

# THE FORENSIC

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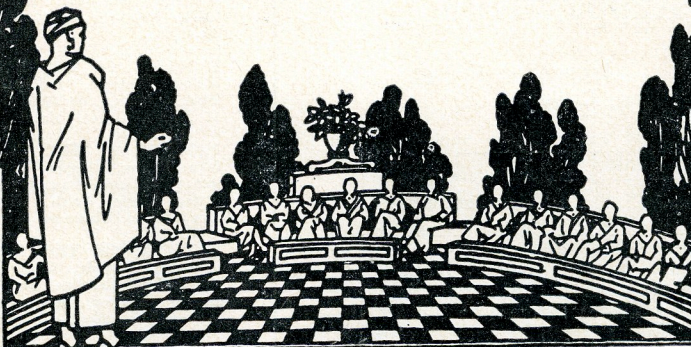
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# The FORENSIC Of Pi Kappa Delta

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10. PROVINCE OF THE NORTHWEST  
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# The Province of the Upper Mississippi

## A History

by Grace Walsh

Province Governor

The problem of meeting THE FORENSIC editor's request for a history of our province was not an easy one. Harried forensic directors do not have much time to dig through old newspaper files. Perhaps this brief report of our history will indicate the rich tradition of forensics in the Upper Mississippi region and stimulate further investigation into our history.<sup>1</sup>

The Province of the Upper Mississippi has chapters in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Macalester College reported the earliest enrollment in the ranks of the province and has the distinction of having the first chapter in Minnesota in 1921. St. Olaf College and Upper Iowa University were admitted to the fraternity in 1922. Hamline University, Concordia College, the University of Dubuque, the College of St. Thomas, and Gustavus Adolphus College all had chapters granted by 1926. Ten years later, in 1936, Wisconsin State College at River Falls and Luther College were admitted. The College of St. Catherine had its charter granted in 1948. The newest charters in the province belong to Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire and St. Mary's College which became members in 1951.

The schools in the province reported that most of their debate activity prior to the establishment of local chapters of Pi Kappa Delta was handled by literary societies. The Clio society started in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1860, and was brought to Decorah, Iowa, in 1862, one year after Luther College was founded there. This group held weekly meetings devoted to speeches,

essays, declamations, and debate. The procedure of the early debates was interesting. There were six or eight people on each side, with one person acting as chief disputant; he began the debate. The rest of the people followed in order, speaking as often as they liked. The propositions employed did not include religious or political questions, but dealt with such subjects as the influence of money and education in society, and the usefulness of the compass and steam power.

Early interest in oratory was shown when *Chips*, the Luther College paper, made editorial reference to the intercollegiate oratorical contest in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana. It suggested that if Luther students were allowed to participate in such affairs, their skill in writing and speaking would be improved. That was about the time when oratorical interest was really flourishing in Wisconsin. Reminiscing about those days in a conversation with this writer, Mr. William T. Evjue, editor of the Madison CAPITOL TIMES, described the night Wisconsin's early winner of the Interstate rode from the depot to the university campus in a vehicle reserved for all returning heroes—a hayrack. The students stood along the street and cheered one who was to be cheered many times in years to come in the field of politics. This young man's name was Robert M. LaFollette, Sr. Evidently the Luther editorial on the importance of oratory had results across the border, for the Luther College alumni of Southern Wisconsin began, in 1903, a long series of Norse and English oratorical contests, offering \$25 prizes to the winners. Still Luther did not fare very well in intercollegiate oratory. They began competing in 1911 in a state contest judged by Pro-

<sup>1</sup> See the "Ridin the Provinces" section of this issue.



fessors Rerig of the University of Minnesota, Lylam of the University of Wisconsin, and Meyer of the University of Illinois. Again the college newspaper stepped in with a stirring editorial, wondering why Luther was weak in this activity. It observed that what was really needed was a faculty advisor, and finally, Henry O. Talle, now Congressional Representative from Iowa, was secured as coach.

As time went on, interest in debate in the province continued to grow. All kinds of questions were debated. Resolved: That Ireland is justified in demanding a separate Parliament was one of them. Another was Resolved: That the United States government should buy all railroad and telegraph lines and control them. Resolved: That the United States should join the League of Nations was yet another topic. In the fall of 1917, debates on the intercollegiate level were eliminated at Macalester. Many good people had gone to war and debating was very expensive. Activity was resumed shortly after the war.

