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**SERIES 75  
NO. 3**

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# THE FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

SERIES 75

SPRING, 1990

NO. 3

C.T. Hanson, Editor

North Dakota State University

P.O. Box 5462

University Station

Fargo, ND 58105

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# Attendance Patterns at National Forensics Tournaments: Factors Influencing School Participation

ROBERT S. LITTLEFIELD, PH.D.

\* Robert S. Littlefield is an Associate Professor of Speech Communication and Interim Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at North Dakota State University.

■ In chronicling the development of the national contests in individual events and debate, a number of scholars (Faules & Rieke, 1968; Faules, Rieke, & Rhodes, 1976; Schnoor, 1984; and Norton, 1987) have noted that the national honorary forensic organizations were the first (excluding the Interstate Oratory group which sponsored – and still does – a single-event national contest) to host national tournaments in both individual events and debate.

One possible reason for this leadership in the area of offering national tournaments may have stemmed from the notion that the honoraries were the only groups at the time with constitutions and the inherent structures capable of offering and managing national tournaments. Also, the fraternal nature of these honoraries may have served to draw participating schools together for the camaraderie, as much as for the competition (Norton, 1987). However, if a school did not hold a membership in one of the honorary organizations, that school did not participate at a national tournament. Further, the fraternal nature of the honorary organizations limited schools to affiliate with one national group. Forced-choice tournament selection caused anxiety for some program directors not wishing to affiliate with an honorary organization and for those schools wishing to compete nationally against schools from the rival organizations. Consequently, new national tournaments began to emerge.

The National Debate Tournament has its origins at West Point in 1947, and was subsequently adopted by the AFA as its national tournament. Later, debate educators seeking to reverse what some considered to be an undesirable direction for the NDT introduced the CEDA nationals. In response to the absence of a non-fraternal national tournament for individual events, the NFA introduced its national tournament in 1970. Several years later, the AFA responded to its memberships' needs and initiated the NIET. Through all of this, the only other non-fraternal national tournament organization, the Interstate Oratory Association, continued to offer its annual oratory contest.

The effect of the diffusion of the other national tournaments on the forensic honoraries was to reduce their influence. No longer were the fraternal-based nationals the only ones in which students from across the country could compete. The fraternal nationals became somewhat secondary because of their apparent exclusiveness based upon membership.

Today, the national tournaments sponsored by the honoraries and the national tournaments run by the forensic organizations coexist. Attendance



at these tournaments is often based upon specific concerns or attitudes held by coaches and students, as well as concerns related to geographic and financial considerations. Over the years, quite spirited debates have taken place regarding the supremacy of one national tournament over another. Occasionally, forensic individuals have characterized the national tournaments sponsored by honoraries as belonging to a clearly second rate position (in terms of quality, format, and/or attendance).

Each of the national tournaments (including those of the honoraries) is unique and has certain attributes that attract or repel forensic coaches and students. However, little if any research has been conducted to identify the determinants for attendance among participants at national individual events and debate tournaments. In the absence of other research efforts, the following research questions emerge:

- (1) How do program directors prioritize the existing national debate and/or individual events tournaments which they attend?
- (2) What factors influence the choices made by program directors when deciding which national debate and/or individual events tournaments to attend?

This study is an effort to begin the process of determining the preferences of coaches and/or teams for attending specific national tournaments. In doing so, some suggestions regarding the relationship between the national honoraries and the national tournaments may result, ultimately helping a new coach to decide which national tournament(s) to attend. National councils and forensic groups can also benefit from knowing which variables influence attendance patterns at national tournaments.

## **Method**

### **Instrument**

In an effort to determine the preferences of coaches or teams, a survey instrument was tested at the 1989 Pi Kappa Delta National Convention and Tournament held in St. Louis, Missouri. The pilot survey asked the respondents to identify the national tournaments which their schools would attend during the 1988-89 academic year. Respondents were also asked to prioritize these tournaments and to provide the reasons or criteria they used to select these tournaments. Of the surveys distributed to the nearly 100 schools in attendance, 60 surveys were returned. The results suggested that the instrument could work to identify preferences and reasons for attending national tournaments. Plans were then made to use the instrument at the 1989 AFA-NIET to identify attendance patterns within that group of the forensic community. However, as a modification from the initial testing of the instrument, the investigator chose to administer the survey orally during the registration period at the AFA-NIET.

### **Subjects**

Of the 116 schools in attendance at the 1989 AFA-NIET, 96 respondents participated in the study either orally or through a follow-up questionnaire which was sent to forensic directors from participating schools who for some reason were not interviewed while at the tournament. With a response rate of approximately 83 percent, the subjects included the Directors

of Forensics, the coaches in attendance, and five students representing schools not accompanied by a coach.

