From Canoes To Cars In 40 Years At KU

After 40 years of teaching at KU, Miss Cornelia Downs, professor of bacteriology, says she would rather talk about her students than her own accomplishments.

Although a nationally known bacteriologist, Dr. Downs is, in the words of one of her associates, "an extremely modest lady."

Dr. Downs, reluctant to talk about herself, spoke enthusiastically about her students who have distinguished themselves in the field of medicine.

gree in 1915, A. M. degree in 1920, and Ph. D. degree in 1924, all at KU.

She has had numerous federal research grants and is now working on six grants. During World War II she did research on germ warfare for the armed forces.

Dr. Downs worked for a year at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Her best known work has been in research to combat tularemia, a disease of rodents, domestic animals, and man.

Campus Was Prettier

When she first came to KU, Dr. Downs said the view from Mount Oread was prettier.

"The campus was not so beautiful then, but the Kaw Valley could be seen for miles, and it was an inspiring sight," she said.

Tennis, dancing and canoeing on the river were popular spare-time activities of the students then, she said.

"Boys used to take their dates for a canoe ride before they had cars. In fact, the biggest difference I've noticed has been the rapid increase in cars on the campus. When I first came here, there was only one car around, a Pierce Arrow belonging to a Beta," she said.

She said few facilities to serve the students, such as the Student Union, were here when she was a student.

The All-Student Council did sponsor dances, but they were held in halls downtown.

The epidemiology of tularemia is the object of the entomological study. Ticks and the tropical rat are being studied as transmitters of tularemia. It has been found that the tularemia organism lives a long time and in great numbers in the bodies of ticks. A tick is infected through its life and transmits the organism to the next generation thru its eggs.

The same is true of the tropical rat.

The work being done at K.U. is not a secret, according to Dr. Downs. However because it deals with infectious disease, it must be conducted in the virus laboratory and other portions of the campus to which only authorized personnel are admitted.

MISS CORA DOWNS

"If a teacher knows she has stimulated students to do worthwhile things, she can ask no more in the way of satisfaction," Dr. Downs said.

Dr. Downs entered KU as a student in 1911 and began teaching here in 1917. She received her A.B. degree in 1915, A.M. degree in 1920, and Ph.D. degree in 1924, all at K.U.

She has had numerous federal research grants and is now working on six grants. During World War II she did research on germ warfare for the armed forces.

Dr. Downs worked for a year at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Her best-known work has been in research to combat tularemia, a disease of rodents, domestic animals, and man.

Campus Was Prettier

When she first came to KU, Dr. Downs said the view from Mount Oread was prettier.

"The campus was not so beautiful then, but the Kaw Valley could be seen for miles, and it was an inspiring sight," she said.

Tennis, dancing and canoeing on the river were popular spare-time activities of the students then, she said.

"Boys used to take their dates for a canoe ride before they had cars. In fact, the biggest difference I've noticed has been the rapid increase in cars on the campus. When I first came here, there was only one car around, a Pierce Arrow belonging to a Beta," she said.

She said few facilities to serve the students, such as the Student Union, were here when she was a student.

The All-Student Council did sponsor dances, but they were held in halls downtown.

The epidemiology of tularemia is the object of the entomological study. Ticks and the tropical rat are being studied as transmitters of tularemia. It has been found that the tularemia organism lives a long time and in great numbers in the bodies of ticks. A tick is infected through its life and transmits the organism to the next generation thru its eggs.

The same is true of the tropical rat.

The work being done at K.U. is not a secret, according to Dr. Downs. However because it deals with infectious disease, it must be conducted in the virus laboratory and other portions of the campus to which only authorized personnel are admitted.

GRANT OF $30,000

To Support Research in Tularemia in Three K.U. Departments

A $30,000 grant by the Army Chemical Corps to support research in tularemia by three departments at the University of Kansas was revealed today by Chancellor Deane W. Malott.

The three-way project in bacteriology, biochemistry and entomology will be continued a second year by the grant from the Army. However, essentially the same study was sponsored three years by the Office of Naval Research. About $85,000 have been devoted to this research in the first four years.

Dr. Cora M. Downs, professor of bacteriology, is project chief for the largest portion of the project. Working under her direction are four technicians and three graduate students. Dr. Downs described the bacteriological portion of the project as a study of the fundamental mechanisms of immunity in tularemia, a disease often called rabbit fever.

A practical aspect is the search for better methods of vaccination. A satisfactory vaccine against tularemia exists and data is being compiled on reactions to various vaccines.

Dr. Russell C. Mills, associate professor of biochemistry, and three assistants are studying the metabolism of bacterium tularense, the "villain" that causes the disease.

(Continued on Page 2)