

# DAVE GRAUE (1926-2001)

Cartoonist/Writer,  
Associate of  
Oklahomans  
Jack & Carole  
Bender



Dave Graue's cartooning/writing career was gloriously built around 50 years with Alley Oop.

Graue became assistant to Oop creator V.T. Hamlin in 1950, began writing every other story of the Alley Oop comic strip and doing most of the drawing in the mid-1960s and completely took over production of the strip early in 1973. In late 1991, when he retired as artist of the strip, he continued to write it for ten more years.

Graue was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1926 and moved with his family to Sarasota, Florida, in 1939. There his high school classmate was Teddy Hamlin, the daughter of V.T. This led to a meeting with her father and, eventually, a career. After military service in the Army Air Corps in 1945 and 1946, Graue attended the Art Institute of Pittsburgh in 1947 and 1948, then was a staff artist for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

He had stayed in touch with Hamlin and accepted the job as Hamlin's assistant in January, 1950. Other than a brief period around 1960, Oop was Graue's fulltime employer until retirement. Graue later lived in North Carolina.

Graue was associated with Tulsans Jack and Carole Bender for a decade. Graue hired Jack Bender as assistant on the Sunday Alley Oop in early 1991. Later that same year Graue announced his retirement from the strip and the NEA syndicate hired Bender as the new artist. Bender suggested that Graue stay on as writer and the idea took. When Graue retired ten years later, Carole Bender, who had assisted on the strip that entire period, was selected as the new writer by NEA.

In addition to Graue's Oklahoma connection with the Benders, he also illustrated a story ghosted by Tulsan Michael Vance in 1981. This episode ran from Feb. 28 through April 4 of that year.

A fine painter in oils, Graue had looked forward to devoting much more time to that career when he retired from Oop in April, 2001. Unfortunately, just before Christmas of that same year he was tragically killed in a two-vehicle accident in a rainstorm on a winding mountain road near his home.

*Dave Graue*