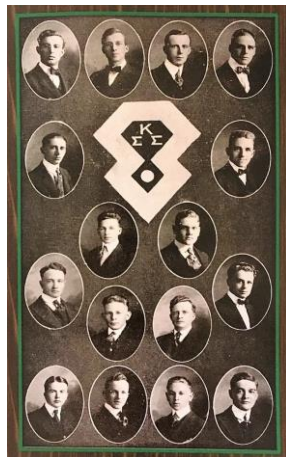




## Dr. Fred D. Fagg Jr. USC President, (1947 – 1957)

**Fred Dow Fagg, Jr.** was born July 30, 1896 in Brooklyn, New York, but moved to California to attend the San Diego Army and Navy Academy in Pacific Beach, California. He then entered the **University of Redlands** and in 1916 he was one of the founding brothers of the **Kappa Sigma Sigma** fraternity, designed the fraternity pin, and became an early chapter president.



With World War I raging in Europe, Fred left Redlands during his sophomore year to enlist in the U.S. Army. He completed flight training, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant, and became a pursuit pilot. In 1918 Fred was assigned to the **92nd Aero Squadron, U.S. Army Air Service** and flew day and night patrols across the English Channel looking for German Zeppelins.



When the World War I was over, Fred returned to the United States and re-entered the **University of Redlands**. A well-built young man, he had a life-long interest in sports which manifested itself in college by two years of intramural basketball and a year of varsity football. He was also an excellent debater. He received his B.A. in 1920 and took his M.A. at **Harvard** in 1921. For the next two years he served as an instructor in economics at **Harvard**. Two years later, Fagg was teaching economics at **Northwestern University** while also studying law.

On August 25, 1924, Fred Fagg married **Vera Wilkes** whom he had met at the University of Redlands. The Faggs had two children: Barbara Louise (later Mrs. William Buchanan), born in 1930, and Fred Dow III, born in 1934. Fagg's son, **Fred D. Fagg III** was later the Dean of the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon.

In 1927 Fred received his J.D. degree and returned to California where he taught economics at the **University of Southern California** and lectured in the School of Law. His interest in aviation surfaced again in 1928-29 which was spent as an exchange professor at the **Institute of Air Law at Konigsberg, Germany**. Dr. Fagg returned to Northwestern in 1929 where he served in many capacities including Vice President and Dean of the Kellogg School of Management.

In 1937, because of his aviation experience, he was appointed Director of the **Bureau of Air Commerce** in the Department of Commerce, when it was being investigated by Congress because of frequent air crashes and charges of inefficiency. Under Dr. Fagg, the bureau was reorganized, and regulations were drawn up that formed the basis for modern aviation policies. Dr. Fagg helped write the **Air Commerce Act of 1938**, on which many private and commercial aviation rules are based. Among the safety measures he proposed were those requiring planes to be equipped for "blind" flying in bad weather or at night and requiring pilots to file flight plans. In 1976, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded Dr. Fagg its Distinguished Service Award for founding the **Air Law Institute** in Chicago in 1929 and the **Journal of Air Law** in 1930.



On September 28, 1937, the Northwestern University Board of Trustees approved Dr. Fagg's appointment as **Dean of the School of Commerce**. When Franklyn Bliss Snyder was elected President of

Northwestern in 1939 Dr. Fagg was chosen to succeed Snyder as **Vice President and Dean of Faculties**. Dr. Fagg held this office until he was elected President of the **University of Southern California** in July 1947.



From 1947 to 1957, Dr. Fagg served as the **sixth president** of the **University of Southern California**, succeeding Dr. Rufus von KleinSmid, who became the University Chancellor. During Dr. Fagg's tenure, the University underwent a great deal of post-war growth, especially when the GI Bill afforded recent veterans numerous educational opportunities and the University needed to expand its facilities. He immediately turned his attention to easing space shortages, and in April 1948, USC dedicated some 29 buildings – most of them former U.S. Army barracks – that were donated by the Federal Works Agency and relocated from Santa Ana Air Base. Dr. Fagg also initiated the construction of much-needed new buildings, including a cafeteria and residence halls as well as classroom and research facilities.

As the University grew in significance nationally and internationally, Dr. Fagg instituted modern cost-accounting practices, establishing a development office and increasing library holdings by two-thirds. He also began a program of

land acquisition, expanding the boundaries of the University Park campus, to encompass the area bounded by Jefferson Boulevard to the north, Exposition Boulevard to the south, Figueroa Street to the east and McClintock Avenue to the west. Additionally, it was under his watch that the university purchased land near the Los Angeles county hospital to create the **Health Sciences campus**.

Major accomplishments during Dr. Fagg's tenure as USC President included:

**1948**

**Old College**, billed in 1884 as the university's first permanent building, is declared a fire and earthquake hazard, and is razed. **Troy Camp** is founded.

**1949**

Using the **Hancock Foundation**-sponsored "benthoscope" — a five-foot ball with steel walls and quartz windows for viewing the mysteries of the deep — USC's Otis Barton sets a world record by becoming the first mortal to descend alone to a depth of 2,300 feet off Santa Cruz Island. Daniel C. Pease and Richard F. Baker, both assistant professors in USC's medical school, use an electron microscope to take the **world's first photograph of genes**.

**1950**

*Life* magazine singles out **USC's Frank Baxter** as one of the eight finest college professors in the United States. (Baxter received two Emmys for his innovative "Shakespeare on TV" course.)

**1952**

**USC's Health Sciences** campus opens. On the University Park campus, the **Norris Dental Science Center** opens, capable of housing the entire operation of the dental school. USC initiates the first doctoral program in social work in the western United States. **USC's Institute for Safety and Systems Management** — the first academic unit in the country to offer degree programs in safety, human factors and systems management — is launched. USC becomes the West's first institution fully equipped to produce a television show.

**1953**

A new men's residence, **David X. Marks Hall**, is dedicated.

**1954**

Young trumpet player and Trojan Marching Band member **Herb Alpert** works his way through two years of USC by playing at weddings and bar mitzvahs. USC's first **SongFest** is held at the Greek Theater. USC inaugurates a cross-disciplinary **Division of Communication** involving the departments of cinema, drama, journalism, speech and telecommunications, providing an integrated course around the concept of human communication.

**1955**

California names USC's first building, today's **Widney Alumni House**, as State Historical Landmark no. 536.

**1956**

***The Face of Lincoln***, a film created by Merrell Gage, head of USC's sculpture department, and produced by the university's cinema department, wins an Academy Award for best short documentary.

**1957**

**USC's first computer** — the gift of an alumnus — is installed in **Biegler Hall**. USC begins its tradition of on-campus pre-game picnics and tailgates.

On January 11, 1957, Dr. Fagg submitted his resignation as President of the University of Southern California, effective July 1, because of poor health.

Dr. Fagg was a well-organized administrator, an educator who believed in thoroughly planned programs, an enthusiast for all aspects of aviation, and a firm upholder of college sports and the "conservative" American way of life. Dr. Fagg died Wednesday, October 14, 1981, of cancer at the Willamette View Convalescent Center in Portland, Ore. He was 85 years old.

The university established the "**Fred D. Fagg Jr. Gardens**" on the eastern part of McCarthy Quad, on campus...

Paul Alwine '62  
History Committee  
USC Half Century Trojans  
January 2021