

## BENNETT CERF

Bennett Cerf had a national reputation for being on the TV panel "What's My Line?" He was also president and publisher of Random House, Inc., Madison Avenue, New York. He was the editor of the Modern Library, Landmark Books, and the American College Dictionary. I called on him in New York and invited him to come to the University both as a special lecturer and later on as a Commencement speaker. In February of 1956 he lectured in the Field House and spoke a great deal about the formulation of American literature and its influence in these days. His main theme, of course, was his appearance on "What's My Line?" and some of the unusual personalities that were on the program.

When he came to speak as Commencement speaker, I asked him to speak primarily on the American literature scene as it had an academic impact and also an educational value. He had been up practically all night the night before and so he again spoke largely about the TV appearances and it was a very popular speech and one that was very well received by the Commencement audience. I was disappointed, however, because I had wanted it to have more of an educational impact and influence in the community and at the University.

He sincerely asked me to call on him each time I went to New York and I went to 457 Madison Avenue on several occasions. I received a letter from him saying, "You and your family were wonderful to me in Tacoma last Friday night

and I hasten to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I was especially touched and delighted with the fact that your two little girls - whom I fell in love with at sight - elected to get up at the crack of dawn and ride with us to the airport. As I taxied off the runway I actually felt I was leaving behind three very old and dear friends."

On many occasions he sent us books - particularly as they were related to the youth and they are part of the cherished memorabilia of our times at the University and also they are in the girls' libraries.