A ROBE BY ANY OTHER NAME

As Commencement Day draws near, the question on everyone's lips is, "What to wear to Commencement Day?" The answer is: academic robes.

"How did the different disciplines come to be marked by academic robes with hoods of different colors?" Everybody, but everybody—asked me how. And I mean I haven't been able to walk ten feet on any campus in America without somebody grabbing my elbow and saying, "How did the different disciplines come to be marked by academic robes with hoods of different colors?"" This, I must say, is not the usual question asked by colleagues who grab my elbow. Usually they say, "Hey, Shorty, got a lemon tree in town?" And when I say no, they lured me to a tea house, and, therefore, the nation's leaders in intelligence and discrimination.

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Marble, the Shay's Rebellion Schottische, and the James K. A doctor of philosophy wears blue, a doctor of medicine wears yellow? Why, for example, should a master of library science wear lemon? Well, sir, to answer this vexing question, we must go back to -

Mr. Todhunter had hated Mr. Sigafoos since 1822 when both men had wooed the beauteous Melanie Zitt and Melanie had chosen Mr. Sigafoos because she was mad for dancing and Mr. Todhunter kept asking himself, and finally the answer came to him: books.

Mr. Todhunter stocked his library with lots of dandy books to try to win Melanie back in the summer. But Mr. Sigafoos kept asking himself, and finally the answer came to him: books.

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"What has Mr. Sigafoos got that I haven't got?" Mr. Todhunter said, "Hockey is more fun for both the players and the spectators, but it requires a good background and experience in playing before you reach the college level. You've got to be a good athlete - no good that you can forget skating and concentrate on all the other aspects of the game."

Coach Arthur E. "Art" Farnham, Jr., of Wayland, Mass., has been at various times over the past 20 years an assistant branch manager of the National Shawmut Bank, a combat Marine, a college distance runner, a high school tennis coach, a director of a boy's summer sailing camp, and an MIT track coach. He currently fills the last two positions, instructing physical education and freshman and varsity track at MIT during the school year, and administering Camp Namequist, at Orleans, Mass., during the summer.

Served in Marines

A native of Boston, Farnham attended Lexington High School where he played varsity football, track, and basketball. After graduation in 1940 he worked two years at the National Shawmut Bank in Boston, then entered the Marine Corps. Farnham served 27 months with the 3rd Marine Division on Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, and New Guinea, leaving the service in late October 1945. By November he was married and back in the book-selling business. He rose to the position of assistant branch manager at National Shawmut before enrolling in Springfield College in 1949.

Farnham had been at Springfield only two years when, during the Korean War, he was recalled to active duty, serving at Camp Lejeune, N. C., in 1951-52. The Marines started calling him on a successful coaching career, however, as the Farnham-coached track teams had undefeated records in competition against other service and college teams.

Both Captains And Coach

Back at Springfield College in 1953, his junior year, Farnham was both captain of the varsity and coach of the freshman cross-country team. By graduation in 1954, he had competed three years in cross-country and two in track as a distance runner. Due to a leg injury at the close of the 1953 season, he did not do any running his senior year, but he again coached the freshman cross-country team.

For three years previous to joining the MIT physical education staff Farnham taught and coached at Tarrytown, N. Y., High School. His track and cross-country teams consistently had winning records, including two undefeated track seasons, and he was a co-founder and co-president of the New York City track club. Two of his cross-country teams won the New York State 3rd and 4th in their class in New York State.

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(Author of "I Was a Teenage Dyke!," "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis," etc.)

But I digress. Back to the colored hoods of academic robes. A doctor of philosophy wears blue, a doctor of medicine wears yellow. Why? Why? Why? For example, should a master of library science wear lemon? Well, sir, to answer this vexing question, we must go back to March 29, 1844. On that date the first public library in the United States was established by Uriah Sigsam. All of Mr. Sigsam's neighbors were out, with great glee at last, is, except Wrex Todhunter.

Mr. Todhunter had hatred of Mr. Sigsam since 1822 when both men had wooed the beauteous Melanie Zitt and Melanie had chosen Mr. Sigsam because she was mad for dancing and Mr. Todhunter knew all the Latest steps, like the Missouri Compromise Mambach, the Shay's Rebellion Schottische, and the James K. Polk Polk, while Mr. Todhunter, alas, could not dance at all owing to a wound he had received at the Battle of New Orleans. (He was struck by a falling prairie.)

Consumed with jealousy at the success of Mr. Sigsam's Library, Mr. Todhunter resolved to open a competing library. This he did, but he hired not a single patron away from Mr. Sigsam. "What has Mr. Sigsam got that I haven't got?" Mr. Todhunter kept asking himself, and finally the answer came to him: books.

So Mr. Todhunter stocked his library with lots of dandy books and soon he was doing more business than his hated rival, but Mr. Sigsam struck back. To regain his clientele, he began serving tea free of charge at his library every afternoon. Thereupon, Mr. Sigsam began serving tea with sugar and cream. Thereupon, Mr. Todhunter began serving tea with sugar and cream and lemon.

This, of course, clinched the victory for Mr. Todhunter because he had the hot beverages in town—in fact, in the entire state of North Dakota—and since that day yellow lemon has of course been the color on the academic robes of library science.

And today Californians, happy among their Guernseys and Holsteins, are discovering a great new cigarette—the unfiltered, king-size Philip Morris Commander and none are Americans in all fifty states. Welcome aboard! © 1951 MacSkulnik