In the early days of the province there were many important problems. In the area of debate, one important intercollegiate triangular debate was called off in Minnesota. Concordia College reported that Gustavus Adolphus objected to debating because Concordia sent a lady to debate. At St. Olaf College the entire student body as well as the college president became involved in the effort to establish the St. Olaf chapter. Objection on the part of the administration was raised because the initiation ceremony involved taking an oath. A compromise was reached when the Pi Kappa Delta president agreed to the granting of the charter by substituting a mere affirmation or promise in the place of an oath. But such major controversies did not interfere with growing interest in forensics throughout the province.

The Upper Mississippi today is the home-base for many very well known tournaments. Part of the strength of the province can be found in the fact that almost every chapter sponsors important tournaments. Prominent among them at present are the Northwest Tournament sponsored by Mac-

alester College and the College of St. Thomas, the Red River Valley Tournament at Concordia College, the Wisconsin State College at River Falls "B" Tournament, and the Eau Claire Speech Meet. It is also significant that many of these colleges sponsor high school tournaments. Gustavus Adolphus with its Northwest Activities Meet for high schools, St. Mary's College, St. Olaf College, River Falls, and Eau Claire are among the chapters that annually hold large high school affairs. This year Eau Claire's report of activity is the highest in the province. In October this college sponsored a discussion clinic attended by 200 high school participants; in January they entertained 194 high school debate teams; and its college tournament in February was attended by 118 discussors, 84 speakers in individual events, and 108 debate teams. All these events sponsored by local chapters lay the ground-work for the success of the province in national affairs and also supply training for future members of Pi Kappa Delta.

Evidence of the debate power of the province has been well demonstrated by the records of its teams at the West Point Tournament. They were the teams of Luther College, College of St. Thomas, St. Olaf College, and Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire. The latter two have repeatedly made strong records at this tournament.

Since 1949, Superior Sweepstakes at the National Pi Kappa Delta Convention have been won by Luther College, Macalester, St. Olaf College, the College of St. Thomas, and Wisconsin State College at River Falls. Double Superior Sweepstakes were awarded to St. Olaf College and Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire in 1953, and to Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire in 1955.

Many people important in forensic circles have been graduated from this province. Probably one of the greatest teams in province history, according to Robert F. Forsythe, was Sheron and Kaplan of the College of St. Thomas. In addition to winning almost all available honors, this



famous pair represented this country in a tour of England. Coach of the famous duet was Professor Owen P. McElmeel. A current cause for real celebration in this province was Professor McElmeel's return to St. Paul for the 25th anniversary of the Northwest Debate Tournament which he founded.

Among the other speakers from our province who will long be remembered were: Carlton Rosholt of Luther College, Anita Erickson of St. Olaf College, Joan Reidy of Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire, Ron Brown of Gustavus Adolphus, and Ralph Zimmermann of Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire. All of these people were first place winners in the Interstate Oratorical Contest within the last seven years.

Specific history from particular chapters with the names of all charter members and the records of debates won and lost are available on many college campuses, but will not be included in this brief report. Following are a few unique facts about particular chapters:

### **St. Olaf College**

St. Olaf is the home of the national president of Pi Kappa Delta, Theodore F. Nelson. Professors Nelson and Kenneth Wilkins have led the St. Olaf college speakers to such recent achievements as provincial women's sweepstakes in 1952, provincial men's in 1954, as well as many national honors.

### **University of Dubuque**

The University of Dubuque can claim Dale Welch, now president of Hastings College, Nebraska, as a charter member of its chapter. Mr. Thomas Olbricht is the present sponsor of this chapter.

### **Wisconsin State College at River Falls**

This chapter has a unique distinction, having one of its own charter members, Miss Marion E. Hawkins, as the debate director of that college. Miss Hawkins was Upper Mississippi Province governor for 1954-55, and River Falls played host to the last provincial tournament.

### **St. Mary's College**

One of the two youngest chapters, St. Mary's sponsor is Brother Philip. On or near December 7, the feast of St. Ambrose, patron of orators, St. Mary's presents a beautifully inscribed trophy to the winner of its local oratorical contest.

