful who asked Mrs. Zaneis to join his political clan. Accepting his invitation, she made speeches in his behalf and convinced many of her own followers that a vote for Marland was a vote for education. She later became his campaign manager in Carter County and covered much of southern Oklahoma giving speeches for him. Marland, on being elected governor in 1934, thanked Mrs. Zaneis for her work by commenting that he would not have been elected if it were not for her.<sup>37</sup> Tabor Galt had been Mrs. Zaneis's chauffeur during Governor Marland's campaign. In

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<sup>35</sup>Daily Oklahoman, March 4, 1973.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Tabor Galt interview.



recalling the occasion, he stated that Marland had asked Kate what she would like if he should win the election. According to Tabor, his sister made a quick response by saying, "President of Southeastern."<sup>38</sup> Such an appointment was possible at that time since college presidencies were handed out as political rewards to those persons who had assisted the candidate to win his office.<sup>39</sup>

Once in office, Marland did reward her with jobs of a political nature such as seeking her services as a substitute speaker on programs that he could not attend.<sup>40</sup> It was not long, however, until he named her to the State Board of Education.<sup>41</sup> The membership gave Mrs. Zaneis a chance to pursue her goal of raising the qualifications of Oklahoma teachers. Not only was she successful in that regard, but she reestablished the custom of allowing sabbatical leave with pay.<sup>42</sup> This allowed faculty members to work on a higher degree or on advance study without loss of income.

During the same period that she held membership on the Board of Education, she was also attending college. She was working on her master's degree at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, which later became Oklahoma State University. Her thesis, "A Proposed Plan to Reorganize and Refinance the Public Schools of Oklahoma", was an

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>James Morrison, personal interview, Durant, Oklahoma, June 20, 1975.

<sup>40</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup>Daily Ardmoreite, September 11, 1973.

<sup>42</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 6.

outgrowth of her work with the Citizens Committee on Education. She wrote in the preface that it was submitted in the hope that each county would elect a school board instead of having the school districts select them.<sup>43</sup>

As a member of the State Board of Education, she put her views to work by stressing the importance of school consolidation. Being on the Board also enabled her to have access to the facts and funds necessary to complete the thesis, and she graduated with a Master of Science degree on May 24, 1935.<sup>44</sup>

Just five days prior to her graduation she resigned her post as a member of the Board of Education; it was assumed that she stepped down from one position so that she would be eligible for another. In commenting on her resignation, the Daily Ardmore suggested that she might be appointed President of Central Oklahoma Teachers College, since she had made it known that she wanted to be the president of a college but no one knew with which school she would become affiliated.<sup>45</sup>

On the same day that she received her Master's degree at Stillwater, Governor Marland, with the approval of the Board of Education, a board

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<sup>43</sup>Kate Galt Zaneis, "A Proposed Plan to Reorganize and Refinance the Public Schools of Oklahoma," (unpublished master's thesis, Southeastern Oklahoma State University Library, Durant, Oklahoma), preface.

<sup>44</sup>Daily Ardmore, March 11, 1935.

<sup>45</sup>Daily Ardmore, April 19, 1935.

from which she had resigned only five days before, appointed her President of Southeastern Teachers College.<sup>46</sup> While the appointment was purely political, it was a major step in the career of Mrs. Zaneis, since no other woman had ever served as president of a four year college.<sup>47</sup>

At the time of the appointment, Kate Galt Zaneis was forty-one years of age, but she was described by those who knew her as still being very beautiful. A friend remembered that her hands were always "perfectly manicured" and the nails "polished red."<sup>48</sup> Another friend stated that her clothes were both "tastefully tailored and flamboyant."<sup>49</sup> It seems she was never seen in public without a hat, always wearing one of the popular floppy style which covered her blond hair, braided so that it "formed a golden frame around her face."<sup>50</sup> In recalling some of her other traits, other contemporaries stated that she carried herself with an erectness that "seemed to command attention" which was further enhanced by her strong voice and excellent use of the English language.<sup>51</sup> She could speak well on any subject but always seemed to turn the topic around to the problems of education. She enjoyed being a political figure, giving speeches, and taking part in a variety of social organizations.

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<sup>46</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup>Southeastern, May 22, 1935; Durant Daily Democrat, May 20, 1935; Daily Ardmoreite, May 23, 1935.

<sup>48</sup>Baum, interview.

<sup>49</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>50</sup>Daily Oklahoman, March 4, 1973.

<sup>51</sup>Baum, Tabor Galt, and Severance interviews.

Her appointment as President of Southeastern Teachers College came at a time when she was full of goals for Oklahoma's educational system. She had accomplished a great deal for Carter County and was eager to try to help develop better teachers. She realized that her tenure at Southeastern might last only during Marland's governorship, but it was a challenge she was ready to accept.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Harrington interview.

CHAPTER II

Accomplishments as President at  
Southeastern Teachers College

When Kate Galt Zaneis was appointed President of Southeastern Teachers College, it was a small institution of higher education founded in 1909. It was located in Durant, Oklahoma, just seventeen miles from the Red River and the Texas border. The campus covered twenty-eight acres of what had previously been hilltop peach orchards.<sup>1</sup> Prospective teachers took course work on campus and received actual teaching experience at Russell Training School, a primary school administered by the college. The students came to Russell from nearby Durant, and the teachers were college students directed by college professors.

Oklahoma was divided into six districts, each served by a teachers college.\* Southeastern was established to serve the people in the area surrounding Durant. Boundaries of the district were based on the railroad lines of the early 1900's, but by the time Mrs. Zaneis took over the administration of Southeastern, roads were the major arteries of the

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<sup>1</sup>"Co-ed Graduate Succeeding in Oklahoma's Toughest Education Job," The Literary Digest, Vol. 123 (February 13, 1937), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Southeastern Teachers College Bulletin, 1935-1936 (Durant: Southeastern Teachers College, 1935), p. 6.

state, and Durant had grown to a town of 7,500 people.<sup>3</sup> Southeastern Teachers College was considered by many members of the state legislature to be poorly located. That situation, coupled with the fact that it was forced to operate on a low budget, made it unattractive to most persons aspiring to be college presidents for they generally looked toward the other five teachers colleges in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Previous to the appointment of Mrs. Zaneis, Wade Shumate had been president of the college. He had been well liked by faculty and the description was traceable, undoubtedly, to an absence of money since most of Southeastern's problems could be solved with additional funds.<sup>5</sup> The buildings were in disrepair with their roofs leaking and their mortar crumbling. The budget had been exceeded, and the school owed local businesses nearly \$1,500.00. The economy in the area was depressed with twenty-seven per cent of the area's families on relief. Enrollment was low, and the curriculum limited to teacher preparation.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these problems, Kate Galt Zaneis accepted the presidency and began her administration. Upon learning of her appointment, which was the same day she received her master's degree at Stillwater, she telephoned Durant and asked Dr. Everett Fixley, then head of the Department of Education and Professional School, to take charge of the college until she could arrange her affairs and transfer to Durant. With a

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<sup>3</sup>Literary Digest, Vol. 123 (February 13, 1937), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Southeastern, May 1, 1935.

<sup>6</sup>State Department of Libraries, Archives and Records Department, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Southeastern File.

of Commerce and lasted from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. The club room was decorated in pink with roses and gardenias on the walls.<sup>10</sup> Magnolia blossoms and roses decked the mantle, and trellises of climbing roses adorned both ends of the room. Each table was graced by a solitary magnolia floating in a punch bowl, a symbol of Southeastern Teachers College and its Magnolia Campus.<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis wore a quilted white silk dress and a white summer fur. There was a background of orchestra music, and local talent presented several musical numbers. Toastmaster of the affair was Henry G. Bennett. He had been president of both Southeastern and Oklahoma A. and M., the two schools attended by Mrs. Zaneis. Guests included representatives from nearly every club and social organization in the community.

A banquet was held in her honor at 7:00 p.m. that evening. It had originally been scheduled for the Bryan Hotel, now known as the Goldcrest Inn at 101 W. Main Street, but the number of tickets purchased forced it to be switched to larger facilities in the college gymnasium. Nearly 500 persons attended with some having come from as far away as Oklahoma City and Stillwater. The college newspaper, The Southeastern, reported that hundreds were turned away due to lack of seating.<sup>12</sup> Among those present were Governor Marland and his wife.