### Procedure

Cross tabulation tables using a two-way frequency were developed to sort the data. The SAS PROC FREQ was used to tabulate all data (SAS User's Guide, 1985).

### The Presentation of the Data

Initially, the respondents were asked to prioritize the national tournaments their schools had attended or would attend during the 1989 academic year (1 = first preference; 2 = next preference; etc.) Six national tournaments were identified, (AFA-NIET, the honoraries, CEDA, NFA's IE Nationals, Interstate Oratory, and the NDT). The honorary organizations were grouped together because schools can only participate in one honorary's national tournament. The following table suggests the respondents' preferences.

**Table One**  
**Preference Rankings for Attending National Tournaments**

Tournament	Preference Ranking						Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
AFA-NIET	44	42	7	2	0	0	95 (40.25%)
Honoraries	17	11	17	2	2	0	49 (20.76%)
CEDA	16	10	7	0	0	0	33 (13.98%)
NFA	11	11	7	2	0	0	31 (13.14%)
Interstate O	1	3	6	6	0	0	16 ( 6.78%)
NDT	7	2	1	0	1	1	12 ( 5.08%)
N = 96							

The respondents were asked to provide their reasons for deciding to attend particular national tournaments. After listing the factors influencing their decisions, respondents ranked their factors. Table Two presents the ten factors which were identified as reasons why certain national tournaments were attended.



**Table Two****Reason Rankings When Selecting National Tournaments to Attend****REASON PREFERENCE RANKING**

(1 = most important reason; 2 = next most important reason; etc.)

	1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total	
Qualifying Process	25	17	3	2	47	(24.48%)
Funding	17	17	6	4	44	(22.92%)
Tournament Quality	11	7	4	0	22	(11.46%)
School Tradition	11	7	1	1	20	(10.42%)
Location of Tournament	6	6	6	1	19	( 9.90%)
Professional Affiliation	7	4	1	0	12	( 6.25%)
Educational Value	6	2	3	0	11	( 5.73%)
Student Preference	5	2	2	0	9	( 4.89%)
Date Scheduled	2	1	1	2	6	( 3.13%)
Enjoyment	0	2	0	0	2	( 1.04%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90*</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>		

\* Only 90 of the 96 respondents ranked their reasons for deciding to attend particular national tournaments.

To focus more specifically on the reasons why particular national tournaments were selected, a cross tabulation was conducted for each of the six national tournaments identified in this study. For those respondents preferring the AFA-NIET first, the following priority of reasons was identified based upon the total number of rankings each reason received. Available funding, the qualification procedure enabling the student to attend the tournament, and the quality of the tournament were the most important reasons provided.

**Table Three**  
**Reason Rankings For Those Preferring AFA-NIET First**

Reason	Reason Rank				Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other		
Funding	8	7	3	1	19	(23.17%)
Qualifying Procedure	11	5	0	1	17	(20.73%)
Tournament Quality	9	4	1	0	14	(17.07%)
Location	3	2	3	0	8	( 9.76%)
Tradition	3	3	0	1	7	( 8.54%)
Student Preference	3	1	1	0	5	( 6.10%)
Timing	2	1	0	1	4	( 4.88%)
Educational Value	1	1	2	0	4	( 4.88%)
Professional Affiliation	1	1	0	0	2	( 2.44%)
Enjoyment	0	2	0	0	2	( 2.44%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>82</b>	
N = 44						

For those respondents preferring the honoraries first, the following rankings were provided. The qualification procedures used by the honoraries, the availability of funding, and the location of the tournament were identified as the main reasons why schools were in attendance at the honoraries' national tournaments.

**Table Four**  
**Reason Rankings For Those Preferring Honoraries First**

Reason	Reason Rank				Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other		
Qualifying Procedure	5	4	2	0	11	(26.83%)
Funding	4	3	1	1	9	(21.95%)
Location	1	4	3	1	9	(21.95%)
Educational Value	3	0	0	0	3	( 7.32%)
Tradition	2	1	0	0	3	( 7.32%)
Professional Affiliation	1	1	1	0	3	( 7.32%)
Tournament Quality	1	1	1	0	3	( 7.32%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>41</b>	
(Of those preferring honoraries first, no rankings were given for Timing, Enjoyment, or Student Preference.)						
N = 17						

Of the respondents who preferred the CEDA National Tournament first, the way student qualified to attend, the availability of funding, and the tradition of participating at the tournament were listed as the top three reasons for attendance based upon total ranks given.



