

# THE FORENSIC

OF PI KAPPA DELTA

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"Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. . . . We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation."

— Edward Sapir, "The Status of  
Linguistics as a Science,"

Language, Vol. V, pp. 209-219 (1929).

# The President's Page

The 1949-50 season is at the moment recorded in the history of forensics. The province tournaments are over and the different chapters are either quite happy as to the results or else there may be some disappointments. In either case one must realize that forensics in any of its forms where the contest is involved must be recognized as a sort of game.

Many teams have won decisions and lost debates and probably as many have found the reverse to be true. Within the next few months many schools will close. Some will continue on through the summer but without a forensic program of the competitive variety. Students have to face the fact either of graduation or the possibility of coming back for another year to do a better job since more experience has been part of the training.

Probably there will be a bigger push for the individual whether as a coach or a contestant since next spring brings the convention where representatives from chapters all over the nation will meet. Some students will feel that they have been cheated since their graduation comes at a time when they are denied the privilege of attending a national convention. This is unfortunate because there is great value in having the opportunity and privilege of meeting the delegates who attend national conventions.

Plans are practically complete for our '51 convention to be held on the campus of A & M College at Stillwater, Oklahoma. It is probably worth your while to know at this time at least the general plans for the convention so that you can operate during the summer or while you are on vacation in the light of these facts. Next fall should bring more specific information about the details of the convention, and the arrangements for holding this convention at approximately Eastertime in 1951.



# Draw Three

B. W. HOPE, Marshall College

At the last extemporaneous speaking contest I judged I heard a contestant say, "Extemp's a good contest—but it's too bad it can't be better."

I think I know what he meant. Extemp is a good contest. But I think that participants, coaches, and judges alike often get the feeling that it somehow doesn't measure up to its potentialities. It's good — couldn't it be better?

Well, what's wrong with it? And then—what can we do about it?

My opinion on what is wrong with extemp can be summed up in three harsh adjectives, which will be properly qualified in due course: extemp is unrealistic, uninteresting, and unfair.

Extemp is unrealistic. Our speech contests are supposed to correspond to real life speaking situations. In that lies their appeal to the student, and their value as training procedures. What is the parallel in real life to this "draw three topics—prepare one hour" procedure of the extemp contest?

If you wanted to explain the extemporaneous speaking contest to someone who knew nothing about it, to what situation within his experience would you compare it? The only comparable procedure I can think of is that of the oral examination. And I'm sure that that's about what it looks like to the extemp speaker preparing for the contest for the first time. You study a subject, you are given a question, you prepare an answer and deliver it orally. If the contest is the kind in

which the use of materials is banned or restricted, or where contestants are penned up in a room under a proctor while they work out their "answer", the resemblance to the examination situation becomes even more striking—and oppressive.

Now, as the contestant learns, the contest is a very different thing from an oral exam, and it is not nearly as unrealistic as it looks. These artificial restrictions are not like those of real life—but they do enforce the use of the speech skills that are needed in the real life speaking situation. Still, the restrictions are artificial, and arbitrary, and they still look and to some extent are—unrealistic.

"Uninteresting" is a relative term. But because the extemp contest is unrealistic, because it seems artificial, because it lacks the unity and direction of real life speaking, it does fail to achieve the interest we'd like a good speech contest to have. Probably the heart of the matter is that the contest speaking is *unmotivated*. In the oratorical contest the speaker is at least talking about the subject he wants to talk about—presumably the subject he wants to talk about more than any other. Why is the extemp speaker talking on his subject? Because he drew it out of a hat. The whole procedure lacks real purpose and motivation, and so degenerates into exhibitionism—of information, of organization, of delivery.

Unrealistic, uninteresting, and unfair? The extemp contest was devised to prevent unfairness—to insure that the student in a speech contest give his own speech, and not



something by the teacher or Aunt Mamie or William Jennings Bryan. But I think it has developed a special unfairness of its own, due to the "luck of the draw".

The luck of the draw is an important factor in the extemp speaker's success, not merely because he has a limited choice of topics, but because the topics drawn are so unequal in their usefulness as speech subjects.