Mrs. Zaneis, backed by relatives, stood at the head of the receiving line. Smartly dressed in a brown dress, a fingertip coat, and brown hat, she greeted the arriving guests for almost an hour. Later, stepping away from the line and out in the center of the gymnasium, she addressed

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<sup>10</sup>Southeastern, May 29, 1935.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

the crowd: "As I stand between my first teacher, my mother, and the man who conferred my first degree.. I come to Durant to accept the greatest task I have ever undertaken.. .."<sup>13</sup> She went on to explain that Southeastern was "not a new love but an old one...." where she had spent some of the happiest moments of her life. In closing, she explained what she felt her duties would be as college president:

I have a conception of the great responsibility which I have accepted and to which I dedicate my life. I have already dedicated my life to education; now I dedicate it anew to the task of teaching those who are to teach our children...I dedicate my life to Southeastern to make it an institution of greater usefulness.<sup>14</sup>

She stated that she intended to increase the number of students enrolled and that she was there with a definite program. She closed with a poem which included the line: "Success does not mean that you have attained any particular position; Success means that you have lived well."<sup>15</sup>

Community reception of the new president was extremely favorable. E. M. Evans in an editorial in the Durant Weekly News described her as "a woman who shook hands like a man and who inspired us with belief in her enthusiasm and her determination."<sup>16</sup> An article in an Oklahoma City newspaper shows her in a more personable light. She was quoted as saying:

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<sup>13</sup>Mrs. Zaneis was referring to Henry G. Bennett as the man who conferred her Bachelor's degree at Southeastern, he was the college president in 1926.

<sup>14</sup>Southeastern, May 29, 1935.

<sup>15</sup>Durant Daily Democrat, May 22, 1935.

<sup>16</sup>Reprint from Durant Weekly News in Southeastern, February 3, 1937.



I have lived and worked in southeastern Oklahoma for so many years, that I know practically everybody and they all know me. I think I'll succeed or fail in this job on its own merits, without the fact that I'm the only woman to head a state college, being involved.<sup>17</sup>

Vera Eppler, a student at Southeastern, was impressed with the strength and determination of Kate Galt Zaneis. She wrote the following poem reflecting the way she felt that the school looked at its new president.

She's a woman--  
 Fair, fragile, tender;  
 Tip your hat,  
 Present to her your chair.  
  
 Enthroned with power she stands,  
 Firm guiding forces  
 Of the men:  
 She's a woman.<sup>18</sup>

With the social activities behind her, Mrs. Zaneis began setting up the mechanics of her administration. She appointed Everett Fixley Dean of Students and, immediately, encountered a multitude of criticism. It was alleged that Mrs. Zaneis had been instructed to select the current director of the training school, R. R. Tompkins as Dean of Students. Instead, she chose Everett Fixley who, despite his high academic training, his dynamic personality, and his reputation for being an outstanding teacher, was the subject of much local gossip. One of the more perverse rumors was to the effect that he had met his wife at a wife swapping

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<sup>17</sup>Daily Oklahoman, August 10, 1936.

<sup>18</sup>Southeastern, December 9, 1935.

party in San Antonio. Since allegations of this kind pertained to his morals, his critics felt that he was a poor choice for a position that would have direct influence on the students.<sup>19</sup>

Many persons closely concerned with the affairs of Southeastern expressed apprehension over Fixley's promotion and gave little support to Kate Galt Zaneis from the start. As she progressed in her job, she produced more criticism by recommending changes that many considered radical, thereby enlarging the number of people who were dissatisfied with her work.

Although she told an interviewer that she was "going to go slow instead of radical... ", her first day on the job started with a flourish.<sup>20</sup> Her offices were filled with flowers, and her orders were just as abundant. "Let's clean up this place," she told the custodian. This instigated a thorough housecleaning which resulted in cleaning up the campus. She had flowers placed on the office desks and library tables, a custom followed for years.<sup>21</sup>

One of the first things she did in her new job was to call a faculty meeting for the express purpose of equalizing pay. The state legislature had shaved the minimum appropriations in the annual education budget. Salaries were to be cut twelve thousand dollars and other spending curtailed. Mrs. Zaneis realized that the faculty was being paid on

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<sup>19</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. ; Southeastern, March 1, 1937.

a varied scale with women receiving much less than the men. She was expected to cut the amount of money spent on wages but, she also wanted to make the pay scale fair.<sup>22</sup>

Most of her staff were not aware of the budget cuts. When she called the meeting, it was believed that she would simply be raising the pay of the women. She explained that the women were only getting around \$140.00 a month with the highest salary, \$225.00, going to a man. Mrs. Zaneis said that she felt everyone should make at least \$ 50.00 a month. Everyone agreed with her. Wages had been a touchy subject ever since pay was cut at the onset of the depression. Several top men had been making \$300.00 a month. One man, perhaps eager to impress his new boss, stood up and announced that he was behind Mrs. Zaneis one hundred per cent.<sup>23</sup> Little did he realize what she would say next. She continued by explaining that \$180.00 would be the most paid and \$150.00 the least paid. This upset the majority of the faculty members. The women felt ill at ease having received a pay raise at the expense of their male colleagues. Mrs. Zaneis further complicated things when she sent out a letter the next day. In it she explained that at the meeting she had made a mistake, and she wanted them to know that Professor Thomas Allen Houston would be getting even less than originally stated.<sup>24</sup> The question of equal pay was probably one of the first things that undermined her power at Southeastern since it alienated most of the faculty men.

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<sup>22</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

Besides cutting salaries, Mrs. Zaneis made some changes in staff. She raised professional requirements and removed those who lacked a master's degree. Most of these she replaced with professors brought in from distant areas. George F. Totten was brought in from Michigan to be head of the speech department. He had received his degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.<sup>25</sup> She hired C. F. Daily to head the training school, promoting him at the same time to Professor of Education. In addition, she appointed him Dean of Men. Daily received his doctorate at the University of Oklahoma.<sup>26</sup>

She created hard feelings when she replaced E. Martin Haggard who had taught foreign language at Southeastern since his teens. She supposedly told an acquaintance that although she liked Haggard personally, he had too many lady friends. Two Ardmoreites were hired to take Haggard's position: H. Michael Lewis and Streeter Stuart. Critics complained that at least one of the two was the son of an old Ardmore friend and, thus, a political appointee. The popular coach and Director of Athletics, Olin L. Ramsey, was fired as were several others. These dismissals created feelings of insecurity in a period of high unemployment.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Southeastern, May 26, 1937.

<sup>26</sup>Durant Daily Democrat, May 20, 1935; Southeastern, May 22, 1935.

<sup>27</sup>Severance interview; Betty Haggard White, telephone interview, Durant June 8, 1976. Betty Haggard White, daughter of E. Martin Haggard noted that her father was rehired by Southeastern Teachers College immediately after Kate Galt Zaneis's tenure at the college ended.

In other staff changes she awarded Fixley \$275.00 a month for his position as Dean of Students and hired a personal secretary for herself. This was Dolly Dobbs who had previously worked in a bank in Dallas. The salary of Kate Galt Zaneis was set at \$375.00 per month with the president's home included.<sup>28</sup>

Once she had her staff in order, Mrs. Zaneis proceeded to tackle the problem of low enrollment. On January 3, 1935, the accumulated enrollment was at an all-time low with only 1205 students. The highest enrollment of the prior ten years had been in 1931-1932 when it reached 1416. During the first term after taking over the administration, she built the enrollment up to 1305. By 1936-1937, the accumulated enrollment of part-time and resident students reached the 1500 mark.<sup>29</sup>

The increase in enrollment was not based on luck, for Mrs. Zaneis had enacted an extensive recruitment program. The school newspaper was sent to all schools in the district and to recent graduates. She sent the faculty members from the training school to visit schools in other parts of the district. They were to create good will and offer help and advice when needed. Whenever Mrs. Zaneis went to visit the county schools, she would take one of her faculty friends. This was to encourage social contact and create interest.<sup>30</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis believed that community involvement would benefit the enrollment as well as the reputation of the college as a whole. She

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<sup>28</sup>"Minutes of the Meetings of the State Board of Education, State of Oklahoma," June 2, 1936, and December 17, 1936, State Department of Libraries, Archives and Records Department, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>29</sup>Southeastern, February 3, 1937.

<sup>30</sup>Severance interview.

donated her time to speak on "Needed School Legislation" at organizational meetings. Children from Russell Training School were brought into Southeastern's assemblies. There they could watch cultural programs usually reserved for college students only.<sup>31</sup>

The number of out of state superintendents invited to teach in the summer school program was increased. Co-operating with local churches, she set aside one or two hours a day during the Religious Week celebrations. During this time, students, ministers, and visiting speakers met in round table discussions on timely topics. As part of the summer program, each county was invited to present an evening of entertainment for the student body to be hosted by the various college organizations.<sup>32</sup>

The event that seemed to have the most impact on the community was having the first lady of the United States as a speaker. Eleanor Roosevelt was the featured speaker on Senior Day, 1937. The local and neighboring newspapers gave the event much publicity. They drew a parallel between the first lady of the country and Kate Galt Zaneis being the first woman ever to hold the presidency of a four year institution.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>32</sup>Southeastern Oklahoma State University Archives, Durant, Oklahoma.

<sup>33</sup>Tulsa News, March 21, 1937; "Highlights, 1936-1937", Southeastern Teachers College Scrapbook, Southeastern Oklahoma State University Rare Book Collection, Durant, Oklahoma; Ardmoreite, February 24, 1937; Newsweek, Vol. II (March 28, 1938), p. 14. The Newsweek article reported that Eleanor Roosevelt had toured the country "Visiting schools, colleges and attending ground breaking ceremonies."