### **Luther College**

Sponsor of this chapter is Mr. Kenneth Berger. The Speech Association of Luther College, through its Speakers' Bureau, has published a brochure of its "package program", designed for high school assemblies, civic and church organizations. Chapters throughout the nation may be interested in this brochure.

### **Gustavus Adolphus College**

Professor Evan Anderson of Gustavus has the longest tenure of any coach in the Upper Mississippi Province.

### **College of St. Catherine**

The only inactive chapter in the province at the present time is St. Catherine's. In view of their previous fine record under Mr. Robert Forsythe and Mr. Joseph Robbe, it is hoped that the chapter may be reactivated next year.

### **Macalester College and the College of St. Thomas**

These schools have jointly sponsored not only the Northwest Debate Tournament for several years, but also a national convention in 1942.

### **Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire**

In 1953, this college won the national championship in public discussion and an outstanding debater award at West Point. In 1953, 1954, and 1955, it survived until the last day at West Point.

The Province of the Upper Mississippi has had a long and illustrious history in forensics. From the early literary society debate to the present high place in national competition Pi Kappa Delta has been a guiding force in the development of college speakers who can take their place on the public platform.



# Group Discussion As A Competitive Forensic Event

Robert S. Cathcart

Los Angeles State College

Group discussion is usually acclaimed as a basic tool in our democratic society and a useful method of problem-solving, yet it continues to meet with difficulty in gaining acceptance into the forensic world. Thirty-five years ago, directors of debating were not aware that group discussion existed. Then came a period when a large group of speech teachers and school administrators upheld group discussion as a worthy replacement for overly-competitive, cut-throat debate contests, and the battle was on. Finally it was recognized that discussion and debate were complementary methodologies, not inherent enemies. Since both discussion and debate were equally useful and essential methods of problem solving in a democratic society it was considered wise by many directors to include both in a well-rounded forensics program.

The problem of group discussion as a contest event, has produced some strange bedfellows. On the one hand there are those patriarchs of traditional debating who can't see that an activity where people "just sit around and talk" would be worthy of a place in a forensics tournament. On the other hand we have those champions of group discussion who cannot allow their chosen activity to come in contact with the "taint of competition." The former group cannot see anything in group discussion to test the skills of the participant or to encourage him to display his abilities, while the latter group is fearful that "typical debaters" will pervert the valuable procedures of group discussion in order to win personal glory.

These two groups both seem to be avoiding the real issue which is: does group discussion as a contest event provide worthwhile training to the college student? In order to answer this question one must ask further: does forensic competition have any real value for the individual student?

Now, if one is concerned with the evils of competition, of over-stressing the desire to win, of promotion of deceit and trickery, then it is in this whole area of forensics competition that one should grapple with the problem and not confine it to group discussion alone. If, on the other hand, one accepts the usual blandishments about forensic competition; that it provides the opportunity and the extra impetus to put classroom teaching to work in a more realistic atmosphere, that it brings about the best in careful research, analytical ability and logical thinking, and that it tends to perfect oral communication skills, then we cannot question the value of competitive forensics. We may then ask only, are these values or results compatible with the aims and goals of good group discussion?

One of the difficulties seems to be a fear that the desire to win will over-shadow all the other important elements of group discussion. It is considered all right to desire to win in a debate or extemp contest but there is something wrong with this desire in group discussion. Yet very few forensic directors will say that the primary purpose in a debate is to win. As Ewbank and Auer put it the real value of formal debating is that "it gives the debater training in thorough analysis, in the construction and delivery of argumentative speeches, and in defending his position against equally prepared opponents. The formal debate gives the student the basic training in thinking and speaking he should have." These same abilities are equally important in group discussion and they can be evaluated and judged on an individual basis just as they can be in a debate. An overpowering desire to win is as detrimental to good debating as it is to good group discussion. It must be kept in its proper place in both cases, not by eliminating the activity but by continually stressing the important things.