It is difficult to compose thirty topics in a subject field which present tasks of equal difficulty to the speakers drawing them. Some topics will be inherently interesting; others inherently dull. On some the speaker will have considerable resources of information to draw on; other topics, while perhaps equally significant, will just have been less discussed, less explored, in the materials on the subject area. You can try to get balanced topics, which will make relatively equal demands upon the speakers, and provide them with fairly equal opportunities for good speechmaking. I said you can *try*. But it's difficult to get a list which will not make the luck of the draw an important factor in deciding who comes up with the best speech.

Under this heading of unfairness and the problem of composing good topics we should also take note of one of the major difficulties in judging the extemp contest. How strictly can you hold the speaker to his topic? How can you decide whether his interpretation of the scope of the topic is a fair one or not? A contestant, speaking on "Recognition of Communist China", delivers a diatribe on Communism, with a few incidental references to China, which you suspect is a canned speech also

to be used, with some adaptation, on "Outlawry of the Communist Party", "Should we compromise with Russia?", "The Marshall Plan", and probably half a dozen other current topics. But still—it *is* a speech on "Recognition of Communist China". I think you'll hear at least one such adaptable speech in every extemp contest that you judge.

Extemp, then, tends to be unfair because of the difficulty of getting topics of equal usability, and topics which will require a really extemporaneous speech instead of a more or less adapted canned speech.

I believe that two changes in procedure can make extemp more realistic, more interesting, and more fair. These changes are not fundamental, or involved, or even new, but I think they would help get the improvement that we need.

In the real life speaking situation most closely corresponding to the extemp contest situation, the stimulus or the speaking is not a "topic". Something has been said or written which requires a response—and the speaker responds. And if someone else stands to speak, he does not use some unrelated "topic"—he deals with the same problem.

This, I think, indicates the nature of the two procedural changes in extemp which we need.

One: The subject in the contest should not be presented to the contestants as a "topic", but as a full statement, the kind of statement which would bring forth speechmaking in real life—a brief editorial or speech, or a selection from an editorial or speech, or a resolution, which will not only give the speaker something to talk about, but which will



give meaning and purpose and motivation to that talking.

Two: All speakers should respond to the same statement—the same resolution, or editorial, or speech.

A few possibilities for exploiting this procedure might be suggested. This subject-statement might come, not from some anonymous speech teacher, but from some one of importance in public life—from a Senator, from an authority on foreign affairs or farm problems, from a crusader or novelist or philosopher or editor.

The general subject on which contestants prepare might be just a subject field, as now (though such a broad area as "current affairs" would probably be ruled out) or it might be a book, old or new, of outstanding significance, or an outstanding group of articles or essays on a central theme. In this case the statement could come from the author or authors.

How this procedure would achieve a greater degree of realism is, I think, clear. How it would achieve greater motivation and interest is also clear. How would it make possible greater fairness?

I believe it would result in greater fairness because:

(1) A statement of this kind, of perhaps one hundred to three hundred words, could touch the essential aspects of the whole field in a way that would make possible a good speech from anyone who was familiar with that field. Some element of chance would remain, but it would be greatly reduced. And though the statement would in a sense be

broad, it would at the same time require a truly extemporaneous speech, tailored to the requirements of the situation—no canned speech would be possible.

(2) The use of the single subject for all speakers would make possible direct comparison and evaluation of speeches, to a degree that is out of the question when speakers talk on widely differing topics. This use of the single subject might require that contestants not hear those who precede them, but I think this is a comparatively unimportant objection, especially since that is true of many extemp contests now.

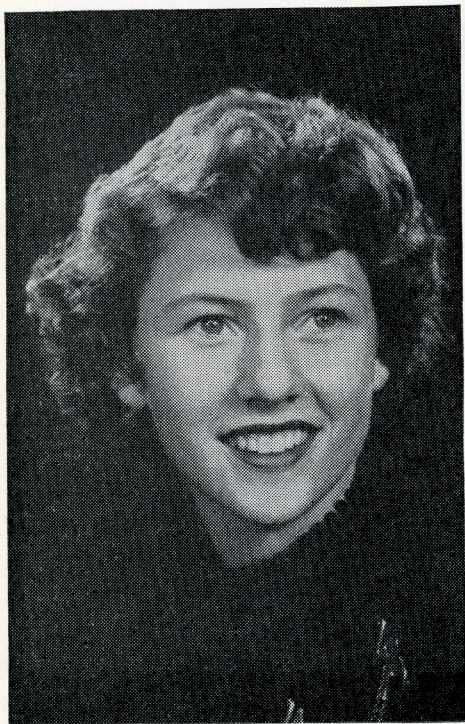
Procedures somewhat similar to these have been tried in minor tournaments, though I think not under the name of "extemporaneous speaking" contests. I believe that we need further healthy experimentation in this direction if the extemp contest is to realize its full potentialities as a learning procedure and a challenging, interesting experience for those who take part.