**Table Five**  
**Reason Rankings For Those Preferring CEDA First**

Reason	Reason Rank				Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other		
Qualifying Procedure	4	5	1	1	11	(31.43%)
Funding	3	3	1	1	8	(22.86%)
Tradition	4	1	1	0	6	(17.14%)
Professional Affiliation	1	2	0	0	3	( 8.57%)
Student Preference	1	1	0	0	2	( 5.71%)
Educational Value	1	0	1	0	2	( 5.71%)
Tournament Quality	0	1	1	0	2	( 5.71%)
Location	1	0	0	0	1	( 2.86%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>35</b>	

(Of those preferring CEDA first, no rankings were given for Timing or Enjoyment.)

N = 16

For the National Forensic Association's IE Nationals, those preferring this tournament listed the manner in which a student qualified to participate, the availability of funding, and the professional affiliation of coach or program as the top three reasons behind the decision to attend this tournament.

**Table Six**  
**Reason Rankings For Those Preferring NFA First**

Reason	Reason Rank				Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other		
Qualifying Procedure	3	3	0	0	6	(28.57%)
Funding	2	2	0	0	4	(19.05%)
Professional Affiliation	3	0	0	0	3	(14.29%)
Educational Value	1	1	0	0	2	( 9.62%)
Tournament Quality	0	1	1	0	2	( 9.62%)
Location	1	0	0	0	1	( 4.76%)
Student Preference	1	0	0	0	1	( 4.76%)
Tradition	0	1	0	0	1	( 4.76%)
Timing	0	0	1	0	1	( 4.76%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	

(Of those preferring NFA first, no rankings were given for Enjoyment.)

N = 11

For the NDT, the tradition of attending this national tournament, the availability of funding, and the manner in which a team qualified to participate were listed as the top three reasons why schools chose to attend this tournament.

**Table Seven**  
**Reason Rankings For Those Preferring NDT First**

Reason	Reason Rank				Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other		
Tradition	2	1	0	0	3	(27.27%)
Funding	0	1	1	1	3	(27.27%)
Qualifying Procedure	2	0	0	0	2	(18.18%)
Professional Affiliation	1	0	0	0	1	( 9.09%)
Student Preference	0	0	1	0	1	( 9.09%)
Timing	0	0	0	1	1	( 9.09%)
TOTAL	5	2	2	2	11	
(Of those preferring the NDT first, no rankings were given for Location, Tournament Quality, Educational Value, or Enjoyment.)						
N = 7						

For the one respondent who preferred attending the Interstate Oratory Contest first, the quality of the tournament and the availability of funding were listed as the two reasons supporting this preference.

**Table Eight**  
**Reason Rankings For Those Preferring Interstate Oratory First**

Reason	Reason Rank				Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other		
Tournament Quality	1	0	0	0	1	(50.00%)
Funding	0	1	0	0	1	(50.00%)
TOTAL	1	1	0	0	2	
(Of those preferring Interstate Oratory first, no rankings were given for Location, Timing, Educational Value, Enjoyment, Qualification Procedure, Tradition, Student Preference, or Professional Affiliation.)						
N = 1						

### Discussion of the Results

The research questions in this study addressed the issues of prioritizing national tournaments and identifying the factors influencing the choices made by coaches and/or program directors when deciding which national tournaments to attend.



## The Prioritizing of National Tournaments

Upon reviewing the findings of this study, the "halo" effect may have been operative. The respondents were attending the AFA-NIET, had responded to the survey questions while at the tournament (or within the week following the tournament), and clearly identified their preference for the AFA-NIET by giving 44 most preferred and 42 next most preferred rankings. A similar result occurred when testing the instrument at the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament where the PKD tournament received the highest number of most preferred and next most preferred rankings, followed by CEDA, the AFA-NIET, NFA IE Nationals, NDT, and Interstate Oratory. Further testing at other national tournaments might confirm or reject the hunch that a halo effect may have been operative. However, due to the fact that membership in the AFA-NIET transcends that of the honoraries, the data can provide some useful insight into how a given population may perceive the efficacy of the other "national" tournaments.

## The Reasons for Attending National Tournaments

In the early decades of this century, the forensic honoraries were the only groups to host national tournaments. The fraternal nature of these organizations stressed not only competition, but active membership, friendship, educational values, tradition, and enjoyment. While funding, location of the tournament, and quality of the tournament may have been factors influencing participation, it might well be suggested that these variables were downplayed by the fraternities' leaders in order to stress the "loyalty" and "tradition" arguments to their constituencies. However, when reviewing the reasons why particular national tournaments were attended in 1989, these reasons were not ranked among the most significant by those most preferring the national tournaments sponsored by honoraries.