Mrs. Zaneis entertained Mrs. Roosevelt in her best social manner. She baked fresh biscuits for her guest and told her about the college. The first lady was informed that she would be standing in a receiving line where she would shake hands with all those who attended the festivities. When Mrs. Roosevelt said that it was more than she could possibly do, Mrs. Zaneis replied "of course you can. These people love you and would rather shake your hand than hear you speak!"<sup>34</sup> Mrs. Roosevelt complied, and the townspeople were delighted.

The first lady gave her speech on the stage of the auditorium. The room was packed with Durant residents who were seated behind her on the stage. As the guest of honor stepped up to the rostrum, the orchestra played "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." The song was chosen, explained Mrs. Zaneis, because everyone loved Mrs. Roosevelt so much.<sup>35</sup>

All these activities did interest students in coming to southeastern, but Mrs. Zaneis was careful to make them feel welcome once they were on campus. Undergraduates were encouraged to join at least two social organizations. Clubs, sororities, and fraternities were nurtured and new groups organized. Mrs. Zaneis began the custom of having a club set up for residents of each county. She appointed Student Council members to committees that determined school policy and tried to give the students a voice in Southeastern's plans.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Southeastern, February 3, 1937.

The college president recognized that many of the students were coming from rural farms and had not been exposed to magazines or newspapers. Few had traveled, and their only contact with worldly ways was via the radio. She wanted to make them feel comfortable away from home. The basement of the Library was turned into a student activity room called Senior-Alumnus Hall.<sup>37</sup> Since at least two thirds of the students needed to work to help pay for their education, Mrs. Zaneis helped them find part-time jobs.<sup>38</sup>

The Deans of Men and Women were asked to inspect homes in the community which rented rooms to students. They offered advice to the housemothers and counseled the students. Each class had a faculty advisor who offered suggestions about courses and counseled students regarding curriculum. Each class also had a dean which looked after the social welfare of its particular members.<sup>39</sup>

The progressive policies of Kate Galt Zaneis raised the school enrollment and filled the classrooms to overflowing. Classes were forced to meet on the stage of the auditorium, in corridors, and out-of-doors. Even the dormitories were full and space in private homes limited. The college needed money for repairs and new buildings. Mrs. Zaneis, always the politician, set out to eliminate still another problem.

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<sup>37</sup>"A Bird's eye View of Southeastern Teachers College," Southeastern Teachers College, Scrapbook, Southeastern Oklahoma State University Rare Book Collection, Durant, Oklahoma. n.d.

<sup>38</sup>~~Ardmore~~, January 27, 1937; ~~Idabel~~ Gazette, August 17, 1936.

<sup>39</sup>Southeastern, February 3, 1937; Holdenville News, January 12, 1936.



She used her political connections to get favors that directly benefited the school. She furnished the Senior-Alumnus Hall with tables built at the state penitentiary, these being a gift from Governor Marland. She arranged for new dishes for the cafeteria and student hall. The tables were set in the school colors with yellow plates and blue glasses.<sup>40</sup> Dr. Henry G. Bennett, then president at Oklahoma A&M had his summer students who were enrolled in manual training make a desk which he donated to Mrs. Zaneis.<sup>41</sup>

The repair and improvement of campus buildings was listed among the items of top priority. Mrs. Zaneis must have felt a twinge of pain when she looked out of her office window to see leaky roofs, scaling paint and crumbling mortar. Even the bare floors and dingy painted walls in her office must have been depressing. No improvements were possible under the reduced budget; so Mrs. Zaneis used her political experience to receive Federal aid. She traveled to Ardmore to convince the Works Progress Administration that the college could come under its jurisdiction. She was successful in her undertaking, and as a result roofs were repaired, walls painted, and several classrooms completely renovated.<sup>42</sup>

Some of the remodeling problems were based on technology instead of money. The third floor of the Science Building had exposed pipes which were a safety hazard to the students in the home economics classes which

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<sup>40</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>41</sup>Oklahoma City Times, July 23, 1936.

<sup>42</sup>Literary Digest, Vol. 123 (February 13, 1937) p. 35; Southeastern, March 7, 1937; Tulsa World, January 12, 1936; McAlester Democrat, August 13, 1936; Durant Democrat, November 8, 1936.

were being held there. Mrs. Zaneis told the plumbers that she wanted them moved. They answered that it would be impossible, but Mrs. Zaneis insisted and kept after them until they eventually found a way to remove them.<sup>43</sup>

Kate Galt Zaneis believed in decorating as well as remodeling. Using a variety of methods, she was able to put rugs on floors, curtains on windows, and paint on walls. It was not long before people realized that Southeastern had received a becoming facelifting. Speaking of her accomplishments, an admirer once said: "Kate gave dignity to the dean's office."<sup>44</sup>

Kate Zaneis did not neglect the president's residence in her remodeling program. She built an apartment in the basement for her housekeeper and developed the third floor into a room for holding receptions and social functions. A summary of items purchased for the home during her administration totaled \$2,665.78.<sup>45</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis believed in entertaining, and her teas and receptions often saw as many as 350 guests file through the house. She entertained the Durant business men at early morning breakfasts. Although she would invite them under the pretext of thanking them for all they had done for the school, she usually got a donation from them before they left.<sup>46</sup>

Faculty members were expected to help at the social events. The men were required to wear tuxedos and the women long dresses. One young

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<sup>43</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>44</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>45</sup>For a complete list of expenditures during the Zaneis administration see Appendix 11.

<sup>46</sup>Severance interview.

teacher recalled her experience of helping Mrs. Zaneis, her mother, and the housekeeper get ready for an open house:

"We would work through the heat of the day getting everything ready. The last fifteen minutes we would rush around getting ourselves presentsble. We didn't have time to go home and clean up so we would freshen up as best we could and put on our party clothes. We always looked nice when the first guest arrived, but underneath we were hot and sticky."<sup>47</sup>

The young teacher thought that part of the fun was working on a tight schedule and seeing the teachers all dressed up. "Kate taught the country folks what culture was,"<sup>48</sup> she said.

Mrs. Zaneis tried to show her appreciation to the faculty members. When additional funds became available in December of 1936, each was given a five dollar raise. She appointed Anne R. Semple Rural School Supervisor at a salary of \$175.00 a month.<sup>49</sup>

The budget was a constant problem for Mrs. Zaneis. When she began her administration, the school had several outstanding debts. It owed the Community Natural Gas Company \$40.38 and the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company \$116.67. Fifteen dollars worth of typing supplies had not been paid for nor had \$17.50 for lacquer and lacquer thinner. There was a bill outstanding for repair of the library elevator that totaled \$19.74.<sup>50</sup> In a letter to John S. Vaughan, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Oklahoma, she appealed for payment of

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>"Minutes of Board of Education" June 2, 1936, and December 2, 1936, Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>50</sup>Kate Galt Zaneis to John S. Vaughan, October 1, 1935, Southeastern File, State Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

outstanding debts: "It would seem to me that material sold to the college in good faith should be paid for, since the college received the materials and used them."<sup>51</sup> Vaughan advised her to pay some of the debts out of the revolving fund and to submit the others to the legislature. Mrs. Zaneis complied, and the bills were paid. The payment of back debts cleared the reputation of the school among area business men and added to the favorable relations between Durant and the college.

Mrs. Zaneis, however, was not able to pay all back debts at once. The athletic department showed a deficit of \$1,278.62 when she took over. There was no way the college could juggle funds to cover it. On seeking advice, she was told to extend payments over the following two or three years. To comply, she had to curtail Physical Education classes and athletic activities.<sup>52</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis made many changes in procedure during her first year in Durant. She established the practice of calling faculty meetings at 7 a.m. in the morning. At such a meeting it was expected that men wear a coat and tie and women also be suitably attired. On one particular occasion a meeting was called for a much earlier hour. The issue for consideration concerned the practice of asking faculty members for donations for "fire insurance". This cut into their already small salaries. For years no one had complained in fear of losing their jobs. Mrs. Zaneis was against the practice and decided to take the issue to the governor's office. Governor Marland told her that he would break up the practice and expose those responsible but she would need to get

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>John S. Vaughan, October 4, 1935, Southeastern File, State Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

the evidence before the legislature while it was still in session. Mrs. Zaneis realized that signed statements from her faculty would make a strong impact. She called a meeting for five the next morning. She planned to explain what she was doing, have the papers signed and on their way to Oklahoma City by 7:00 a.m.

When the staff met, several of the men came dressed in their pajamas. She never acknowledged their silent protests, and, when one man came in late, she said nothing. Rather, she stopped her speech, gave him a cold stare, and waited for him to be seated before continuing.<sup>53</sup> While the faculty may not have appreciated this early morning meeting, most of them were glad to learn later that the forced donations had stopped. Many felt that her success in getting that done was one of her greatest achievements while in Durant.

Mrs. Zaneis felt that the school would serve Oklahoma better if the "teacher" was dropped from the name of the college. She felt that the name Southeastern State Teachers College indicated a limited function. A liberal arts college could serve the whole district.