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It would be as idle in an orator to waste deep meditation and long research on his speeches as it would be in the manager of a theatre to adorn all the crowd of courtiers and ladies who cross over the stage in a procession with real pearls and diamonds. It is not by accuracy or profundity that men become the masters of great assemblies.

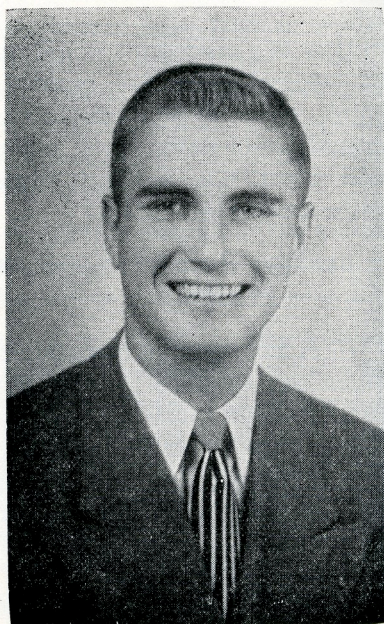
T. B. MACAULAY: *Gladstone on Church and State*, 1839  
(Edinburgh Review, April)





Mary Houtman of Hope College was winner of the Michigan Intercollegiate Oratorical Contest for Women. She represented Michigan in the Interstate Oratorical Contest at Evanston, Illinois.

Rog Fritz played an important part in the victories Monmouth won in debate and extempore speaking at the joint meeting of the Missouri and Illinois Provinces. Monmouth was superior in both events.





# The Speech Training Of Jonathan P. Dolliver

GORDON HOSTETTLER, Temple University\*

Jonathan Prentiss Dolliver was born February 6, 1858, near Kingwood, Preston County, Virginia. He was born into a veritable hot-bed of abolitionist agitation, for Preston was to be one of the Western counties that remained loyal to the Union and formed West Virginia during the stress of the Civil War. Jonathan's father was James J. Dolliver, a camp-meeting convert and circuit rider. At the time of Jonathan's birth, his father was riding the Preston county circuit, preaching Methodist salvation and the sin of slaveholding. Dolliver's mother was Elizabeth J. Brown, the daughter of an anti-secession Democrat.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan's boyhood was spent in the West Virginian hills on the farm of Grandfather Brown. We are told: "Life thereabouts was simple, with food in plenty and money scarce. It was a sturdy ardent environment."<sup>2</sup>

When Dolliver was but ten years of age, his parents moved to Morgantown where the University of West Virginia is located. By this time, 1868, Jonathan was sufficiently advanced in his studies and understanding to warrant his entering the Preparatory Department of the University.<sup>3</sup> In his first preparatory year his studies consisted of geography, arithmetic, and grammar. His second year, when he was but eleven years old, saw him begin the study of Latin and Greek. "Literary," which evidently refers to literary societies,

was also added to his schedule. These subjects were carried over into his third preparatory year, and algebra and geometry were added.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the fact that he was studying with students much older than himself, Dolliver seems to have maintained grades well above the average. In his first year, when work was graded on the basis of 5, his grades ranged from 2 to 4.53, with most of them falling above 3.5. In his second year, when the basis for grading was 10, his grades ranged from 7.8 to 9.26; and in the third year, from 8.08 to 10. In these two years most of the grades were above 9. In "Literary" he received grades from 6.9 to 9.<sup>5</sup>

Dolliver's mental development at this time was not left entirely to the Preparatory Department, for his father took a hand in it. Dolliver possessed a marvelous memory. "He was able to speak exactly as he had written because at one reading, or at the most two readings, he could deliver his longest speech word for word."<sup>6</sup> And he was later to credit his father with the development of this ability. La Follette wrote: "Dolliver had a very remarkable memory. He often told me how he trained it. His father had insisted upon his committing all his Latin themes and whole books of the Bible to memory."<sup>7</sup>

Whether Dolliver's memory was developed from these exercises, or

\* Part of an undergraduate thesis for honors in Speech at Kent State University.



whether he was able to do them because of his memory, must remain a matter of speculation. But we can conclude that these exercises did have their effects upon him. They may account, in part, for his familiarity with the Bible and, perhaps, other classics.

