

The History of MSS

Fifty years ago, MSS, Butler's student literary magazine, was founded. Since its beginning it has grown and changed, considerably. Over the last fifty years its literary merit has repeatedly won statewide acclaim and honors. In commemoration of the magazine's golden anniversary, the 1982 editors interviewed the faculty founder of MSS, Dr. Allegra Stewart. The following are comments from that meeting.

"I was asked in 1933 to back a student initiated literary magazine, I said, 'Of course I will.' I taught Creative Writing at that time and most of the advanced work came out of my class. I enjoyed working with the young people very much. We also would publish the winners of the writing contest in each opening issue of MSS.

"We were strict about material. The Freshman editor worked with the Freshman themes. We had a section of excerpts, paragraphs that were well written. The purpose of it was to encourage good writing. We never meant to make writers out of our young people; we just meant to interest them in writing well. Students were always interested in MSS, but it didn't sell much. It was never meant to be a commercial publication. We did everything. We ran off the pages, corrected them, did all the lay-out. The only thing we didn't do was set the type. We sold copies for 15¢ a piece.

"Remember, it was the Depression. Everybody was hard up. Butler was different then. I look back on that time and think of it as a time of innocence."

Dr. Werner Beyer, present faculty advisor of MSS, added:

"Increasingly in my many years as its advisor, MSS has become a showcase for good student writing and especially for imaginative creative writing by students interested in becoming professional writers, editors, public relations people, as well as teachers.

"MSS has provided a means for breaking into print, and a number of stories that have come out of my Creative Writing classes and first appeared in MSS have subsequently been reprinted in national magazines. At least a baker's dozen former MSS staffers have become professional writers or editors in the magazine and book publishing worlds.

"In recent years MSS has repeatedly received statewide recognition in competition with other college literary magazines.

"Best wishes for a scintillating future!"