**Table Nine**

**A Comparison of Reason Ranks Between All Respondents  
And Those Preferring the National Tournaments Sponsored by  
The Forensic Honorary Organizations**

Rank by Population	Reason	Rank for Those Preferring Honoraries
1	Qualification Process	1
2	Funding	2
3	Tournament Quality	7
4	School Tradition	5
5	Geographic Location	3
6	Professional Affiliation	6
7	Educational Value	4
8	Student Preference	9
9	Date Scheduled	10
10	Enjoyment	8

Among those preferring the national honorary tournaments, the manner of qualifying was as important a consideration for them as it was for those preferring the other national tournaments. Membership in the honorary organization constitutes qualification for participation at the national tournaments. For the other national tournaments, specific qualifying requirements must be met in order to participate. The absence of a competitive qualifying procedure for the national honorary tournaments may be the basis for some of the claims that these national tournaments are of a "secondary status." It is interesting to hear that schools often have students do well at both "national" and national "honorary" tournaments (Hawkins, 1989).

Funding also was ranked as a major reason why certain national tournaments were attended. It should be noted that while 96 respondents indicated they attended at least one national tournament, 79 responded that they attended two; 45 attended three; 12 attended four; 3 attended five, and 1 attended all six of the tournaments included in this study. Clearly, funding may limit participation; but for the respondents at the AFA-NIET, there appeared to be a commitment to support more than one national tournament. In addition, for those 17 respondents preferring the national tournaments sponsored by the honorary organizations, there was an indication that their schools also attended at least two additional national tournaments.

The grouping of reasons in the lower half merits discussion. Tradition, professional affiliation, enjoyment, student preference, and even educational value should be the critical areas upon which membership in the national forensic honorary organizations are based. If not for tradition, ties to the national honorary organization, the enjoyment and preference of the students, educational value of competition, the claim can be made that the national honorary organizations are not unique, and in fact, are just like all the other forensic organizations sponsoring national tournaments, sans a competitive qualification procedure.

Nearly 73 percent of the total population of the study were people from California, the Lower Mississippi Valley, the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Southwestern United States. Consequently, the conclusions of this study may be more reflective of the preferences of coaches from these geographic areas of the country than the forensic community as a whole. Further sampling of coaches in the forensic community may help confirm or deny that possibility.

### **Conclusions and Directions for Further Research**

The national forensic honorary organizations and the "national" tournaments are related. Each national tournament provides opportunities for students to excel in the art of competitive speaking. However, the attraction variable of the national forensic honoraries has changed somewhat in the forensic community. It seems that other putting the educational value of the tournament experience above the tournament quality, the respondents connected with forensic honoraries did not appear to use a set of criteria for national tournament selection that was different from the population as a whole. It would appear that the reasons for selecting to attend Pi Kappa Delta, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, and Phi Rho Pi have



been altered by the presence of the AFA-NIET, NFA IE Nationals, NDT, CEDA and Interstate Oratory Contest. With such a menu of competitive national tournaments, the forensic director might well be confused as to which national contests are "the best" or "most important" to attend.

What this study suggests is that the selection of a national tournament reflects a shared set of determinants among program directors. The study also acknowledges that students' preferences and enjoyment are not considered to be important variables when deciding which national tournament to attend. If student preference and enjoyment are low on the list of reasons why program directors choose to participate at national tournaments, what does this say about the activity. Do the low rankings for student preferences and enjoyment reflect an assumption that the students will or should enjoy any national tournament experience?

Future research might focus on the attitudes of coaches and students regarding the national competitive forensic experience. Has the forensic community become too competitive? Have the number of national tournaments contributed to this increasingly competitive point of view? What role do the national forensic organizations play in influencing the attitudes of their subscribers?

Other national forensic organizations should undertake similar studies of their memberships to determine which national tournaments are preferred and the reasons behind these preferences. Learning more about these variables may enable future leaders of the forensic community to improve and shape the nature of their national individual events and debate tournaments.

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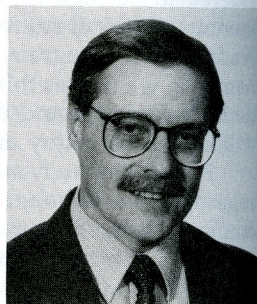
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# Fraternally Speaking

## President Cole Notes Vitality in Pi Kappa Delta

DR. TERRY W. COLE, PRESIDENT

■ Springtime finds each of us in the midst of winding down and change. For those of us in the forensic community, Spring means that our seasons are over for another year. Spring also brings graduations at which a number of our members have matriculated into that big "real world." In Pi Kappa Delta, this Spring also means that we have completed a series of successful Province (or bi/tri-province) tournaments. We all deserve a rest and to all, I extend my congratulations for successful forensics seasons.



