

THE FORENSIC

ΠΕΙΘΩ ΚΑΛΗ ΔΙΚΑΙΑ

Series 61

May, 1976

No. 4



*The texture of May in a memorial pool
and a life which looks back and ahead*

The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

SERIES 61

MAY, 1976

NO. 4

Table of Contents

The President's Message	3
Today's Relevance of Yesterday's Wisdom	4
Houston, 1936, and On	6
A Negative Response to Debate Parameters	9
Why Parameters?	11
Forensic Forum	13
Dear Editor	15
Two Seniors Reflect on PKD and Forensics	16
Provincial Tournament Results	20
Provincial Election Results	22
PKD Highest Distinction	23
New Members	24
Chapter News	26
Editor's Word	31

EDITOR CAROLYN KEEFE

ASSOCIATE EDITOR ROBERT BEAGLE
Edinboro State College
Edinboro, PA 16444.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR ADA MAE HAURY
Bethel College
North Newton, KS 67117.

DIRECTORY OF PI KAPPA DELTA

NATIONAL PRESIDENT—Evan Ulrey, Harding College, Searcy, AR 72143.

NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT—James DeMoux, Boise State University, Boise, ID 83725.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER—Theodore O. H. Karl, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA 98447.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS—Phyllis Bosley, Towson State College, Baltimore, MD 21204; Tom Harte, Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701; Jack D. Starr, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, WI 54601.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT—John E. Baird, California State University, Hayward, CA 94542.

HISTORIAN—Larry Norton, 1010 N. Heading Court, Peoria, IL 61604.

EDITOR OF THE FORENSIC—Carolyn Keefe, West Chester State College, West Chester, PA 19380.

PROVINCE GOVERNORS

1. PROVINCE OF THE PLAINS—Gary Horn, Southwestern College, Winfield, KS 67156.
2. PROVINCE OF THE MISSOURI—Robert Brewer, Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg, MO 64093.
3. PROVINCE OF ILLINOIS—Marie Robinson, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL 61701.
4. PROVINCE OF THE PACIFIC—Richard Lucas, California State College, Turlock, CA 95380.
5. PROVINCE OF THE SIOUX—James Zeman, Northern State College, Aberdeen, SD 57401.
6. PROVINCE OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI—Ron McCrory, University of Southwest Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70501.
7. PROVINCE OF THE LAKES—Roselyn Freedman, Morris Harvey College, Charleston, WV 25311.
8. PROVINCE OF THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI—Jack D. Starr, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, LaCrosse, WI 54601.
9. PROVINCE OF THE SOUTHEAST—Terry W. Cole, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608.
10. PROVINCE OF THE NORTHWEST—Leslie Lawrence, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59715.
11. PROVINCE OF THE NORTHEAST—Al Montanaro, State University of New York, Plattsburgh, NY 12901.
12. PROVINCE OF THE COLONIES—Patrick L. Miller, California State College, California, PA 15419.

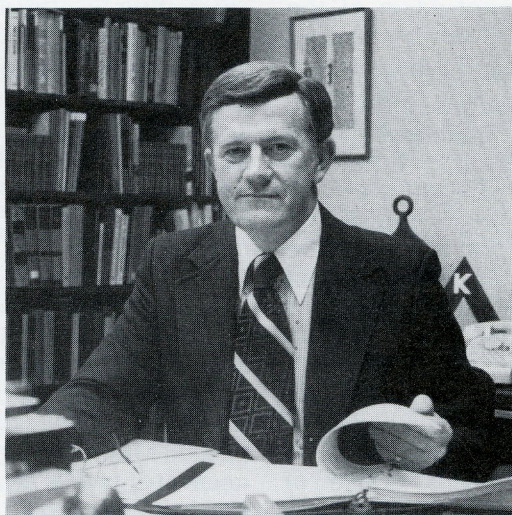
Published four times a year in October, January, March, and May by Pi Kappa Delta. Subscription price is part of the membership dues. For PKD alumni and non-members, the rate is \$2 for one year, \$3 for two years, and \$5 for three years.

Office of publication: West Chester State College, West Chester, PA 19380. Second Class postage paid at West Chester PA 19380.

Printed by Graphics Standard
West Chester, PA 19380.

The President's Message...

FORENSICS: PREPARATION FOR LIFE?