To all of this some will answer that debate is essentially competitive whereas discussion is essentially cooperative. On the surface this appears to be true. However, basic in both activities is the democratic search for the best possible solution to a problem. Neither cooperation or competition is best in this search. Both are important and other things, such as the ability to reason, are more important than either. Unlike the proponents of debate, who would deny that their sole purpose is to teach students to win, some upholders of group discussion have adopted a singular purpose in the promotion of cooperation. They apparently believe that if we just cooperate enough we will automatically find the right answers. Therefore, anything that smacks of competition only hinders group discussion. However, no amount of group cooperation ever produced valid solutions where the individuals in the group were incapable of using sound reasoning. There is nothing mystical about a group which gives it powers above and beyond the mental abilities of its members; all the thinking that is done in a group situation is done by the individuals who compose the group. It is true that cooperative thought can provide the opportunity for reasoning to develop, but underlying this is the presumption that the individual *can think* and that cooperation comes after that.

It may be more difficult to evaluate an individual's cooperativeness in group discussion than to discount competition in a debate, especially when there is a reward offered for cooperation. But, cooperation is not the only factor to be evaluated and rewarded in discussion. According to McBurney and Hance, "Inquiry, constructive thinking, criticism, and cooperation are the basic conceptions underlying the principles and methods of discussion." Cooperation is only one element of group discussion and no amount of cooperation alone could adequately substitute for a lack of inquiry, constructive thinking, and criticism. Note also, that these three elements are all matters of individual ability and application, and they can also be observed, criticized and appraised by a competent critic judge the same as individual ability in a debate can be judged.

One can appreciate the fact that cooperation is a necessary element for welding individual reflective deliberation into purposeful group action, yet one cannot force participants to cooperate any more than debaters can be forced to think logically. They must be continually motivated and stimulated to do so. Cooperation in group discussion must grow out of a sincere desire to follow the facts wherever they lead, from a deep belief in the ability of all to rise above self-interest when properly motivated and from a realization that what is right is more important than who is right. No amount of parading of "cooperation" will make good discussants out of persons who do not believe in the value and worth of group discussion or who are unwilling to honestly pursue its aims and objectives.

All of this is to say, that group discussion does have a place in competitive forensic activities if the aim of such activities is to promote the best in thorough research, sound analysis, logical thinking, and communicative skills, and to stimulate students to put these things to practice in an atmosphere which places a high premium on individual intellectual ability. It would indeed be a shame to prevent some of our best students from ever becoming acquainted with one of the most valuable of all democratic tools.

One of the reasons, I believe, that so many persons object to contest discussions at present is because it is conducted in such a hap-hazard manner. There is little regard for the fact that group discussion requires a different approach from traditional debate and perhaps requires even more rigorous training. Too many coaches regard contest discussion as just another individual event in which they can enter those people who can't orate or who aren't sharp enough to compete in extemp or impromptu. Little or no training in the skills and methods of discussion is given to the student and no help in preparation other than the usual, "be sure and read up on the subject." Consequently, the participant enters the discussion contest with no direct preparation and little or no understanding of what it is all about. He



sees it only as another opportunity to win an individual certificate or add a few more points toward the sweepstakes award. No wonder then that we get results which in no way resemble a true problem-solving situation. If coaches could or would devote a fair part of their time to teaching the skills and methods of discussion, and if they would give as much thought to the selection of discussion participants as they do to picking their number one debate team, then, our discussion contests would take on a different aspect.

At present, discussion contests are too often tacked onto debate tournaments as just another event. Consequently, very little planning goes into the event and hardly anyone is concerned with the results obtained. It seems possible to plan a discussion tournament, just as we now plan debate tournaments. Or, there could be a tournament in which several rounds of discussion on the general problem could precede the debates on a specific topic. This might even result in better debating. Then too, there is the student legislative congress which has become increasingly popular indicating that it has a great deal of appeal to the student and can have great value in the field of discussion when properly conducted.

