



Education, background and standing are all revealed in academic apparel—if you know how to look for them.

WHO'S WHO IN ACADEMIC GOWN

by ALI BÜLENT CAMBEL

Some notes on the origin and purpose of the Commencement cap and gown—or how to tell what's going by in an academic procession

THERE ARE FEW CEREMONIES more impressive than academic functions, with faculty members in full dress, wearing proper caps, gowns and hoods. And just as every faculty member enjoys an individuality within a group, so does his academic garb, which he wears on these special occasions. It should not be surprising, therefore, that academic apparel can be a most revealing characteristic as to an individual's education, background and standing.

In Europe, academic apparel goes back to medieval times. In the very early days, people in Europe—from king down to beggar—wore long gowns with hood and cap. The differentiation of social standings was made by observing the trimmings of the gown and the elegance of its bearer.

During this period, scholars did not have a special

type of dress, but in the 14th century various universities adopted codes prescribing the styles to be worn by their educators.

Around the 16th century, it became fashionable to wear trousers, breeches and plumed hats, but scholars did not become involved in this vogue. It is difficult to know whether this was due to traditionalism or to a decree which stated that "it is honorable and in accordance with reason that clerks to whom God has given an advantage over the lay folk in their adornments within, would likewise differ from the lay folk outwardly in dress."

Thus a tradition began which is precious to scholar, administrator, new graduate and, above all, proud parents.

The Intercollegiate Code

In the United States caps and gowns have been used since colonial times, with the Ivy League institutions being among the first to adopt such customs. As every institution had different criteria for the academic dress to be worn, there were many inconsistencies. To bring order out of chaos the Intercollegiate Commission, in 1894, drafted a most simple and adaptable code for the wearing of academic apparel. This Intercollegiate Code was presented to American universities in 1895 and today is accepted by almost all of our institutions of higher learning.

The bachelor gown is made of black worsted material and has long, pointed sleeves. The master gown, also black, may be of wool or silk and has long sleeves with

an arc and a slit for the arm. The doctor gown is made of black cotton, rayon-wool or silk and has full, round and open sleeves. There are three bars of velvet on each sleeve and the gown itself is faced with velvet in the front.

The mortar board and tassel are worn by all three degree holders or candidates. Bearers of doctorates and institutional presidents may wear a golden tassel in contrast to the black tassel, or a tassel with the color indicating the field of learning.

The hood, too, is worn by all degree candidates. The bachelor hood is three feet long; the master, three and one-half feet long; and the doctor, four feet long. The width of the hood binding changes with the degree, being two inches for the bachelor, three inches for the master and five inches for the doctor. The hood is made of the same material as the gown.

The color of the velvet hood binding is an important item and the following standard is set up by the Intercollegiate Code:

- Agriculture—Maize
- Arts and Letters—White
- Commerce and Accountancy—Drab
- Economics—Copper
- Engineering—Orange
- Fine Arts—Brown
- Forestry—Russet
- Humanities—Crimson
- Law—Purple
- Library Science—Lemon
- Medicine—Green
- Music—Pink
- Oratory—Silver Gray
- Pedagogy—Light Blue
- Pharmacy—Olive
- Philosophy—Blue
- Physical Education—Sage Green
- Public Health—Salmon Pink
- Science—Golden Yellow
- Theology—Scarlet
- Veterinary Science—Gray

The velvet trim of the doctor gown may be either black or the color of the field of learning, while the color of the velvet edging of all hoods indicates the field of learning.

No matter what the degree, all hoods are lined with silk of the official academic color or colors of the institution conferring the degree. Chevrons are used if the institution has more than one color. For example, the University of California, whose colors are blue and gold, has a hood lining of golden silk on which is superimposed a blue chevron. Different color shades are used whenever the same colors are shared by several institutions.

The scholar who does not appreciate the simplicity of the Intercollegiate Code would do well to study some of the British traditions of cap, gown and hood, which are confusing to say the least. And the educator who finds colored velvet not up to his standing is advised to receive a degree from the University of Paris which prescribes a scarf with no less than ermine trimming.

THE HIGH COST OF ACADEMIC COSTUME

FEW EDUCATORS can afford to own their own cap, gown and hood. Going rates for doctors' gowns, for example, range from \$42.50 for a poplin robe to \$80 for a rayon and wool creation. Doctors' hoods cost from \$23 to \$32. Caps are priced from \$2.85 to \$6.75—and the tassel, which is extra, comes in the \$2.50 to \$5 price range. All of which means that the well-dressed Ph.D. has to pay \$123.75 if he wants to be dressed in the best, and \$70.85 if he wants to be dressed at all.

Holders of the M.S. degree can join the academic procession for a mere \$78.25 for the best materials, or for \$40.85 for poplin. Bachelors' prices run from \$67.25 down to \$34.35.

The easy way out of this economic impasse, of course, is for just about everybody to rent his academic outfit. Doctors can do this for \$3 a day, masters for \$2.75, bachelors for a comfortable \$2.50.