The province tournaments have each been well attended and, by all reports, successful. It was my privilege to attend not only my home provincial at UNC Charlotte, but also to be the guest of the Province of The Colonies provincial at King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Similarly, this year, members of the National Council were present at each provincial. I would like to thank each province for hosting National Council members at their provincials. I hope that our presence added to your event and I further hope that we can gather as a National Council in July in a better position to consider the affairs of our Order because of what we learned at your provincial meetings.

I would like to take the opportunity of this page to extend congratulations to each Pi Kappa Delta member who graduated this year. The best wishes of the National Council go with each of you as you make your way into the world. I would urge you to remember that your membership in Pi Kappa Delta is a lifetime privilege and encourage you to remain active in our Order. One way you can keep current is to subscribe to **THE FORENSIC**. The subscription rate is \$12.50 per year, and you can subscribe by contacting the National office. Also, if your undergraduate chapter has not chartered an alumni chapter, you might want to encourage that one be chartered. Alumni chapters play an invaluable role in maintaining the strength of our Order. Starting or participating in an alumni chapter is an excellent way of saying "thank you" to Pi Kappa Delta for all that PKD did for you.

Sally Roden, Professional Development Coordinator, has recently reported the results of her efforts regarding both the Professional Development Conference to be held in conjunction with our National Convention and Tournament, and the Pi Kappa Delta programs at the Speech Communication Association in Chicago next November. Both programs look exciting and I would like to commend her for her work on these projects. The November SCA Convention will include six Pi Kappa Delta sponsored



programs with subjects ranging from interactive video communication and forensics to a consideration of forensics in the 90's and our educational agenda. Each of the respective program planners – Robert Littlefield, Jim Norwig, Carolyn Keefe, Bill Hill, Scott Jensen, Sam Cox, and Nina-Jo Moore – are to be commended for their efforts as well. The March Professional Development Conference will explore four topics under the theme "Commitment to Forensic Education: The Challenge of the Twenty-first Century." The four topics include considerations of ethical standards, coaching co-curricular programs, judge/educator responsibilities, and the forensic education curriculum. I would urge all members to plan your travel to Monmouth next March so that you can participate in this valuable pre-convention conference.

I would like to close this issue's President's Page by welcoming Deanna Jo Nicosia to the National Council. She comes on the Council as a replacement for Dana Weihs, who had to resign. We will miss Dana's participation and appreciate her contributions to Council during her tenure. Deanna Jo, a classmate of Dana's at Monmouth College, comes highly recommended to the council as an enthusiastic Pi Kappa Delta member, and we are all looking forward to working with her in the months ahead.

As each of you prepares for a restful and productive summer, the National Council is preparing to meet at Monmouth College for its summer council meeting. The results of our deliberations will be reported in subsequent issues of **THE FORENSIC**.

# Coaches' Corner

This segment of the journal is provided for those who have concerns/issues that they would like to share with others in our fraternity. Commentaries are not refereed.

## Shall We Dance?

DR. CHARLES G. TAYLOR

\* Dr. Charles G. Taylor is Director of Theatre and Forensics at U.M.H.B., Belton, Texas.

■ After an absence of some six years from the "forensics arena," I recently returned to find my old "pet peeve" more in evidence, and more objectionable.

Individual events entrants are the types of participants I train most often for tournaments, and I find glaring inconsistencies in the applicable rules. May I take the liberty of calling to your attention to the following problems:

1. **Acting** seems to be perfectly acceptable in all individual events—except dramatic interpretation! This has been brought (ever so forcefully) to my attention throughout my dealings with the event, and I simply do not understand why actors are not allowed to act! They may make no eye contact (the essence of **reaction**). They are compelled to carry a manuscript when, everyone knows, the piece is (and should be) memorized. They are often "taken to task" for overdoing, when they are forbidden to position themselves in any direction except dead front. Why are we surprised when a judge catches them mugging? Characters in plays are realized only through truthfulness of emotion. If these emotions are not filtered through action-and-reaction **between** characters, of course they will call attention to themselves—to the detriment of realization of thematic intent of the author. Synchronized robotics have become the modus operandi in an event which should underline reality and confirm experience. Why do we not allow ourselves to be entertained and enlightened (theatre's reason for being) by aiming for the essence of reality unclouded by directional jim-cracks and gee-gaws whose place is more justified where beer is consumed and popcorn thrown? Is it because we are so visually oriented now that we cannot or do not bother to listen for emotional nuance through interacting characters in various states of imaginable believability. It is only relatively recently that people go to see plays. They used to go to **hear** them. Why do we work polarically against this purpose?