Evan Ulrey

The Greek master teacher, Isocrates, claimed that his school of eloquence prepared students for participation in the public life of Greece.¹ Plato denied that it did so and said rather that rhetoric as practiced by the sophists was a "knack" like cooking. What claims do we modern teachers of rhetoric, particularly of forensic rhetoric, make?

You have no doubt seen testimonies by various public figures that training in debate was crucial to their later achievements in the public life of our nation. What will you testify that forensic training has done for you, baccalaureate matriculators of 1976? Cicero, invoking the power of his model, proclaimed: "Then behold Isocrates arose, from whose school...none but real heroes proceeded..."² Do you seniors, products of modern forensic education, feel like "real heroes?"

What relevance to education or "training for public life" has three or four years participation in forensics in high school followed by a more intensive three or four years experience in college or university? Surely there must be some tangible result or carry-over effect from all this work.

Can we document our intangible impressions that this frenzied activity is really productive of good for our students?

I, of course, feel that the results of forensic activity can justify all the intellectual and physical exertion which goes into it. However, there doubtless is not a simple cause-effect relationship between amount of activity and desirable results. I want to suggest one criterion for the existence of a forensic program in a college or university.

A good program must have a sound theoretical base. The theory thus must be taught, not just "coached." Since the time of Isocrates, rhetoricians have accepted the truism that practice, theory, and criticism are essential ingredients of an art. We may ask ourselves just how thoroughly our students understand the theory of argumentation and persuasion. If students have been practicing the forensic arts since junior high school, and we recruit the winners and give them scholarships so they can continue their winning ways under our "coaching," one may well ask how sound a theoretical basis they develop for their practice and

(Continued on page 14)

Today's Relevance of Yesterday's Wisdom

Wayne Thompson

Scholarly expositions abound on Aristotle's great contributions to rhetoric, poetics, logic, politics, philosophy, and other academic fields, but little appreciated is the great perceptiveness of his commentaries on human nature and problems. Although the tone of the following article is lighthearted, the thesis is serious: Aristotle is an important source of trenchant observations on the human condition.

First in interest to those in forensics is the *Rhetoric*, which is an excellent source for passages both timely and timeless. In regard to susceptibility to praise or flattery, Aristotle observes, "And we also feel friendly towards those who praise such good qualities as we possess, and especially if they praise the good qualities *that we are not too sure we do possess*" (*Rhetoric* ii.4; italics added). Is there any debater or coach who has not known someone like that — perhaps a scholar who paid little attention to praise for his true achievements but who loved flattery for some minor accomplishment?

Other observations of human nature are equally astute. "... the audience," Aristotle says, "take the truth of what they know as so much evidence for the truth of what they do not" (iii.16). Elsewhere he notes, "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others: this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible" (i.2). As is true in so many other parts of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle goes a step beyond most modern commentators: many note the importance of ethical character but not its added importance when "certainty is impossible."

Still another shrewd observation is in the section on pity: "... what we fear for ourselves excites our pity when it happens to others" (ii.8). Two chapters earlier he notes, "... that is why we feel ashamed to refuse those a favour who ask one for the

first time — we have not as yet lost credit with them" (ii.6). Concerning wealth he points out, "Wealth as a whole consists in using things rather than in owning them" (i.5). On bravery he says, "For there are two reasons why human beings face danger calmly: they may have no experience of it, or they may have means to deal with it" (ii.5).

Other commentaries on human nature are numerous. Some are succinct and some are detailed. Of the latter, one of the most famous is the description of youth. Many readers find this passage as accurate today as it was in Classical Greece:

Young men have strong passions, and tend to gratify them indiscriminately. Of the bodily desires, it is the sexual by which they are most swayed and in which they show absence of self-control. They are changeable and fickle in their desires . . . their impulses are keen but not deep-rooted. While they love honour, they love victory still more; for youth is eager for superiority over others, and victory is one form of this. They love both more than they love money, which indeed they love very little, not having yet learnt what it means to be without it. . . . They look at the good side rather than the bad, not having yet witnessed many instances of wickedness. They trust others readily, because they have not yet often been cheated. They are sanguine; nature warms their blood as though with excess of wine; and besides that, they have as yet met with few disappointments. Their lives are mainly spent not in memory but in expectations. . . . They are easily cheated, owing to the sanguine disposition just mentioned. Their hot tempers and hopeful dispositions make them more courageous than older men are. . . . They have exalted notions, because they have not yet been humbled by life or learnt its necessary limitations. . . . They would always rather do noble deeds than useful ones: Their lives are regulated more by moral feeling than by reasoning. . . . They are fonder of their friends, intimates, and companions than older men are, because they like spending their days in the company of others. . . . They think they know everything, and are always quite sure about it; this, in fact, is why they overdo everything (ii.12).