She outlined her plan for this expanded curriculum at the NEA Convention in Denver, Colorado.<sup>54</sup> There she found many receptive to her ideas. In an interview with a reporter from the Daily Oklahoman, she explained that Southeastern served twelve counties and it served the majority of students who could not afford to go farther away from home.

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<sup>53</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>54</sup>Southeastern, February 10, 1936; Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 18, 1935; Madill Record, November 18, 1935.

She stated that the enrollment now was one thousand and not all the students wanted to be teachers.<sup>55</sup> She was able to revise the curriculum and change the nine week terms to semesters.<sup>56</sup> Convincing the Board of Education to agree to her plans proved to be a difficult task. Only after soliciting letters from her staff telling why they taught their subjects was she able to get control of the curriculum. Eventually her work paid off and the State Board not only acted favorably but changed all six state teachers colleges to liberal arts colleges.

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<sup>55</sup>Daily Oklahoman, November 18, 1935; Southeastern, December 3, 1935.

<sup>56</sup>Anadarko Democrat, March 23, 1936.

### CHAPTER III

#### The Removal of Kate Galt Zaneis from Southeastern Teachers College

Kate Galt Zaneis was among the most controversial presidents of Southeastern State Teachers College. Many Durant residents viewed her administration policies with alarm while others praised her work with great zeal. The male dominated society of 1937 contributed to her difficulty in establishing an acceptable repertoire with the local populace. However, her friends and colleagues at Southeastern, in giving their assessment of her downfall, said it was due not to what she did but rather, the manner in which she attempted to get things done.

There is no doubt Mrs. Zaneis offended many, including her own mother, because her cultural ideas were too advanced for the Durant area. She planned assembly programs which were intended to enlighten the area culturally. Many such programs brought in from the East were described by critics as "beyond the bounds of good taste."<sup>1</sup> When a troupe of nearly nude dancers performed on the stage in the main college auditorium, many people were shocked. Kate's mother showed her disapproval of the performance by walking out in the middle of the

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<sup>1</sup>Baker interview.

show.<sup>2</sup> As a whole, however, the townspeople in Durant liked Mrs. Zaneis, and many stated that she was acquainting them with culture and a society usually not found outside the limits of the large city.

Although she tried to keep on good terms with the businessmen of Durant, Mrs. Zaneis alienated many of them. A major mistake which was said to have hurt her politically was her decision to change the publisher of the college newspaper. The Durant Daily Democrat had been printing the Southeastern for the school, but Mrs. Zaneis gave the job to the Durant Weekly News. The weekly was published by E. M. Evans, a man who often wrote favorable comments about Mrs. Zaneis.<sup>3</sup> The daily was published by Robert F. Storey and Walter Archibold, both of whom were influential men in the community. When Mrs. Zaneis needed the support of a daily news media, the Durant Daily Democrat ran only the minimum of information.<sup>4</sup>

Many of her projects received adverse publicity. Her policy of sending supervisors out into the state was highly criticized. In a proposal that she and Everett Fixley developed, the training school was left in the hands of the student teachers. The training school faculty would then visit other schools and give talks in district towns which would encourage political donations and student enrollment. Although

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<sup>2</sup>Southeastern, December 8, 1937. The group was identified as the Frazer-James Dance Group which appeared in the central auditorium on December 5, 1937.

<sup>3</sup>Durant Weekly News reprinted in Southeastern, February 3, 1937.

<sup>4</sup>Durant Daily Democrat, May 1935-June 1937.



the main idea behind the plan was to create goodwill, the teachers were also supposed to pick up new ideas and techniques. The program was criticized as being poorly organized, political in nature, and detrimental to the students at Russell School.<sup>5</sup>

Personnel management was an area that also presented problems. The people she appointed to various positions did not always want the job. An example was Anne R. Semple whom Mrs. Zaneis made Rural School Supervisor. Miss Semple had to arrange for a car in order to visit the one-teacher schools in the district. There she was to help them with their problems and deliver books from Southeastern. Anne Semple did not want the job because she felt that she was improperly qualified and that she might not get her old position back should her current job be terminated. She realized that Mrs. Zaneis might leave Southeastern and the posts she created might be eliminated.<sup>6</sup> Her co-workers felt that Miss Semple had to take the job because she had been hired by Mrs. Zaneis, and because it would be an asset to her career.

Mrs. Zaneis offended the faculty when she made a rule that none of the staff and faculty could write an official letter without having it pass through her censorship. That, and similar mistakes in psychology caused her many problems that otherwise might have been avoided. She found herself having to do an abundance of paper work to justify her decisions. The procedures set forth by the Board of Education were not always followed by Mrs. Zaneis as an examination of her correspondence discloses. Letters written by Mrs. Zaneis to the board and the answers

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<sup>5</sup>Severance interview; "Birdseye View of Southeastern Teachers College," Southeastern Teachers College Scrapbook, n.d.

<sup>6</sup>Anne R. Semple, Durant, Oklahoma, telephone interview, July 8, 1976; Durant News, January 8, 1937.

written by State Superintendent A. L. Crable indicate a growing dissatisfaction with her methods.<sup>7</sup> Many people felt that she was spending too much money on plush furniture and on unnecessary items for the president's home. It was suspected that her entertainment practices were more important for Mrs. Zaneis's career than for the college.

Shortly after she instigated her reforms, a group of Durant citizens took a petition to the capital in hope of using the 3,000 signatures to get her fired. The petition stated that she "made unnecessary changes in the college faculty, and that she was creating unrest among the townspeople."<sup>8</sup>

The charge that petitions seeking the ouster of Mrs. Zaneis were being circulated among members of the legislature was met with "vigorous denials" from the capital.<sup>9</sup> In Durant E. M. Evans, editor of the Durant Weekly News, said that he had made an "extensive study and failed to find any 'responsible' persons behind such a move."<sup>10</sup> The Ada Morning News printed a story in which it named three prominent Durant citizens who supported her. They included J. T. Foote, H. W. Cooley, and J. P. Puffenbarger, a former faculty member.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"Southeastern Teachers College File," Department of Libraries, Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>8</sup>Blackwell Tribune, August 13, 1935; Shawnee News, August 12, 1935.

<sup>9</sup>Bartlesville Examiner, August 14, 1935.

<sup>10</sup>Eagle (Enid, Oklahoma), August 13, 1935; The paper was referring to an interview between E. M. Evans and the Eagle reporters.

<sup>11</sup>Morning News (Ada, Oklahoma), August 14, 1935.

Publicity about the petition died, and nothing was done to remove her at that time, although many remained dissatisfied with her administration. She was described as being too authoritative, too bossy, and lacking in diplomacy. Dissenters alluded to a widely circulated article in the Daily Oklahoman which related a story about Mrs. Zaneis being stopped by a state game warden. Mrs. Zaneis had been driving through the Kiamichi Mountains, an area that had been having problems with deer poaching, when a warden stopped her car to make a routine inspection. She is reported to have told the officer that she was a college president and as everyone knew, college presidents did not have time to go "deer shooting."<sup>12</sup>

She did have the time to come up with some new ideas for the college. An outgrowth of Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to the campus was a short-lived experiment having to do with a campus patrol. When the first lady came to Durant, she brought with her several secret service men who scattered themselves across the campus. They kept a tight watch on security during her stay. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Zaneis instigated a system that used the male faculty members in a similar manner. She assigned each an area of the campus which they were expected to patrol.<sup>13</sup>

It was an unpopular job although not entirely a boring one if the following incident can be credited. The story had to do with a professor assigned to cover the local lover's lane. He was supposed to keep tabs on the students who sat parked in their cars. Being tired, he did not feel like creating a disturbance when he walked up to a car parked in the moonlight. Instead he sat down on the running board and listened to the

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<sup>12</sup> Daily Oklahoman, November 18, 1936.