2. Perhaps more importantly, I am weary of watching poetic and prosaic interpreters tearing passions to tatters and out-Heroding Herod. Since the illumination of an author's thematic structure is the ultimate aim of these events, why do we see such floods of tears, shaking hands, and gnarled bodies when the full realization of the **works purpose** is the only reason for "performing" it? It is my contention that gesture and movement



(all that is physical) should be meant to be employed only where the vocal tone cannot paint all of the mental images necessary. I want to **hear** the piece, but I seldom do so completely. Talk about mugging . . . ! The physical in interpretation should be like a visual aid in a public address – **an aid!** Why do we not help young people to train and play their vocal instruments well instead of encouraging the sort of histrionics in poetry and prose which are rightly the property of the stage?

I hope that it has been obvious that heretofore I having been complaining about "duo-drama" interpreters not being allowed to make contact, a lamentable fact which I believe to be contrary to dramatic interpretation. I have yet another question concerning drama – "solo acting."

Why, in most cases, is one individual compelled to interpret **at least two** characters? In most cases, when the selection is from a play (not dialogue from another medium) one character is, or should be, enough for most performers. While on the subject, "another medium" should not be allowed – if the event is called "Dramatic Interpretation." Sections of novels, for example, cannot rightly be referred to as drama, for there is inevitably attendant psychoanalytical comment accompanying whatever "dialogue" may be used. It is decidedly unfair to be able to read what the author meant at the same time as that meaning is expressed by the words of his characters. Such selections defeat the purpose of the intellectual analysis of character by an interpreter (actor?) and cannot correctly be classified as dramatic.

Again, why **two or more** characters? Many great soliloquies are eliminated from competition by this rule. And, anyhow, selection is always made on the basis of one. To require more is to advocate "throwing in" another – often contrary to gender just for the sake of a rule, more often than not resulting in a terrific imbalance in the scene and/or ludicrous "sex-changes."

All of the foregoing may be the result of a decided change in society's attitude toward artistic style. Poetry, for example, has fallen from grace (out of fashion generally) and is resultantly relegated, not even to the dignity of melodramas, but to the trash-heap of 10-20-30 meller-drammer! It follows, then, in the minds of student and "coach" alike that poetic interpretations should be accomplished with the bombast of mid-Victorian exaggeration. Dramatic interpretation conversely and perversely, has been reduced to attempts at actuality (mistakenly styled after film acting) instead of the essence of reality which has been its purpose since its inception. (It should be noted here that the warehouses full of machinery which constitute the backbone of film making have made the talented performer nearly obsolete and that what is considered "real" in the mass media, so far from reality, is made up merely of shadows on a screen whose composition amounts to thousands of minute dots. With microphones just out-of-frame and cameras which can focus on a gnat's romping through an eyebrow, it is unnecessary for the film actor to act at all – but merely to behave. A competent cameraman and lighting technician can make a star of anyone (They have!); and film has become the art of the director. This misperception of theatricality has mesmerized tournament interpretation of drama into so small, impersonal, and insignificant a style as to contradict the very defini-

tion of the word, "dramatic."

At the same time, the word, "dramatic," can certainly be applied to what I have seen of the interpretation of other literary genres – probably because literary merit and thematic analysis came too far down the list of the selection of such pieces. I suggest that "shock value" may head the aforementioned list of reasons. Herein, I believe, lies another misconception.

Words are symbols for thought; thought is description of emotion. Of and by themselves, words have no ability to be profane or, in any other way, unacceptable. Yet, in all "IE's" material is interpreted (with regularity) which can only be classified as socially unacceptable. I understand all of these words (use them frequently) and am not shocked to hear them – when they serve a valid purpose. Nonetheless, effect-for-effect's sake is boring. Everyone I know swears, though few of them know it because euphemistic terms have become acceptable. If the people in my corner of life knew enough language to understand half of what they say, they would spend half of their lives in the confessional. Beside the point, you say? Not at all! The point is that the choosing of literature to interpret is more often made from meritricious rather than meritorious groups for the purpose of calling attention to the screaming of obscenities (Look it up!) rather than speaking to the universal "condition of man."