But much in the *Rhetoric* is timely besides the observations on human nature. Much of the advice is relevant to today's intercollegiate debate, as three widely different passages demonstrate. First, with a shrewd observation on human nature generally, Aristotle identifies the debater's motivation:

Victory also is pleasant, and not merely to "bad losers," but to every one; the winner sees himself in the light of a champion, and everybody has a more or less keen appetite for being that. The pleasantness of victory implies of course that combative sports and intellectual contests are pleasant. . . . For where there is competition, there is victory. That is why forensic pleading and debating contests are pleasant (i.11).

Also on debate is a justification for debating both sides, an issue that a few years ago was hotly waged in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* and other learned journals: ". . . we must be able to employ persuasion, just as strict reasoning can be employed, on opposite sides of a question, not in order that we may in practice employ it in both ways but in order that we may see clearly what the facts are" (i.1).

Of the many passages related to the techniques of debating, the one that I favor for its perceptiveness is this one on examples:

. . . we should use our Examples as subsequent supplementary evidence. They should not precede the enthymemes: that will give the argument an inductive air. . . . if they follow the enthymemes, they have the effect of witnesses giving evidence. . . . For the same reason, if you put your examples first you must give a large number of them; if you put them last, a single one is sufficient; even a single witness will serve if he is a good one (ii.20).

The main thrust of the *Rhetoric* is that of advising on speechmaking, but space permits citing only those passages of unusual astuteness. On the nature of metaphors, Aristotle says, "Metaphors must be drawn . . . from things that are related to the original thing, and yet not obviously so related" (iii.11); and on the place where special devices for stimulating attention are needed, he says, ". . . calls for attention, when required, may come equally well in any part of the speech; in fact, the beginning of it is just where there is least slackness of interest" (iii.14).

Striking is the explanation of the proper

length for the opening section of a speech: "Remember what the man said to the baker who asked whether he was to make the cake hard or soft: 'what, can't you make it *right*?' Just so here. We are not to make long narrations, just as we are not to make long introductions or long arguments" (iii.16).

Scattered through the *Rhetoric* are many ideas that have retained their importance. The basis for English democracy is the concept that the basis for government should be not men, but laws; this idea can be found in the first chapter of the *Rhetoric*. Basic plots for tragic drama appear in the section on pity. Moreover, as an article in the magazine *ETC* indicates in detail,¹ the roots of general semantics are found in Aristotle. The ideas that "the word is not the thing," that "the map is not the territory," and that careful discourse requires dating and indexing all appear in Aristotle. Likewise to be found is an early version of the motivational explanation of behavior; man does, he points out, "whatever creates or increases happiness or some part of happiness," and he avoids "whatever destroys or hampers happiness" (i.5).

Besides the *Rhetoric* other Aristotelian works contain passages and ideas that are timely, timeless, or both. During one autumn I compiled a collection of several hundred striking and sometimes humorous passages that he organized under 189 topic headings ranging from "the active life" to "youth." A few of these topics and the related passages will close this article.

On adultery Aristotle says, "Nor does goodness or badness with regard to such things depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and the right way, but simply to do any of them is to go wrong" (*Nicomachean Ethics* ii.6).

On appetite he writes, ". . . children in fact live at the beck and call of appetite" (*Nicomachean Ethics* iii.12).

On censorship the stand is clear: "And since we do not allow improper language, clearly we should also banish pictures or speeches from the stage which are indecent" (*Politics* vii.17).

On civil rights Aristotle says,

(Continued on page 8)

*Larry Norton,
the current historian,
who also served PKD
as national president
and secretary-treasurer,
pulls from his
prodigious memory in . . .*

HOUSTON, 1936, AND ON.