<sup>13</sup> Slaughter interview.

couple inside. They discovered him several minutes later, much to their mutual embarrassment.<sup>14</sup>

Although many of Mrs. Zaneis's plans failed, she did have the reputation for being a good sport. No one realized just how good a sport she was until the annual Gridiron Show was staged. It was put on by the Durant Rotary club each year to entertain the teachers. It was a comedy show in which prominent townspeople poked fun at events at the college. The show was held on September 29, 1937, in the ballroom of the Bryan Hotel in downtown Durant. The event was attended by a near capacity crowd of approximately three hundred. The show, which introduced the 1937 football season, was a satire on the Zaneis administration.<sup>15</sup>

In a series of skits and songs, the Rotarians lampooned every major event of her administration. The characterization was said to be outstanding, and when the business manager of the Durant Daily Democrat came on stage dressed as Mrs. Zaneis, the crowd roared with laughter. Most songs spoofing Mrs. Zaneis were popular tunes with lyrics rewritten to fit the situation such as the "School of the Raising Daughter" and "Goddy, Goody". Also there was a song "To Kingly Kate" depicting her numerous teas. In addition, fun was made of her decision to employ only those professors which had a master's degree in "Dear Old STC." A song written by Pauline Flint and Claude Klick was the favorite one on the program. It concerned her attempt at policing the campus and was called "Katie's G Men." The manner in which she attended the football games

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<sup>14</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>15</sup>Gridiron Program, 1937, Red River Valley Historical Association Archives, Southeastern Teachers College Collection, Durant, Oklahoma.

was the topic of another skit. It seems that she sat in her chauffeur-driven car, which was moved back and forth on the sidelines keeping even with the ball. According to witnesses who recalled the affair in later years, she took no offense to the program but rather enjoyed the skits.<sup>16</sup>

Hard work and accomplishments characterized the Zaneis administration. Not everyone considered her goals good for the school, as evidenced by the flow of letters directed to the State Board of Education during her tenure. The correspondence came from a group in Durant that wanted her removed from the president's chair. Others in the state also felt she was doing too many things of a controversial nature.<sup>17</sup>

Much of the discontent stemmed from the Zaneis campaign to get new dormitories built at Southeastern. Since the enrollment had been increased, there had been a shortage of rooms for students, and many were being housed in attic apartments and Durant tourist cabins. The school needed at least two new dorms, one for each sex. Although there was no money available, Mrs. Zaneis went ahead and worked up the plans for a \$700,000 project.<sup>18</sup> It included two new housing units, a new training school, an Industrial Arts building, and major repairs to existing structures. Many of the proposals were just too expensive and advanced for a small teachers college; however, the building plans became a state wide issue. Her hometown newspaper the Daily Ardmore

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<sup>16</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>17</sup>Miscellaneous correspondence, "Southeastern Teachers College File" Department of Libraries, Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>18</sup>Highlights scrapbook, 1936-1937, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Archives, Durant, Oklahoma.

stated that "she will get them...because she doesn't know how to take 'no' for an answer and probably wouldn't if she could."<sup>19</sup>

Southeastern would have been eligible for the new buildings if the state legislature had approved the appropriation. Once the money was set aside, the Oklahoma School Board would have been the governing body to administer the funds. However, Senator John A. McDonald introduced a bill that provided for President Zaneis, in conjunction with the school board, to hire the architect and direct the project.<sup>20</sup> State Superintendent A. L. Crable opposed the bill on the grounds that it was a political move to get a job for Bryan Nolen, brother-in-law to the Senator. Mrs. Zaneis explained that she engaged Nolen at a cost of \$17,500 to start drawing the plans. She justified her course of action by stating that the townspeople wanted him for the position because he was the only Southeastern graduate to apply.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of her reason to retain Nolen, it was thought that the uncertainty over the situation put Mrs. Zaneis in a bad spot politically. When the Board of Education realized

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<sup>19</sup>Daily Ardmore, January 27, 1937.

<sup>20</sup>Daily Ardmore, March 1, 1937. In an article under the caption "Mrs. Z. to Have Charge of Construction," Attorney General Mac Q. Williamson was quoted as telling State Superintendent A. L. Crable that a law passed by the legislature had given the President of Southeastern Teachers College the right to administer the building of the dormitories. The paper noted that when this was challenged by Crable, who felt the Board of Education should have control, Williamson answered: "The legislature has made specific provisions for the school president to draw the plans and award contracts."

<sup>21</sup>Sayre Journal, May 23, 1937.

that Governor Marland would not be in office another term, they asked her to resign.<sup>22</sup>

Many of her followers agreed with Mrs. Zaneis when she refused to comply with the request. They felt that the board was doing wrong because it did not give a public explanation as to why it was taking such action.<sup>23</sup> It is believed; however, that she was told the reason in private and that it concerned the dormitory issue. Whatever the reason, Mrs. Zaneis said publically that she felt she was taking the brunt of a battle between two government officials.<sup>24</sup> She apparently had reference to the argument between John McDonald and Henry G. Bennett. Bennett was past president of the Board of Education and still had great influence on its members. Although Bennett had been a friend of Mrs. Zaneis, he evidently did not favor the bill giving her administrative rights. McDonald accused Bennett of swaying the school board against the bill. In an article in the Muskogee Democrat dated May 24, 1937, Bennett replied that he tried to stay out of Southeastern's affairs and McDonald's accusation was "absolutely without foundation."<sup>25</sup> A day later the Ponca City News came out with a story in which Claude C. Hatchett, a Durant lawyer and past president of the University of Oklahoma Board

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<sup>22</sup>Tabor Galt interview. In an article in the Ponca City News, May 25, 1937, Joseph H. Howell in his column "State Capital Echoes" editorialized that he thought the State Board of Education may have been trying to remove all Marland supporters.

<sup>23</sup>Holdenville Tribune, May 23, 1937.

<sup>24</sup>McAlester News, May 22, 1937.

<sup>25</sup>The article quotes McDonald as saying he blamed an "educational clique dominated by Henry G. Bennett," and that "The teachers colleges are dominated by his crowd." Mrs. Zaneis "just wasn't a member of his crowd."

of Regents, said he had asked the board for Mrs. Zaneis's resignation. "We feel her appointment here was a serious mistake," he said. "We have no real prejudice against her. But we want a real school man to head the college."<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of the turmoil, Kate Galt Zaneis was still trying to convince the legislature that money should be voted for new dorms. Her chief opponent on this issue was Sam Sullivan. He was a state legislator who had been led to believe that the city of Durant was against the new dorms. He had been advised that boarding house owners were organizing against the building plans because they were in a depression and the boarding house owners needed the income.<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Zaneis pointed out that this was not true and that student population was increasing so fast that the housing units would be filled without affecting the public boarding houses. In a letter to the state Superintendent of Public Instruction she indicated that the better boarding houses could not continue to rent their rooms at the present low rate and that the majority of the students could not afford to pay more. Therefore, the dorms were badly needed.<sup>28</sup>

Either the controversy over directing the project or the opposition of Representative Sullivan in the legislature stopped the appropriations,

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<sup>26</sup>Ponca City News, May 25, 1937; Mary Jane Galloway, telephone interview, Durant, Oklahoma, July 3, 1976. Mrs. Galloway, niece of Claude C. Hatchett, described him as a man who believed that woman's place was in the home and that it was his main reason for objecting to Mrs. Zaneis.

<sup>27</sup>Sam Sullivan, telephone interview, Durant, Oklahoma, July 6, 1976.

<sup>28</sup>Miscellaneous correspondence, "Southeastern Teachers College File," Department of Libraries, Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



and Mrs. Zaneis, still at the college, was unable to use her political influence to do anything about it. Her major concern at this time, however, was to find means to retain her job. To that end, Everett Fixley initiated a move to obtain persons who would write testimonials on her behalf. This controversial action, may have been responsible for the subsequent loss of his job. Although it was publically stated that the drive to collect the letters was to show Mrs. Zaneis that the community and school appreciated her, critics felt that it was a method to get mass support to present to the officials at Oklahoma City to enable her to hold her job.<sup>29</sup>

The occasion used for soliciting the letters was the second anniversary of the Zaneis administration. H. S. Bates, writing in behalf of the Committee to show appreciation to Mrs. Zaneis, sent a letter to members of the President's Club which consisted of the heads of all college organizations. The following excerpt is taken from the letter:

Dear President:

As was explained to you at the recent meeting of the Presidents' Club, you are invited to be the guests of the faculty of this college at a dinner on Thursday evening, May 20, at 5:30 p.m., honoring President Zaneis upon the second anniversary of her administration. We know you will be happy to participate in this testimonial of our approval and regard ....I am sure you will want your organization to be represented. Will you, therefore, be good enough to write a letter addressed to President Zaneis in which you sketch what seem to you to be the outstanding accomplishments of her administration both for the college in general and for your organization in particular. Not only will such an expression be a priceless treasure to her but will, undoubtedly, give her added encouragement in carrying out the many plans she has for the future of this institution.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Letter to Presidents of campus clubs from H. S. Bates, "Southeastern Teachers File," Department of Libraries, Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

On May 14, Everett Fixley sent a similar letter to the students at Southeastern and on the following day to the "friends of Southeastern." In it he included the following paragraph:

If you will write your letter to President Kate Galt Zaneis, in which you state your appreciation for the accomplishments that have been made in the last two years in the interest of Southeastern State Teachers College, and send it immediately to me, I shall be glad to include it in a bound volume of appreciation to Mrs. Zaneis. Whether you plan to attend the dinner or even if it is inconvenient for you to attend, I am sure you will want your letter included in this volume.<sup>31</sup>

A copy of the above letter was sent to the Superintendent of Schools in Oklahoma City with a note typed across the bottom. It complained that Everett Fixley was using "high pressure tactics" in securing letters of esteem. C. C. Hatchett of Durant sent a copy of Fixley's student letter to the Superintendent. Across the top he had written:

Mr. Crable,

An intensive drive has been conducted by the administration to secure the good-will letters mentioned below, with the understanding they are to be used only as such. I am sure that no one of the people writing them even suspect they are to be used for a political purpose and should they be so used I am sure you will make proper allowance and give due consideration to the circumstances under which they were written.

Yours truly,  
C. C. Hatchett<sup>32</sup>

The drive to collect letters for Mrs. Zaneis resulted in dozens of testimonials which were bound as a book and given the title "Heart Throbs."