In fine, I believe that the fosterer of forensics on the national level should look at what has become fashionable and decide whether or not it approves. "The art of persuasion, beautiful and just" was, no doubt, meant to describe debate in the beginning. With the advent of individual performances, in my opinion, this motto has been distorted so that what results in many cases is not at all "just" and monumentally ugly.

Each of us professes to love language and what it will do – its power. Let us not ignore denotation in order to indulge connotative wanderings into a not-so-beautiful land of Oz.

Let us at least try to view the challenge with dignity and style; let us **interpret** poetry and prose while **acting** drama. Or, let us restrict ourselves, again, to debate!



# Forensic Colleagues Wear New Hats

## Dr. Robert S. Littlefield Selected to Serve as Interim Dean

■ Dr. Robert S. Littlefield has been selected to serve as North Dakota State University's Interim Dean in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Littlefield began his term on July 1, 1990. Littlefield has just completed six years of service as Chair of the Department of Mass Communication, Speech Communication, and Theatre Arts. Dr. Littlefield replaces Dean Margriet Lacy who has been named Associate Vice President of Instruction at NDSU.

A native of North Dakota, Littlefield came to NDSU in 1978. He has served as NDSU's Director of Speech Fundamentals and as Director of Forensics. Littlefield teaches Intercultural Communication at the graduate and undergraduate level, research methods, rhetorical criticism, communication and change, and issues in speech communication education.

Littlefield received his bachelor's degree from Moorhead (MN) State University; his Master of Arts degree from NDSU, and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota.

Littlefield is the current President of the Fargo Lions Club. He is also the new Secretary of the American Forensic Association. Littlefield and his wife Kathy are owners of KIDSPEAK. Robert and Kathy have two children, Lindsay and Brady, and they reside in Moorhead, Minnesota.

## Cole Chairs Appalachian's Communications Department

JANE NICHOLSON  
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS BUREAU

■ Dr. Terry Cole, a professor of communication arts at Appalachian State University, has been named chairman of the communications arts department. His appointment was effective July 1.

Cole replaced Dr. Charles Porterfield, who has chaired the communications department for 20 years. Porterfield will continue to teach at Appalachian.

A California native, Cole came to Appalachian in 1971. He was the university's debate coach and director of forensics for 15 years. Cole teaches courses on media law and ethics and freedom of speech.

Cole received bachelor's and master's degrees from Fresno State College and a doctorate from the University of Oregon in 1971. He taught at the University of Oregon from 1968 to 1971.

Currently a member of the Faculty Senate, Cole chaired the Faculty Senate's grievance committee for five years.

Cole is past president and a member of the Boone Lions Club, a scout leader for Boy Scout Troop 111, a member of the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union and past chair of the UNC-Charlotte Parents Council.

Cole and his wife, Marny, have two sons: John, a junior at UNC-C; and Jamie, a senior at Watauga High School.

## **C.T. Hanson Elected as Department Chair**

■ Dr. C.T. Hanson, Professor of Speech Communication, has been elected to serve as Chair of the newly created Department of Communication. The Department of Communication has graduate and undergraduate programs in Mass Communication and Speech Communication. Hanson began his term on July 1, 1990. He has served as the department's Director of Graduate Studies and Division Chair of Speech Communication for the past six years. Prior to that, Hanson served as Assistant Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at NDSU. He has served as Director of the Basic Course and has also served as Director of Forensics at NDSU. During his tenure as Director of Forensics, Hanson also chaired the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament Committee, and received the Distinguished Service Award from the AFA-NIET.

Hanson, a native of North Dakota, came to NDSU in 1975. He has developed and taught courses in public address, persuasion, communication theory, small groups, nonverbal communication, argumentation and debate, and the social psychology of human communication. He has taught graduate and undergraduate offerings for NDSU. He earned his bachelor's degree from Mayville State University. He is a member of NDSU's YMCA Board of Directors, a member of the Fargo Lions Club, and the owner of a consulting company.

Hanson and his wife, Karen Sellie, have two daughters: Kristine and Kari. They reside in Fargo, North Dakota.

## **West Chester Alumni Offer Testimonials to Dr. Carolyn Keefe**

### **She Taught Me How to Help Others**

THOMAS PAUL ALEXANDER

■ I'm going to show this class and Mrs. Keefe \*('Mrs.' Keefe was not 'Dr.' Keefe just yet) that I can give them something valuable to learn, 'speech evaluation.'