It was the academic year 1935-36 and the twenty-fourth in the history of Pi Kappa Delta. The fraternity historians of that era refer to it vaguely as one of the years in the period of tournament expansion. For me it was the year that I was introduced to Pi Kappa Delta. In September of 1935 I moved from Adrian College in Michigan, a non-affiliated school, to the Beta chapter number thirteen at Eureka College in Illinois. Dr. Harry Pritchard, one of the national founders, had been president of the college several years earlier. The proud heritage lingers on to this day. Adrian College was granted a charter in 1971.

No single forensic year exists unto itself, so it is natural that the following reflections should not be limited entirely to the one particular year. Through much of the twenties and into the thirties, rapid expansion of intercollegiate forensics was accompanied by problems of judging, ethics, and awards. Criticisms of the tournament as a way of forensic life were numerous and justified. By 1936 the editor of *The Forensic*, Alfred Westfall, former historian, treasurer, secretary, and president of Pi Kappa Delta, was asking the question: "What does a debater get from his 50th debate that he has not already obtained from his 49th?"

Clarence Nystrom of Wheaton College, now retired and living in Scotts Valley, California, was but one of a number of skeptical coaches who doubted that the critic judge could adequately coach the many unprepared debaters attending tournaments. Adding to the growing problem was the large number of critic judge-coaches who were also unprepared to present adequate critiques, because the time between weekend tournaments was too short for preparation, not only of their speakers but also of themselves.

In the early thirties numerous experiments were introduced in an attempt to "save debate." The non-decision debate became popular as a means of escaping the competitive pressures and the decision-making judge. The Oregon cross-examination plan and the direct clash debates were given a trial in an effort to spark enthusiasm of speakers and, hopefully, of audiences. The congressional form directed attention to new values, and the extempore debate added a variety of topics for a variety of audiences.

Such experiments, together with the period of economic depression, calmed the critics to some extent, and by the middle of the decade it was full speed ahead.

Coaches and students were digging deep in their own pockets to finance frequent trips from January through March. Soon it was December through March and then November through April. In that year coaches were thinking, "Can there be too much of a good thing?" but they were saying, "I need an assistant coach."

The Eleventh Biennial Convention of Pi Kappa Delta was held at Houston in March of that year. George McCarty was president and Sylvester Toussaint was president elect. Among the 666 delegates from the 150 active chapters was E.R. Nichols, founder and first president and editor. One of his many talented students from Redlands was Weston McIntosh who went on to become a director of forensics and college president. The roll call included an amazing number of students and coaches who later made significant contributions to their chosen profession.

The three LeVander boys were there. Ted, coach of oratory at Augustana in Illinois, was starting a career in which he would be responsible for many of the best orators in the long oratorical history of Illinois. Forty years later, still at Augustana, Ted judged in the Interstate Oratorical Contest held at Bradley in 1975. His brother Harold attended as coach of the Macalester delegation and served as chairman of the men's extempore committee. He was appointed chairman of the Constitutional Revision Committee for the following convention. Harold later became Governor of Minnesota. Bernard, a younger brother, competed for Gustavus Adolphus at Houston. All the brothers were at one time intercollegiate orators and special distinction members at Gustavus Adolphus under coach Evan Anderson.

George Henigan and Donald Smith were debating together again as they had in 1934 at Lexington, representing Kearney State of Nebraska. Later, George became chairman of the speech department at George Washington University, and Don is now serving as vice-president of the University of Wisconsin. Walter Murrish, currently chairman of the Public Relations and Research Committee of Pi Kappa Delta, was another member of that distinguished delegation.

The late United States Senator Karl Mundt, coach at Eastern State Teachers at Madison, South Dakota, and governor of the Province of the Sioux, stayed home to campaign for the office of Congressman. Thirty-five years later another South Dakota politician and Pi Kappa Deltan stayed home to campaign for President of the United States and received his Distinguished Alumni Award in absentia. His name is George McGovern. Dwayne Orton, coach at the College of the Pacific, brought four students. Dwayne later became a college president and then editor of THINK magazine, a high quality IBM publication. He was an outstanding lecturer on the college circuit and was honored with a Distinguished Alumni Award at the Bowling Green Convention in 1959 where I had the privilege of making the presentation.

Warren Strausbaugh had just succeeded Wilbur Moore at Colorado Alpha. Wilbur became editor of *The Forensic* from 1947-51 while at Central Michigan University. Twenty years later *The Forensic* returned to Central Michigan under the editorship of Gil Rau. Among Warren's students at Houston was Alfred Westfall, Jr. whose father, mentioned earlier, was a national officer for twenty-seven years. Warren became a very longtime member of the University of Maryland Speech Department. During some of the depression days of 1933-34, we worked together in a survival job — dishwashing in Iowa City's finest hotel.