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

It was presented to Mrs. Zaneis at the anniversary party attended by 300; and, according to friends, it was one of her most cherished possessions.<sup>33</sup> There is no evidence to indicate that the volume was ever used for a political purpose.

It is not known if the controversy over soliciting the letters had any influence on the Board of Education and their decision to fire her since there were several other things which they might have considered. A letter that was written after her administration indicated that there may have been some concern over her prejudice against Baptists.<sup>34</sup> The following excerpts are from an anonymous letter to Dr. H. Vance Posey in August of 1938.

Dear Dr. Posey:

Perhaps this letter is out of place but I trust that you will not think me presumptuous in writing it, for the matters referred to here, while very delicate, are of substance.

Your predecessors, particularly one of them, seem to have made a studied effort to eliminate from the faculty of S.T.C. all teachers and employees who were of Baptist faith. I believe there are two active members of the Baptist faith remaining, but they are the kind who never attend worship nor who never pay nor cooperate, as far as the local church is concerned, in any church endeavor....

I do not believe this is as it should be in view of the fact that about 40% of the student constituency of the College are of Baptist faith.

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<sup>33</sup>Severance, Baker, and Tabor Galt interviews.

<sup>34</sup>Anonymous letter to H. Vance Posey, president of Southeastern College in 1938. "Southeastern Teachers College File," Department of Libraries, Archives and Records. August, 1938.

I happen to know that a great many leading Baptists in this section of the State resent very deeply this very apparent discrimination. I am one of that number. I do not believe that the College will ever succeed as it should unless there is a spirit of fairness shown in the selection of the faculty members.<sup>35</sup>

Evidently, Mrs. Zaneis had offended the people of Durant in many ways; but, if she had made enemies, she had also made friends since many stated that her refusal to resign was a dignified act. When Mrs. Zaneis did not submit her resignation, the board took a vote with seven members voting six to one to fire her. Stephen George of Ardmore was the lone member in favor of keeping her as the college president. Those voting to eliminate Mrs. Zaneis included Jack L. Newland of Fredrick, Harry D. Simmons, Wewoka, J. R. Holmes of Ardmore, Eugene L. Rodman, Antlers, Grace Norris Davis of Oklahoma City, and the chairman of the board, A. L. Crable, Oklahoma City. In announcing their decision, they stated that it was "for the good of the organization".<sup>36</sup> They appointed William Brown Morrison, Head of the History Department, to take over as acting president on June first and gave Mrs. Zaneis a months vacation with pay.<sup>37</sup>

Many people were disappointed by her removal and especially shocked that she was dismissed immediately instead of at the end of Governor Marland's two year term. Supporters of Mrs. Zaneis thought that Governor Marland would interfere with the decision. Instead, he issued the following statement: "I am sorry to see her lose her position but we have a

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>"Minutes of the Meetings of the State Board of Education, State of Oklahoma," May 22, 1937. Department of the Libraries, Archives and Records division, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.; Southeastern, May 26, 1937; Poteau Sun, May 27, 1937.

State Board of Education whose duty it is to select presidents ...and their judgment in the matter is final as far as I am concerned."<sup>38</sup>

When news reached the school that she had been fired, several students threatened to walk out in protest and two faculty members resigned. A faculty member who worked with Mrs. Zaneis recalled in later life that Mrs. Zaneis had asked the entire faculty to resign as a means of showing their dissatisfaction with the decision. The same faculty member recalled that the two who did resign, C. F. Daily and George F. Totten, were those whom Mrs. Zaneis had appointed.<sup>39</sup>

It was believed by most people that Everett Fixley had resigned, but a copy of a telegram dated May 29, 1937 indicates that he was fired. The statement was addressed to Dr. Fixley in typewritten script. The Dr. had been penciled out and the title Mr inserted. It reads: "THIS IS TO NOTIFY YOU THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AT ITS MEETING TODAY DISMISSED YOU FROM THE FACULTY OF SOUTHEASTERN STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE EFFECTIVE THIS DATE." It was signed by A. L. Crable, "President, State Board of Education."<sup>40</sup> One source indicated that Everett Fixley had already resigned when the telegram was sent and that it was simply A. L. Crable's way of making Everett Fixley look bad on the record.<sup>41</sup>

Several newspapers did note that Everett Fixley had turned in his formal notice to resign. The Oklahoma City News quoted his letter of resignation which in part is set forth below:

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<sup>38</sup>~~Oklahoma~~ City Times, May 24, 1937.

<sup>39</sup>Southeastern, May 26, 1937.

<sup>40</sup>Telegram, "Southeastern Teachers College File," Department of Libraries, Archives and Records, May 29, 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>41</sup>Severance interview.

I have watched with growing disgust the activities of the political-education ring which has long sought to control the administration of higher education in this state, today I have seen its activities culminate in the crucifixion of a woman who has been willing to give her life for the service of the youth of Oklahoma.. I do not want to serve under a board who dismissed Mrs. Kate Galt Zaneis... I therefore tender my resignation.. .42

The Durant News, while acknowledging the resignation also noted that A. L. Crable stated that his office had never been officially notified that Dr. Fixley had resigned.<sup>43</sup>

With the removal of Fixley and Zaneis the campus returned to its tradition of male presidents. William Brown Morrison was followed by a permanent appointment, Dr. H. Vance Posey, who took office during the summer of 1937. The dismissal of the lady president was not forgotten, however, as a group of political activists, believing that Mrs. Zaneis lost her job due to sexual discrimination, formed the Women's Democratic Council. Kate Galt Zaneis served as president of the group for six years while they fought for women's place in the politics of Oklahoma.<sup>44</sup>

The dormitories that Mrs. Zaneis worked so hard to plan eventually became a reality. At the end of World War II the state legislature issued \$350,000 worth of state bonds, for the construction of Hallie McKinney, and Shearer Halls, which were the results of the hard work and planning of Kate Galt Zaneis, Southeastern's only woman president.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Oklahoma City News, n.d., in "Highlights" Scrapbook, 1936-1937.

<sup>43</sup>Durant News, n.d., in "Highlights" Scrapbook, 1936-1937.

<sup>44</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup>Mary McKinney Frye, "The McKinney name is Honored," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 29, (August, 1951), pp. 355-359.

## CHAPTER IV

### Kate Galt Zaneis, Her Later Life and Conclusion

When Kate Galt Zaneis left the presidency of Southeastern Teachers College, she took with her a desire to better the education of college students in Oklahoma; and she spent the remaining twenty-five years of her active career trying to accomplish that end. After leaving Durant, she became the Director of Education of the State Department of Public Safety. In this capacity her duties included promoting a program of formal teaching of Public Safety in the public schools. Her belief in the importance of such a program is evident in the following quotation:

Safety Education should be included in the curriculum of the public schools. If thousands of students in the schools today are to know how to protect themselves and their associates, and are to develop an adult citizenship better informed as to safety precautions than the present adult citizenship gives evidence of being, then safety education must be formally presented in the public schools, not in elected, but in required courses.<sup>1</sup>

Working out of the state Capitol, she, her mother, and Pearl Brent, moved to Oklahoma City where they eventually made their home at 2820 N.W. 22nd Street, while keeping the Ardmore residence at 117 Stanley Street.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Robbie Pitts, telephone interview, Ardmore, Oklahoma, June 3, 1976.

The "Z" as the Ardmore house was called because of the large "Z" installed in the brickwork, was turned into an apartment building which became an important source of income when Mrs. Zaneis had to live off her pension during her later years.<sup>3</sup>

Leon C. Phillips, the successor to the Marland administration made few changes and followed the pattern of the previous governor. Thus, Mrs. Zaneis was able to keep working for the State due, in some measure, to the large number of friends and acquaintances she had made during her years working with Governor Marland.<sup>4</sup> From 1939 to 1943 she was the Director of the Recording Division, State Board of Public Welfare and the Public Relations Division.<sup>5</sup> The latter position was one which demanded extensive travel throughout the state, and she used her many visits to promote the school lunch program which she had started earlier in her career. In this respect, she made every effort to convince the superintendents of schools to initiate school-sponsored lunches for the good of the children. Speaking of this to a close friend she said that many school administrators were against the idea and fought to the bitter end. She went on to say that she felt the work with the lunch program was the most rewarding accomplishment of her twenty years of service to the state.<sup>6</sup>

Robert S. Kerr, governor from 1943 to 1947, transferred the School Lunch Administration to the State Board of Education. However, Mrs. Zaneis continued working in the area of public relations in connection with the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Tabor Galt interview.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Daily Oklahoman, March 4, 1973.



lunch program. In 1947 she became editor of "The School Lunch News", a pamphlet which dispatched information on school lunch management and stimulated public interest in the program. From 1943 to 1953 her work was placed under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Emergency Relief Board, a division of the Department of Public Welfare, which administered the distribution of food commodities to the schools.<sup>7</sup> From 1947 to 1951, under Governor Roy J. Turner, Mrs. Zaneis duties were expanded to include organizing school lunch workshops. These three day sessions were held yearly between 1949 and 1952 and were refresher courses in the techniques of mass feeding.<sup>8</sup> Also as part of her public relations work she represented the State Board of Education annually at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater and certified the personnel trained for administration of the School Lunch Program in the various Oklahoma schools.<sup>9</sup>

