

Dark-haired Tom Jordan is a 6 ft. 3 in. 21-year-old with a crew cut, a languid manner, a fondness for ^{hunting} ~~fishing~~, skiing, swimming, psychology, Shostakovich, ^h Katchaturian, Ibsen and Shaw, and a curiosity not so much about the how as the why of everything that excites his active mind.

He also is president of UMD's senior class, chairman of the student commission's academic affairs committee, a student assistant in the physics and mathematics departments, a designate of the 1958 "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities," and a member of the Engineers club.

His love of skiing has taken him to many an area skiing resort during his high school and college years. This spring he went with friends to Aspen to top off their 1958 skiing.

For eight years an avid archery fan, he and a friend, Paul Schmidt, have a joint hobby in bow and arrow making. They work in an inviting shop just off Tom's second-floor room in his parents' home at 2232 Roslyn avenue. Currently, they are more interested in tinkering out hi-fi sets.

And his honor point average during four years at UMD is something like 2.9, or a gnat's eyelash shy of straight A.

That this average stands up against the most exacting academic yardsticks in the nation is indicated by a rash of offers and opportunities coming his way.

He has been offered, on the basis of the ultra-stiff National Science Foundation examinations given only to top-ranking students, the first NSF fellowship ever awarded to a UMD student. He ranked in the 95th percentile in mathematics and only slightly lower in two other categories, thus outshone thousands of America's finest students.

He has been offered the coveted Woodrow Wilson ~~scholarship~~ ^{fellowship} a prestige opportunity available only to carefully selected top ranking students planning to teach in college or university.

And at last county he had offers for assistantships from nine leading American universities, each representing between \$2,000 and \$2,500 in compensation, tuition and other benefits. ^{fellowship}

The other day he decided to accept a full-time ~~scholarship~~ from the University of Rochester. The decision stemmed largely from a UMD campus visit in January by Professor R. E. Marshak, head of the U of R physics department.

A distinguished nuclear physicist himself, Marshak was a deputy group leader at the Los Alamos laboratories and helped conduct radiation research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology during World War II.

Tom is attracted to Rochester by its extensive physics department numbering 26 teacher-researchers, its excellent facilities and its nuclear research program that includes a famed annual conference attracting the world's leading physicists ~~and graduate students.~~

More specifically, Tom is interested in the "particle physics" program conducted at Rochester. The Eastern school was first, for instance, to find multiply charged nuclei in cosmic "star showers."

"No one really knows the order of atomic particles," explains Tom as he warms up to the subject of neutrons, protons, electrons, mesons, pi-mesons and other atom components.

"New particles are being found every so often. We know that some particles decay to form other particles. It seems about the most exciting thing in physics today."

Four years ago, Tom would have labeled as pure idiocy any suggestion that atomic particles would one day beckon him on to a fifth year of college study.

or back in 1954, as he neared graduation from Duluth East, he thought vaguely that he'd had about enough of school and might look for a job smewhere. Seventh highest in his class, he didn't relish more study the next fall.

As for UMD, he had no particular regard "except that I got the feeling it was a good place to go if one couldn't go to a more expensive school."

But he talked himself into trying engineering and, with a Marshall H. and Nellie Alworth scholarship in his pocket but still not sure what he wanted to do, started at UMD.

"I chose engineering because it had a lot of math, and at East I had found math one of my better subjects. But I still didn't know what I was looking for until I took a freshman physics course, required in engineering."

He and his^{physics} teachers gave free rein to some of his pet interests.

"They would give me the whole run of the laboratory some afternoons and spend hours with me themselves. I couldn't help but become interested. I guess that led to an addiction to the smaller campus where you get to know everybody."

Among his projects was an elaborate experiment to determine velocity and killing power of various weights of arrows. He put his findings into an article for the national magazine "Archery," that "settled the problem once and for all in pure physics, at least."

But the article just sparked a new round of controversy among archery fans. "I proved mechanically and mathematically that the heavier arrow has greater killing energy, but a lighter arrow can be shot at higher velocity with lower trajectory and more accuracy."

Although he was discovering that grades opened doors, he didn't let grades become an obsession. "An A is fine, but I'm not going to be heartbroken if I get a B." ~~So far his only B has been in a math course.~~ ←

He also has discovered a happy cycle. "You learn and enjoy most when you devote energy and interest to a subject. With the kind of help I have had, you just want to dig in."

While the Duluth campus environment has been ideal for him and his special interests, Tom believes it offers "the same opportunities to any person to work out his own set of ideal circumstances."

In four years, Tom hopes to have received the Ph. D. degree. Then he plans to work in industry or in government research for more experience. Eventually, he would like to teach and do research at a university.

Although afraid he might be accused of pontificating, Tom makes clucking sounds over a popular American notion that the nation can pay its way to better students as well as better schools.

"We need a change of attitude more than a change in our education budget," he suggests. "Many high school students won't make a maximum effort in the classroom for fear of ridicule from the anti-intellectuals, and I think they are many.

"We won't make much progress in reversing the trend until we honor the good student as we honor the good football player," he avers.

"It's not that we don't have people who can do the work. It's just that, for one of a number of social and academic reasons, many of them fail to get interested.

Although Russia has advanced spectacularly in certain fields, her total scientific and technical program is still behind America's, he believes.

"One thing is sure," says the lanky example of the well-rounded student, "if the Russians could build weapons as well as they create fine music, we'd really be in a fix."

And with that the UMD physics major with the nearly straight A average launches into something about the life, vitality and beauty of his favorite Shostakovich ^{Symphony} ~~ballad~~ and the Khachaturian piano concerto.