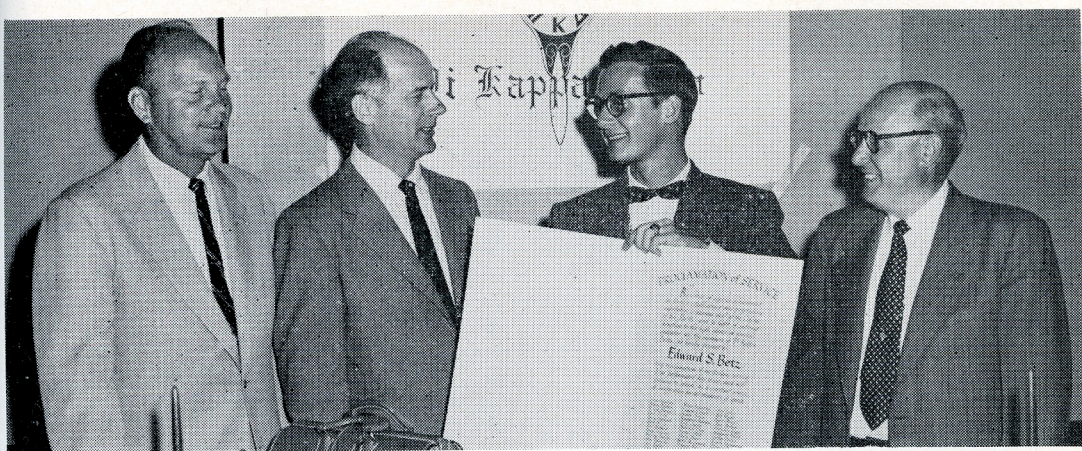
Finally, it is necessary to give at least as much thought to criticizing and judging discussion contests as is given for debate contests. Actually, the judging in discussion probably involves a higher degree of skill than in debate. Unfortunately, too many debate coaches and others who are tournament judges know very little about the basic principles of true group discussion. Many tend to judge discussion as either a debate, looking for the one who argued the best, or as a cooperative contest, looking for the person who agrees the most. It is this kind of superficial evaluation that leads to insincerity and dishonesty on

the part of the student participant. To prevent this we need to carefully select judges who are trained in group discussion and who can properly evaluate skillful analysis and reflective thinking as well as recognize sincere attempts to promote the best interests of the group.

The judging itself could be improved by providing more thorough evaluation sheets wherein the criteria for judging are clearly set forth and explained. Also, there is no reason for a judge to have to select the best participant or for the tournament to declare a winner. What we are interested in is finding those students who are superior or excellent in their ability to use the skills and methods of good group discussion so that others may be motivated to improve their abilities. In this same vein, there is no logical reason for judging the chairman by the same set of standards as the others are judged by, particularly when the discussion calls for a formal leadership role. When this is done, it tends to handicap the other participants and make it extremely difficult for the judge to properly weigh their contributions against that of the chairman. Either, trained chairmen should be provided, or the chairmanship should be rotated so that every student has an opportunity to function and be judged as a chairman.

When, and if, group discussion is elevated to its place as a coactivity with debate, and when forensics directors, tournament directors and others become as concerned with the fine points of discussion as they are now concerned with debate, then perhaps many of the present objections to group discussion as a contest event can be eliminated. More important, however, students may then have the opportunity to gain skill and knowledge in an activity that will better prepare them to take their place as useful citizens than training in debate alone can do.





Left to right: E. R. Moulton, Governor of Province of the Pacific; Ed Betz, retiring Director of Forensics; Dave King, President of COP Chapter of PKD; Dr. Runion, Chairman of the COP Dept. of Speech.

## Edward S. Betz Honored At Pacific Provincial Tournament And Convention

Edward S. Betz, Director of Forensics at the College of the Pacific in Stockton, California, was honored April 6 at the Pi Kappa Delta Pacific Provincial Tournament and Convention by a special tribute announcing his retirement as Director of Forensics upon the conclusion of this school year. The announcement of Mr. Betz's retirement was made at the Provincial Banquet held on the college's campus in the presence of over 100 Pi Kappa Delta members who were attending the tournament. Following the announcement was the presentation of a scroll stating a Proclamation of Service and on which was inscribed the names of all the members of Pi Kappa Delta at the College of the Pacific since 1938. Also presented to Mr. Betz was the gift of a briefcase which served as a material expression of the high regard and esteem held for him as forensic director for the past 19 years. Officiating at the tribute were David King, President of the C. O. P. chapter of Pi Kappa Delta, and John Varner, Debate Manager at the college.

A most significant aspect of the entire proceedings was the fact that it represented the combined efforts of many members of the honor fraternity, past and present, who together expressed their regret at Mr. Betz's retirement. Several of those in attendance to extend their personal well wishes were: Mel Nickerson, Susan Vanderlaan, Jane Curry, Jack Mansfield, Margaret Pinto, Martin Pulich, Manuel

Furtado, Jim Lewis, Dr. Colliver, John Fanucchi, George Nunn, and Howard Runion.