In 1953 Mrs. Zaneis was transferred to the Civil Defense Agency while Johnson Murray was governor. She controlled the Public Relations Division of the Civil Defense Agency. She qualified for the position by taking a short course offered by Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. Her certificate, dated January 9, 1953, read: "Certificate for Completion of Instruction in Civil Defense." With this training she was now able to join the state-wide promotion of the newly organized Civil Defense Program.<sup>10</sup> As she traveled throughout the state promoting

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<sup>7</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

the program, her brother Tabor worked with her and served as her chauffeur."<sup>11</sup> In 1956 she was employed by the Oklahoma Emergency Relief Board as Chief File Clerk in the Commodity Division. This was the agency during the Governorship of Raymond Gary which distributed food to the schools. After two years in this position, she was named Assistant Postmaster for the State Senate Post Office. This was a position created by the Senate. When Raymond Gary left office in 1959 and J. Howard Edmondson became governor, Mrs. Zaneis again changed positions. In this instance, she became the secretary for State Senator Tom Tipps while she continued to work for the State Department of Public Welfare doing field and state office work until her retirement in 1963.<sup>12</sup> She lived in Oklahoma City only a short while after her retirement before returning to the family home in Ardmore. Her mother had died in 1943 when they resided in Oklahoma City, but her nurse and housekeeper, Pearl Brent, had remained with her. These two lived out their retirement years together.<sup>13</sup>

Pearl Brent had lived with Mrs. Zaneis for nearly forty-two years when she died suddenly in 1973. While in the hospital recuperating from a simple illness she fell and hit her head. She died almost instantly as a result of this fall. Her death came as a shock to

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<sup>11</sup> Tabor Galt interview.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Tabor Galt, Harrington, and Baum interviews. Miriam Galt had outlived her husband by twenty years. After her death, Pearl Brent went to work for the State Department but retired when Mrs. Zaneis returned to Ardmore.

Mrs. Zaneis, for only a few minutes previously the two had talked by telephone and had made plans for the activities they would pursue once Miss Brent returned home.<sup>14</sup>

Only a few months later Kate Galt Zaneis died. Recalling the occasion, her brother Tabor stated that she had become very despondent after Pearl Brent's death and had been put in the Ardmore Hospital . She never returned home from the hospital , dying Sunday, September 9, 1973. "She passed away so slowly that we were not really aware of her condition," her brother reported, adding that "she and Miss Pearl were inseparable and that had an effect upon her passing away."<sup>15</sup>

Her funeral service was held the following Wednesday at the First Methodist Church in Ardmore; and she was buried in Rose Hill Cemetery.<sup>16</sup> In a eulogy printed by the Southeastern, she was described as a "strikingly handsome woman who devoted her life to education."<sup>17</sup> In conclusion, the article praised her for the work she had done both at Southeastern Teachers College and for the state schools in general.<sup>18</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis's will provided that any money beyond funeral expenses left in her estate was to go to the students who desired to further their education at the schools she had attended. Although she did not have an attorney draw up a will, she did leave definite instructions in her own handwriting. All her things were to be sold at auction and the

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<sup>14</sup>Tabor Galt interview.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Denison Herald, September 11, 1973.

<sup>17</sup>Southeastern, September 18, 1973.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

dividends from the sale deposited in a savings account. Her three brothers were allowed to spend the interest, but, on their deaths, the money was to be divided among the following: Ardmore High School, Southeastern Oklahoma State University which was Southeastern Teachers College when she attended it, and Oklahoma State University, previously called Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.<sup>19</sup>

In retrospect, one can see that Mrs. Zaneis was a woman dedicated to education. She began her life in a family where learning was stressed and in an atmosphere of public awareness and self-determination. Since the Galt family had been active in civic affairs, it would seem only natural that Kate Galt would become a leader while still in her teens. At that time, her father was promoting the Boy Scouts, and his daughter helped him by gathering a group of Ardmore's young men together and informing them of the procedures for setting up a scouting program in their neighborhoods.<sup>20</sup>

Mrs. Zaneis was a woman ahead of her time. She believed in equal rights for women as demonstrated by her attempt to join the Masonic Lodge in Ardmore.<sup>21</sup> Although liberal in many of her attitudes, acquaintances described her as being a conservative person who had extreme foresight in educational pursuits.<sup>22</sup>

Although she loved teaching, she told a friend that she "felt compelled to do something about the injustices of the teaching profession."<sup>23</sup> This

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<sup>19</sup>Tabor Galt interview.

<sup>20</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>22</sup>Baker, Pitts, and Severance interviews.

<sup>23</sup>Harrington interview.

led her into her work as an administrator where she developed even greater goals for assisting Oklahoma's total education system.

Working in a man's world, Mrs. Zaneis did not diminish her femininity. She was considered among the most stylishly dressed women in the community. She had a streak of sentimentality which she did not attempt to hide.<sup>24</sup> The best description of Kate Galt Zaneis is that she succeeded in a man's world without losing a bit of her female charm. She did not use the fact that she was a woman to gain favors nor did she fear being labeled "sentimental" or "forward". She seemed to live her life for what she believed and refused to let anyone push her around. This trait for decisiveness may have been inherited from her father who was a man who believed in making up his own mind. The Galt family was almost totally Baptist except for James Galt and his offspring. His wife's father had been a Methodist minister, and James Galt changed to the Otis family religion. When questioned about his former affiliation with the Baptist Church, James Galt looked the other person straight in the eye and said, "I'm perfectly satisfied," thus ending the discussion.<sup>25</sup>

This family proclivity for being strong willed may have been one of the reasons she was appointed to the presidency of Southeastern Teachers College, since Governor Marland realized that it was a job which required a great deal of determination in the goals of the school were to be accomplished. During her short term as president of Southeastern, her administration received much criticism; yet one cannot deny her credit for its many advances and accomplishments. Most of her critics admitted

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<sup>24</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>25</sup>Harrington interview.

that she did a good job of running the school and that it was the only college at the time that operated within the legislation appropriation.<sup>26</sup>

Kate Galt Zaneis was a leader, not a follower. Co-workers said that the men were jealous of her; others said the men were not ready to be led by a woman. Some said she did not have a chance of succeeding as a president for more than one term because she was "straight-laced, pushy, and that a woman did not belong in men's education."<sup>27</sup>

Although many felt she did not belong, there were just as many who were delighted to see her become a college president, especially the residents of Durant. Her appointment was doubly unique, for she was the first woman and first alumna to serve as president.<sup>28</sup>

The citizens of Durant, were kept well-informed about activities at the campus. Mrs. Zaneis once told a colleague that it was her philosophy that the institution should serve its district.<sup>29</sup> She gave talks at area events and wrote a column of encouragement and direction for the college newspaper which was entitled "President Zaneis' Students". Anne Semple was sent out as Rural School Superintendent to promote academics at area schools, and the area residents were invited to attend Southeastern's cultural and social events.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Charles Evans, A Brief Review, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup>Severance interview.

<sup>28</sup>Daily Oklahoman, August 10, 1936, Blackwell Journal, May 24, 1937, Muskogee Democrat, May 24, 1937.

<sup>29</sup>Baker interview.

<sup>30</sup>Southeastern, June 6, 1935; May 3, 1937.

Mrs. Zaneis was an extremely active person, both socially and professionally. One of her favorite sayings was that she liked to eat and sleep education, but when she went to the beauty shop it was for a rest. She was an active member in nearly two score organizations.<sup>31</sup> Tabor Galt stated that she never did anything halfway and that she would always complete a task which she had started. For example, he noted that she framed and hung in her study every diploma, citation, and award that she had ever received.<sup>32</sup>

While her professional life was notorious, the private life of Kate Galt Zaneis was difficult to uncover. A scattering of comments by acquaintances and relatives give glimpses of her personality. She was a commanding person who enjoyed the better things of life. Her favorite evening meal was T-bone steaks, and other favorites included limeade and chicken burgers. She dressed in well-tailored, unfrilled dresses that were both flamboyant and, yet, in good taste. Her chief relaxation was to withdraw to her booklined study and engage in a game of babytalk with Pearl Brent.<sup>33</sup>

The issue of the Zaneis marriage was avoided by members of her family. Although she kept her married name, all other remnants of the marriage were discarded. Her friends say that it was never mentioned nor was there ever any talk of men in Mrs. Zaneis' life. As one

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<sup>31</sup>For a complete listing see Appendix 111.

<sup>32</sup>Tabor Galt interview. For a complete listing see Appendix IY.