From Illinois State University came Donald Holley and Robert Turner among the many who were directed into the speech profession during the great eras of F.L.D. Holmes and Ralph Micken. They blazed the trail for Carl Wilson, John Keltner, Dane Harris, Don McConkey, Marvin Kleinau, Stan Rives, Roger Hufford, Jack Parker, Neal Claussen, Ed Carpenter, Don McHenry, Jim Backes, George Tuttle, and many others. From Western Illinois at Macomb were two undergraduates, Wayne Thompson and Otis Aggert, Jr. Both were destined to become national leaders in speech as teachers, authors, editors, and administrators.

Obviously scores of others, many of whom we never met personally, went

away from Houston in 1936 to achieve success and recognition. One was Ralph Fjelstad, a junior and special distinction member in debate, who represented Concordia College in Minnesota. He placed in the semi-finals of men's extempore speaking and tied for third in debate. The general subject for extempore was, "The Foreign Relations of the United States." Ralph later earned a Ph.D. degree in political science at Northwestern University. Since 1948 he has taught at Carleton College. When my daughter Jeanne entered Carleton and majored in government and international relations from 1958-62, Ralph was her instructor and department chairman.

needs doing it ought not to be left undone, whether it be day or night. There are occasions when a master should rise while it is still night; for this helps to make a man healthy and wealthy and wise" (*Economics* i.6).

In various places Aristotle writes on such timeless topics as health, happiness, friendship, marriage, and love; he also writes on developments and problems that we consider contemporary — athletics, Communism, free love, "hippies," juvenile delinquency, long hair, women's rights, medicare, welfare programs, and the population explosion. That space does not permit citations on all of these topics is regrettable, for the views remain fresh.

Today's Relevance of Yesterday's Wisdom

(Continued from page 5)

"Everywhere inequality is a cause of revolution" (*Politics* v.1); and later he writes, "Equality consists in the same treatment of similar persons, and no government can stand which is not founded upon justice" (*Politics* vii.14).

On corruption (which did not begin with Watergate or Teapot Dome) Aristotle observes, "For the people do not take any great offence at being kept out of the government . . . but what irritates them is to think that their rulers are stealing the public money" (*Politics* v.8).

On courage and cowardice the sage remark is that "People who are ignorant of the danger also appear brave" (*Nicomachean Ethics* iii.8).

On drunkenness Aristotle has numerous comments, one of which is this: "Wine also makes men amorous; as is shown by the fact that a man who is drinking is induced to kiss those whom, owing to their appearance or age, no sober person should kiss" (*Problems* xxx.1).

On the values of early rising, Aristotle predated Franklin: "And since it is good for the formation of character and useful in the interests of economy, masters ought to rise earlier than their slaves and retire to rest later. . . . when anything

Perhaps a good way to close this brief excursion is to refer to one of the liveliest of contemporary issues — women's liberation. On most issues Aristotle is consistent; but as with the Bible and the writings of Shakespeare, the Aristotelean corpus is so vast and the contexts in which sentences appear are so varied that one can find support for both sides of some issues. So is it with women's "lib," as it is with civil rights demonstrations and the giving of welfare. "Where, as among the Lacedaemonians, the state of women is bad," the Stagerite writes, "almost half of human life is spoilt" (*Rhetoric* i.5). Elsewhere, however, is a passage that gives the Germaine Greers and the Gloria Steinems no encouragement: "... the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled" (*Politics* i.5). Male chauvinists and female activists, choose as you prefer!

Note

¹Wayne N. Thompson, "Aristotle: A Forefather of General Semantics?" *ETC*, 28 (Dec. 1971), 469-75.

Wayne Thompson was a student member of Illinois Nu, and he served as PKD sponsor at Bowling Green State University and at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He holds the degree of highest distinction in the orders of debate, competitive individual speaking, and instruction. Presently he is a professor at the University of Houston, Central Campus. This article is a revision of a speech given on October 2, 1975, at the annual meeting of the Texas Speech Communication Association.