The speech training which Dolliver received in his "Literary" classes was probably rather comprehensive, for the Principal of the Preparatory Department was Dr. F. S. Lyon, who was also the Professor who taught Dolliver's rhetoric class in the University.<sup>8</sup>

In 1871, when he was thirteen, Dolliver became a freshman in the University itself.<sup>9</sup> Despite the fact that he could live at home, he had a hard time finding enough money to stay in school. Throughout his college days, and especially during the panic years after 1873, he was forced to do odd jobs and work in the summers to earn his education.<sup>10</sup>

The courses which Dolliver took in college covered a rather wide range. In his first year his studies consisted of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, Greek, Latin, general history, English Literature, The Constitution of the United States, and "Literary." His grades ranged from 6.52 to 9.9, and most of them were above 8. The second year he took surveying and analytical geometry, Rhetoric, English Philosophy, Greek, Latin, history, logic, chemistry, botany, and "Literary." This year most of his grades were above 9. In his third year he took general philosophy, mental philosophy, English, history, physics, calculus, chemistry, zoology, Greek, Latin, French, military science, and "Literary." Again most of his grades were above 9. In

his senior year, Dolliver enrolled in Moral Science, International Law, Natural Theology, History of Civilization, Literary Criticism, Astronomy, Geology, German, and "Literary." In this year all his grades were above 9.<sup>11</sup>

The above evidence clearly shows that Dolliver was equally brilliant in many different fields. The fact that in each of his last three years he received his highest grades in mathematics, French, and history of civilization is further evidence of the diversity of his abilities.<sup>12</sup>

Frances Dolliver says, "He was chiefly distinguished there (in the University) for his readiness in debate and his love of the classics."<sup>13</sup> That Dolliver was very active in speech work while in school, we can conclude from the fact that "Literary" was always included on his schedule; but the exact nature of these activities can only be inferred. We do know that he wrote many original orations, but as far as we know, he won no major contests, as did Beveridge and La Follette. "His original college orations bear pompous titles ... 'Dangers of Supremacy,' 'Time Tests Worth,' 'The Republic in Peace,' 'Success of Napoleon,' 'Where Are We Drifting?'" We are told that his orations abounded in classical references with the sources neatly indicated in the margins.<sup>14</sup> Generally these orations reflected the conservative, Republican sentiments of the time. Dolliver concurred in the Reconstruction measures for the South, favored the continuance of the protective tariff, and reveled in the materialistic exploitation and expansion in the West.<sup>15</sup>

We can infer that he took more than a passing interest in public



speaking from the number of books on rhetoric and public speaking which he studied. In his sophomore year, the only year he was enrolled in a regular class in rhetoric, he studied Whatley's *Elements of Rhetoric*, under Professor Lyons. Other books which he read, (whether they were text-books or not is not indicated), were: Caleb Bingham, *The Columbian Orator*; E. G. Welles, *The Orator's Guide or Rules for Speaking and Composing*; and Ebenezer Porter, *The Rhetorical Reader*.<sup>16</sup> Dolliver also studied John Quincy Adam's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*. It seems to be a fair assumption that these volumes were read for his personal satisfaction and not to satisfy classroom assignments. At any rate, the volumes were borrowed from the Morgantown Circulating Library and never returned.<sup>17</sup>