<sup>33</sup>Literary Digest, Vol. 123 (February 13, 1937) p. 35. She told a reporter that a favorite passtime was to carry on make believe conversations in "baby talk" a language remnisant of her youngest years.

contemporary said: "She dedicated her life to education and did not have time for men."<sup>34</sup> Tabor Galt recalled that the only living thing she was attached to besides her family was "Miss Pearl".<sup>35</sup> While working at Southeastern, she told a reporter that her idea of a holiday was 'to spend it at home with her housekeeper and to help her bake ham, make cherry pies or rearrange a closet.<sup>36</sup> Her reliance on Pearl Brent indicated that she was unable to accomplish many of the domestic tasks others would consider as simple household chores. Succeeding housekeepers hired by Mrs. Zaneis after her friend's death were unable to meet the high level of skill attained by Miss Brent.

Her domineering stance prevailed in her retirement years as illustrated by the following incident. It was a cold night with rain turning to sleet. Mrs. Zaneis had the flu so she called a friend to come to her apartment to fix her some tea and to go to the store and bring her something to eat. When her friend replied that she too was ill, Mrs. Zaneis retorted: "You will come." Her friend, disregarding her own illness

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<sup>34</sup>Severance interview; Literary Digest, Vol. 123 (February 13, 1937) p. 35. Her private life was above reproach. There were never any rumors of romance or scandal in her life. The most shocking thing she ever did dated back to her years as an undergraduate at Southeastern. James Morrison, a fellow student, recalls that during a masquerade, Mrs. Zaneis let down her long blonde hair, donned a body suit, mounted a horse, and went as Lady Godiva.

<sup>35</sup>Tabor Galt interview.

<sup>36</sup>Elaine Johnson, "Kate Galt Zaneis," Paper written for a history class at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant. In files of Charles Harris, Norman, Oklahoma.



and dizzy spells, made her way through the storm to be at the bedside of Mrs. Zaneis.<sup>37</sup> Despite her power to prevail over other people, the absence of her lifelong companion, Pearl Brent, resulted in such grief that her relatives thought it hastened her death because she had nothing to live for.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Baum interview.

<sup>38</sup>Harrington and Tabor Galt interviews.

## APPENDIX I

### GRATITUDE

For a Scrap Book, I thought, from the schools far and near,  
I would gather material as I visited each year  
And these pictures and stories would long prove a joy  
In recalling associations with each girl and boy  
Of the thousands of children I know and hold dear'  
And for whose interest I have worked many a year.  
There are occasions of Life, fond and dear,  
That a clipping or picture will ever bring near  
But how many the moments so sacredly sweet  
Left only to memory with no token to keep.  
We cherish memorandums that so often recall  
A Summer, a Winter, a Spring or a Fall  
And while each year brings progress, work and new scenes  
And we welcome new friends still how often it seems  
That we hardly appreciate our friendships at best  
Until time and circumstance give them a test.  
On the faces and clippings of my own Scrap Book,  
Kind friend, you are welcome to look.  
Still there's something depicted 'that you cannot see.  
(Don't say I am selfish)--it is only for me  
That's the memory that each little picture brings nigh.  
Yes, this is a pleasure my book will deny  
To any save those who partook in the scene--  
Ah, well, you won't care, for how little 'twould mean  
To you with your own store of memories to keep;  
But as you turn through the pages, I am sure you will meet  
Faces of mutual friends you have known of yore  
And I am sure the book holds in store  
Information, and at best entertainment,  
for what would otherwise be  
A lonesome half-hour with nothing to see.  
Thus came a vision: if only my book  
Might be given to many who cared to look  
On pictures of buildings, records and play  
Of Carter County Schools since Statehood Day,  
The Teachers' Association met in the Fall  
Endorsed my publishing the book and that was not all--  
They added some stories, pictures and rules  
In completing the Journal of Carter County Schools.  
Then followed the Clubs--Chamber of Commerce with aid,  
Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and Ryonis Maid  
Sent words of approval endorsement and said,  
'We help--publish the book--and you'll make no mistakes  
To mail copies to other Counties and States.'

Then individuals the purpose read  
Believed in the Foreword and sincerely said:  
"Publish the Journal we've encouragement to give  
To the interest of schools as long as we live."  
Merchants and firms brought smiles to our faces  
When they asked for advertising spaces.  
Thus from these sources and the sale of the book  
Funds were realized and we undertook  
What somebody said couldn't be done.  
You--have helped--the victory is won!  
It is finished--the last page and yet  
Deep in our hearts is a bit of regret  
For we know not how our appreciation to tell  
To each one who helped so very well.  
We sum it all up in our humble "Thank you,"  
And lay it at the feet of not a few  
Who have seen in this educational theme  
Encouragement for many a noble dream.

Sincerely,  
Kate Galt Zaneis,  
County Superintendent.

## Appendix II

### SUMMARY OF ITEMS BOUGHT FOR PRESIDENT'S HOME -1935-36-37

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
7-10-35	Awning Coverings, 32 windows and one door	220.45
7-20-35	One Glider	49.50
7-20-35	One Gas Heater	57.50
7-20-35	One linoleum	6.75
8-20-35	One Gas range	112.00
8-30-35	Rugs for President's home	500.00
9- 4-35.	Repairs to President's home	516.50
12-31-35	Drapes and rods	337.18
12-31-35	Nets and Curtains, 74	244.35
7-20-36	Refrigerator for President's home	298.50
11-20-36	Four Circulating heaters	130.25
12- 2-36	One rug and one rug pad for study	43.86
12-12-36	One Hoover sweeper	61.94
3- 4-37	Heater for President's home	87.00
		\$2,665.78 <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>W. B. Morrison to State Board of Education, "Southeastern Teachers College File," Department of Libraries, Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

## APPENDIX III

### Memberships

Kate Galt Zaneis held memberships in the following organizations :

1. American Association of University Women, State President.
2. American Legion Auxiliary
3. Chickasaw Historical Society
4. Delta Kappa Gamma, national society of recognized women educators. President of Zeta Chapter, 1935-1937.
5. Delta Kappa Pi, National Honor Society in Education.
6. Delphian Society
7. Democratic Party of the United States, charter sustaining member.
8. Eastern Star, Mattie Bruce Chapter.
9. Jefferson-Bryan Club of Oklahoma, largest club of Democratic women in the United States at the time, Membership Chairman for five years.
10. National Education Association, life member.
11. National Retired Teachers Association
12. Oklahoma Education Association, life member.
13. Oklahoma Heritage Association
14. Oklahoma Historical Association, life member.
15. Oklahoma State University Alumni Association, life member.
16. Rebekah Lodge #190.
17. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City.
18. Sigma Tau Delta, National English Fraternity.

19. Speakers Bureau for Oklahoma and the National Central Committee.
20. State League of Young Democrats.
21. Woman's Democratic Council of Oklahoma, President six years.

## APPENDIX IV

List of framed documents from Tabor Galt Collection of Zaneis Memoranda, Galt Residence, Norman, Oklahoma.

1. Teachers certificate, Southeastern Teachers College, May 20, 1925.
2. Bachelor of Arts, Southeastern Teachers College, July 21, 1926.
3. Oklahoma Education Association, Life Membership Certificate, 1931.
4. Master of Science, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, May 24, 1935.
5. Master of Science, Oklahoma State University, (to replace the diploma with the schools previous name.)
6. Sigma Tau Delta, April 14, 1937.
7. Advisory Committee on Womens Participation for the State of Oklahoma for the New York World's Fair, 1939.
8. Governor's appointment as Honorary Lieutenant Colonel on Governors Staff, May 14, 1946; October 25, 1954; December 14, 1954; November 14, 1956; September 12, 1957.
9. Committee for Celebration of Presidents Birthday for National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, 1948.
10. Certificate of Completion for Course of Study, "School Lunch Workshop," June 8, 9, 10, 1949; August 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1951; August 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1952.
11. State of Oklahoma, Civil Defense Agency, Certificate for Completion of Instruction in Civil Defense, January 9, 1953.
12. J. Howard Edmondson Award for Recognition and Appreciation of "Valor under fire on the political battlefield," 1958.

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1976.

## Vita

Linda Arlene Beach was born in Jackson, Michigan, January 21, 1943, the daughter of Leon W. Beach and Mable L. Beach. She resided in Jackson until her marriage to Richard J. Forbush in 1968 when she moved to Fenton, Michigan. Upon her divorce in 1973 she moved to Denison, Texas where she resides at the present.

She attended the public schools in Jackson, Michigan, where she graduated from Jackson High School in 1961. After two years at Jackson Junior College, Miss Beach attended Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, receiving the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1966. She was an exchange student at the University of Nigeria, Nsuka, Nigeria, Africa in 1965.

Miss Beach taught science at Hanover-Horton Independent Schools in Horton, Michigan, in 1968-1969. During her married years she was a substitute teacher at Hartland, Michigan, in the Hartland Consolidated Schools, teaching a full year of History and Science during the 1972-1973 school year. At this time she was also a member of the Community Education faculty teaching two night classes in Adult Education. Upon moving to Texas she began teaching at Sherman High School in the Geography and Biology departments. She teaches Interior Decorating at Grayson County Community College, evening division, and works as an Interior Decorator on a part-time basis.