PARAMETERS FOR THE NATIONAL DEBATE

RESOLUTION: A NEGATIVE RESPONSE

James J. Floyd

In the January issue of *The Forensic*, President Ulrey presents several arguments in favor of "parameters" for the national debate resolution. He suggests, further, that it might be necessary to "go beyond parameters to limit the topic areas." And while he feels that "we shouldn't have to have them," it has become necessary if we are to maintain tournament debating "as an educational activity rather than as an exercise in sophistic nit-picking."¹

Having read Professor Ulrey's arguments, I feel that it is necessary, in the spirit of honest debate, to question what appear to me as unfounded and unsupported assumptions about the current status of tournament debate. Surely we cannot afford to ignore the negative side of such a sweeping indictment of the status quo as that presented by the President.

In order to avoid mere "nit-picking," I shall limit my response to five of Dr. Ulrey's arguments: 1) that comparative advantages cases are used primarily to avoid topicality, 2) that "it is rather passé. . . to argue topicality" in a debate, 3) that it is "passé to argue that the affirmative must show its 'comparative advantage' is a significant improvement over the status quo and that it is unique," 4) that because teams winning the flip of a coin in elimination rounds choose the affirmative side, most winning cases are off the topic, and 5) that establishing parameters will somehow solve any problem that might now exist.

Turning to that first argument, there are indeed other reasons for presenting a comparative advantages case than merely to avoid topicality. The simplest reason is that the affirmative may decide that the proposed plan will more effectively meet the goals of the status quo. This merely shifts the debate from arguing for total rejection of the status quo to arguing the

benefits that a *topical* plan can produce. A second reason, as William English and B.L. Ware have explained, is to "directly counter some negative disadvantages" and to give the affirmative a better chance to deal with "negative expansion tactics."² Evidently Professor Ulrey is not concerned with the frequently employed negative practice of making the first affirmative rebuttal an almost impossible task by presenting an overwhelming number of plan attacks.

Secondly, it is difficult for me to understand how anyone can reasonably conclude that it is "passé" to argue topicality. In weekend after weekend of judging debates, I cannot recall a single tournament in the last four years in which I have not heard negative teams present topicality arguments. I see no reason why the negative team cannot argue for rejection of the affirmative case on the basis of topicality and convince the judge to vote accordingly. This is exactly what happened in a large tournament early this season. Other judges and I voted against a blatantly non-topical case, and the team running it failed to qualify for the elimination rounds.³ While this is only one example, it clearly leaves open to question the blanket assertion that topicality arguments are "passé." In addition, I would like to quote what a judge wrote on the ballot in a debate in which one of my teams went negative against a team from a respected debate school. "I accept negative position on this not being a comprehensive land use case."⁴ The least President Ulrey could do is to provide some support for his conclusions that topicality is not argued and that the affirmative can successfully "present any case at all, however remote to the national topic."

Closely related to the charge that topicality is a "passé" issue is the assertion that it is also "passé" to challenge the af-

firmative to demonstrate significance and uniqueness of advantages. I know of nothing that supports this position and would expect anyone maintaining it to provide some kind of proof that it is true. While the degree of significance is less in a comparative advantages case,⁵ I know of no debate theory that frees the affirmative from demonstrating significance. Neither do I know of any justification for freeing the affirmative of the burden to prove uniqueness. In fact, this is the very issue that dominates many debates in which the CA case is presented. This is why I spend hours with my debaters reviewing ballots and revising cases when we have lost because we have lacked impact and uniqueness.

Professor Ulrey's fourth major argument implies that, since teams frequently choose to defend the affirmative side in elimination rounds, they wish to take advantage of the "hapless negative" by whipping out their successful off-topic cases. Again, I must ask for some kind of proof. For example, is there any evidence that affirmatives win more preliminary rounds than do the negative teams? If not, it might be just as reasonable to conclude that these teams have good affirmative cases and feel more comfortable defending cases that have helped them reach elimination rounds, especially when they know that their opponents probably have good cases also. Topicality does not necessarily have anything to do with it.

Finally, I would like to examine the idea of establishing parameters (or specific topic areas) as a means of solving our alleged problems. If the desire to present off-topic cases is as pervasive as Professor Ulrey would have us believe, it is not beyond the realm of probability that we will hear complaints of "non-parametric" cases. This would merely demonstrate the difficulty of solving a problem of interpretation by decree. If it is true that judges refuse to vote against non-topical cases, why is it reasonable to assume that they would not vote for cases outside the parameters?