Reference has already been made to Dolliver's love of the classics and to the fact that his college orations were filled with literary references. During his college days Dolliver developed this love for literature which he was to retain all his life, and which was to play an important part in the development of his speaking. While he was in college, he became acquainted with most of the classical writers. And while all literature delighted him, he became especially fond of Shakespeare, Virgil, Dante, Edward Gibbon, Thomas Paine, and Edmund Burke.<sup>18</sup> As Bowers points out, "He found his keenest joy in study, and there was no branch of literature that he did not love. The Bible was a favorite because of the purity and strength of the English. The poets, from the masters to the minor figures, delighted him; the essayists, like Bacon, pleased

him..."<sup>19</sup> Dolliver was able to retain what he read, and he made determined efforts to grasp important ideas. "It is said that as a young man he often copied especially striking passages from his reading upon large sheets of paper which he pinned on the wall of his room until by continued attention he had made the thought or expression his own."<sup>20</sup> And "he himself followed the advice he gave to a young friend, 'Young man, burn the mid-night oil.'"<sup>21</sup>

As might be expected, the effects of Dolliver's wide reading were to be found in his speaking. No one can read his speeches without being aware of his stately majestic sentence structure and expression. "Often there was a fine literary flavor to his speeches. The long evenings in his library with the masters of poetry and prose were reflected in his English, though he was not given to quotation. He assimilated what he read—it became a part of him."<sup>22</sup> Truly Dolliver assimilated what he read, for his stately style was too easy and natural to be consciously formed. His manner of expression carried over into private conversation. "He rarely uttered a sentence that did not round itself into a pleasant period, agreeable to the ear."<sup>23</sup> By his persistent and constant reading and studying of good literature, Dolliver laid a sound basis for his oratory; for "unless the foundations of oratory are well and truly laid by the teaching of literature, the superstructure will collapse."

Dolliver's love for literature was matched by his regard for the study of history. While he was in college, and throughout his life, he read all the history books which he could get."<sup>24</sup>...He was a careful student



of history. It was not the events of time alone that interested him—he saw their relations and applied their lessons to his own political thinking.”<sup>25</sup> This study of history and knowledge of historical movements was to be of great value to him in his speaking. Albert Cummins said in the Senate:

“He not only mastered the facts of history but he caught and held its spirit and knew the relation of events to each other; and you will all bear witness to his marvelous aptitude in illustrating and illuminating the discussion of current questions by the parallels of former times.”<sup>26</sup>

Dolliver graduated with highest honors from the University of West Virginia in 1875. He delivered a commencement oration entitled, “A Phase of Social Philosophy,” in which he defended the institutions of private property and individual

initiative against the stagnating influences of socialism.<sup>27</sup> One gathers that its main thesis was very similar to that expressed by Beveridge in “Capital and Labor.”

The effects of Dolliver’s reading were probably important factors in the development of his personality. His humility before the world, his tolerance of all men and ideas, his realization that the problems which seem so vital at any moment are but transitory were probably all, at least in part, the result of his wide reading. “Part of his immense charm lay in his preference as a rule, to be a spectator upon life, a spectator who ever regarded mankind as interesting, amusing, and on the whole likeable; and who brought to his observation of life rich resources of reading and reflecting.”<sup>28</sup>

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1 Ralph S. Kuykendall, “Jonathan Prentiss Dolliver,” *National Dictionary of Biography*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1929, Vol. 5, p. 359.

2 *Ibid.*

3 L. L. Friend, letter, Oct 24, 1939.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 Harvey Ingham, Address before the Pioneer Lawmakers Association, February 23, 1927. In *Annals of Iowa*, 15 (April, 1927), p. 580.

7 *Autobiography*, p. 435.

8 Frances Dolliver, letter of December 30, 1939.

9 L. L. Friend, *loc. cit.*

10 Kuykendall, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

11 L. L. Friend, *loc. cit.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 *op. cit.*, p. i.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Miss Frances Dolliver, letter of March 29, 1940.

16 Miss Frances Dolliver, letter of December 30, 1939.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Frances Dolliver, Masters Thesis, University of Iowa, 1931, i-ii

19 *Op. cit.*, p. 328.

20 E. M. Eriksson, “A Tribune of the People,” *The Palimpsest*, 5 (February, 1924), p. 37.

21 Ingham speech, *loc. cit.*, p. 580

22 Bowers, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

23 Mark Sullivan, Editorial, *Collier’s Weekly*, 46 (October 29, 1910), p. 15.

24 Frances Dolliver, *op. cit.*, p. i.

25 Bowers, *op. cit.*, p. 328

26 *Memorial Addresses*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

27 Frances Dolliver, *op. cit.*, p. i.

28 Mark Sullivan, *Our Times*, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 357.