I remember that thought going through my mind during that first class I had taught. Dr. Carolyn Keefe had asked me to teach one of her classes for the day. I knew I was doing something right, since Dr. Keefe had selected me to perform the task. What previously had transpired without our trying was that, the characteristic nature Dr. Keefe had displayed in evaluating myself and others during our presentations, had now descended upon myself. Then I simply began to hone those skills. I listened with not only my ears, but too with my eyes and my mind. I became the observer, the judge taking in all the facts, clues, and evidence. And when the speaker is done I passed my judgment. I evaluated speakers fairly and honestly, but also with a learning experience. The evaluation sheets they receive are not simply filled with small quotes and check marks. I have pointed out to the individual their 'strong' and 'weak' points and what they can do about them.

Along with having the opportunity to teach my evaluating skills to the students, I also am able to practice what I preach. Each semester I am afforded the opportunity to judge in the 'Susan G. Harney Speech Contest'. I have the pleasure of judging the final round with several of my colleagues. It's like being one of the judges in an Olympic final event. We are all from different backgrounds, but we all must judge fairly, honestly and to the utmost of our evaluative potential. Finally, we hand out the decision and to the victor goes the gold! I too received the 'gold' when Pi Kappa Delta made me an Honorary Member. This was something reserved only for faculty. However, PKD members voted and made an exception. Finally, I too was a brother of Pi Kappa Delta.

The reason I did not join the Forensic Society while I attended the university was a matter I talked over with Dr. Keefe. She had approached my about becoming a part of the Forensics Team and joining PKD. However, I had too many outside responsibilities and obligations to fulfill. I knew I couldn't devote myself.

## She Helped Me Learn How to Swim in the Ocean and Not Be Caught as a Fish

HENRY J. GENTRY, JR.

■ Did you ever meet one of those people who does crossword puzzles in **ink**? Or how about someone who watches the Financial News Network while reading **Barron's** Magazine? If you have, or if you do, then what I'm reciting will conjure thoughts of success.

Success is often defined as:

"... not being blown out of the water."

"Throwing him/her in and seeing if they sink or swim."

Being involved in West Chester University Forensics polished the difference between being mediocre in the business world and being successful.

In my professional experience I have been a supervisor or representa-

tive for a company (chain of stores) traveling from store to store whether it is a company-owned or a franchised store. The list includes: 7-Eleven, Mobil, and presently Hillary's Gourmet Ice Cream. In this article the focus espouses the relationship of myself and the company, rather than the relationship of my actual work with the stores. Being successful because of my forensic activities is the common thread.

Success means many different things, but perhaps it is easier to identify traits of a successful businessperson. Very often I am able to use **impromptu** with a question from a vice-president; or deliver an **informative** presentation; or be **persuasive** with a franchise; or **interpret** a financial document; or **sell** a franchise a new company developed program; or **debate** an issue with a district manager; or even apply my **sense of humor** (ADS) to everyday business. I must admit, poetry did not help me; but I must also admit, on the forensic circuit I did not help poetry.

The Speech Coaching I received at West Chester never left me. It became an inherent part of my everyday life. That is important because each business day I am judged by my vocabulary, vocal inflections, and non-verbal cues; and my success depends on my persuasive, informative abilities.

## Forensics, A Thing of the Past . . . Yea, Right!

JODI DALEY

■ The last time I wrote an article for the FORENSIC, it had the taste of a fond farewell to an old friend. All the tournaments were over, the trophies put away, and Red Roof Inns and the McDonalds diets were slipping into history. Yes, forensics was a thing of the past . . . yea, right!

April, 1982, the office of "Ryan's Hope," Suzanne Ringrose, the casting director is speaking to me. I'm sweating because there are no lines written for the part I'm playing tomorrow. "Jodi, keep it to about 30 seconds, just interact with the other actor . . ." "No problem," I'm saying, while impromptu time signals pop into my mind . . . "No problem." And it isn't.

June, 1983, a phone call comes in from my old professor at Graduate School . . . where I never finished. They'd grandfathered a clause that said students could come back and finish with no penalty, if, in fact their arguments were substantial enough for re-instatement. At the meeting, I'm not brilliant, I never did do debate, but apparently, my persuasion isn't bad. I have my M.A. by December.

January, 1984, I'm waiting on tables at the "Saloon" in Manhattan and the biggest agent for broadcasting sits at my table. I know I have a 1/2 hour (the time it takes him to eat lunch) to prep, but not for a 6-8 or a 5-7 minute extemp speech . . . but 30 seconds on the outside to convince him to give me a shot. No note cards this time, just three main points hitting him like bullets. Two weeks later, I'm working at ABC.

May, 1988, the FNN cameras are about to role on live, yes, live make-