Additionally, it is not particularly clear to me that anyone (or any group of people) have the inside track on determining what the correct parameters are. I would

maintain that few topics actually have clearly definable parameters. What authority would decide? If, for example, we were to turn to *Black's Law Dictionary* for a definition of *land*, here is what we would find: "'Land' includes not only the soil or earth, but also things of a permanent nature affixed thereto or found therein, whether by nature, as water, trees, grass, herbage, other natural or perennial products, growing crops or trees, minerals under the surface, or by the hand of man, as buildings, fixtures, fences, bridges, as well as works constructed for the use of water, such as dikes, canals, etc. It embraces not only the surface of the earth but everything under or over it."⁶

Essentially, my disappointment in the President's article centers upon the lack of substantiation in support of his assertions. He presents a bleak picture of the state of tournament debating and does so in a manner that falls short of what I would expect of a debater's obligation to present a prima facie case. In spite of the need to strive for better judging and coaching, I am favorably impressed with the efforts of today's college debaters. I think they justify every cent of budget money being spent on them.

Notes

¹Evan Ulrey, "Establish Parameters for the National Debate Topic," *The Forensic*, Series 61, No. 2 (January 1976), 8.

²William B. English and B. L. Ware, "A Comparison of the Need—Plan and the Comparative Advantage Approach: There Is a Difference," in James I. Luck, ed., *Proceedings: National Conference on Argumentation* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1973), p. 9.

³Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois. "Season Opener Tournament," September 26-28, 1975.

⁴Western Illinois, Round I, Central Missouri State University (Negative) vs. Eastern Illinois University (Affirmative). Decision to CMSU.

⁵English and Ware, p. 11.

⁶*Black's Law Dictionary* (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1957), p. 1019.

James J. Floyd is an assistant professor of speech and the director of forensics at Central Missouri State University. He sponsors the Missouri Eta chapter.

WHY INTRODUCE PARAMETERS?

HOW CAN THEY WORK?

WHAT GOOD CAN THEY POSSIBLY DO?

Roger Hufford, PKD's representative to the National Committee on Discussion and Debate, gives his replies to these questions.

Two recommendations of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics include specific suggestions relevant to parameters:

Organizations appointing members to the SCA Committee on Intercollegiate Discussion and Debate should instruct them to include with each proposition submitted for final vote a brief statement of its substantive parameters.¹

Forensic organizations and directors of individual tournaments in academic debate should develop methods whereby the central themes of debate cases to be employed in a given tournament are disclosed to all participants in that tournament in advance of the event.²

While disagreement exists about both suggestions, both were passed by the conference, and the first has now been endorsed by all organizations appointing members to the topic selection committee. This year the ballot for the national debate topic will include parameters.

The rationale is stated succinctly in *Forensics as Communication*:

...decisions are best made after rigorous testing of opposing arguments. Rigorous testing is not achieved when arguments are encountered by surprise, without the opportunity for prior research or reflection by the opposition.³

Parameters are a tool, and it will take time for the forensic community to develop skill in their use. Most tools can be misused. Parliamentary procedure, for example, can be used by persons of good will to make meetings run smoothly or can be misused to impede and confuse.

Debaters, coaches, and judges will need to work cooperatively to make the parameters serve the forensic community well.

Why do we select a debate topic, anyway? Ordinarily, serious discussion of issues requires adequate notice so participants can be well informed. In court, briefs are exchanged. In government, bills go through committee, then are listed on an agenda. We require environmental impact statements on a variety of projects. Serious problem solvers do not take opponents by surprise but invite full deliberation in advance of reaching a decision. We select a topic to let people know what is going to be debated!

Outside of academic debate, notice is ordinarily clear and specific — "The House of Representatives will debate on H.R. 6278 on Wednesday at 2 P.M.," and copies of the bill are available in advance. Only in academic debate do we put a *double* burden on a topic statement: it must indicate what is to be debated in October but in such broad language that we will not have exhausted the subject next April or May.

This double burden is more than language or the topic selection committee can reasonably bear. Some critics are outraged at the squirrel interpretations and unreasonable research burden resulting from an attempt to phrase a topic that will "last the season." I share their outrage. Others condemn the kind of narrow, restrictive pattern they believe the first set of critics is advocating — a return to the