Mr. Betz, whose increasing duties as Dean of Men and many other administrative tasks at the college necessitated his retirement from active speech participation, expressed his deep appreciation for the tribute which was presented as a complete surprise to him, and his sincere regret that his pressing administrative duties prevent his further active continuance in forensics at the college.

Mr. Betz, before his acceptance of his position at the College of the Pacific in 1928, taught history at Holderidge College Nebraska before directing debate for two years at Hastings College, Nebraska, his Alma Mater.

His record at the College of the Pacific has truly served as an inspiration and encouragement in many ways since 1938. His efficient term of office as National President for Pi Kappa Delta in 1951-52 is still well remembered. Also commemorating Mr. Betz's service was the reading of a letter from Theodore Nelson, President of Pi Kappa Delta, honoring Betz for his many years of superlative contribution to the high ideals of forensic endeavor. It is assured the entire membership of Pi Kappa Delta joins with Dr. Nelson in extending a salute to a great man who has stepped from our active ranks in deed only.



# In Memoriam

## CAROLYN MARIE NEVINS

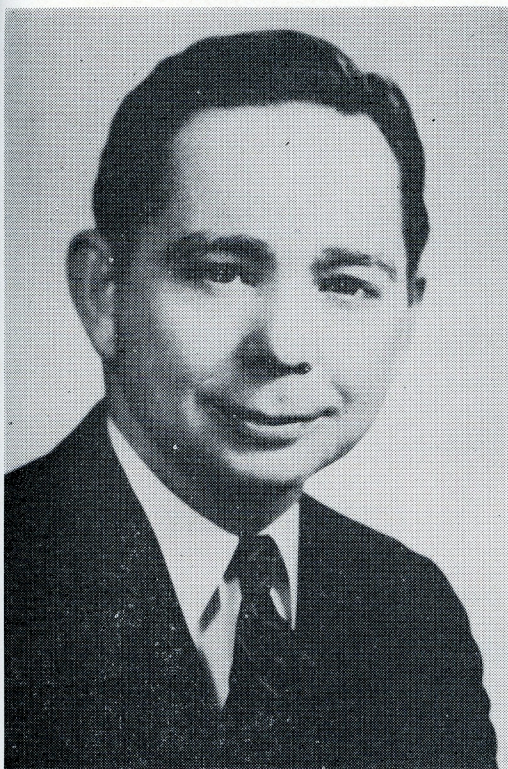
Carolyn Marie Nevins, senior honor student, major in speech, and active member of the Pi Kappa Delta chapter at the University of Omaha, Nebraska, was shot to death on Saturday evening, December 10, 1955, as she waited for her father to keep a date to drive her home from the university campus. Her murderer has not been apprehended after over five months of diligent searching by police and private investigators.

Her forensic director, Alfred Sugarman, writes of her: "It is difficult to get students who are willing to put in the time or the effort that forensics requires, and there are not too many who have the intellectual capacity to do significant work. Carolyn Nevins was one who had the capacity and somehow found the time. She received a number of awards of Superior and Excellent in discussion, debate and extemporaneous speaking. The day of her death she participated in our annual tournament here and received superior ratings in every discussion and debate round. As a person, as a student, as a speaker, she was a most worthy member of Pi Kappa Delta."

The National Council of Pi Kappa Delta has taken official notice of this tragedy to a member of its order. President Nelson has sent a letter in the name of the fraternity to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Nevins of Omaha, Nebraska. The Council is considering further action in the name of Pi Kappa Delta in honor of Carolyn Nevins.



# Southeastern Oklahoma Initiates Democratic Whip



Congressman Carl Albert, Democratic whip in National Congress from Oklahoma.

Theta Chapter at Southeastern State College, Durant, Oklahoma, claimed a distinctive honor this school year. Democratic House "whip" of the United States Congress, the Honorable Carl Albert, was initiated into honorary membership in that chapter with the award of Special Distinction in Oratory.

Albert has been Oklahoma's Congressman from the Third District since November, 1946, having been re-elected each two years following that date.

Congressman Albert won the National American Legion Oratorical contest while a senior in high school in McAlester, Oklahoma High School, and the Missouri Valley Oratorical contest while at the University of Oklahoma.

In addition, Carl was a debater of distinction at McAlester High School,

where he graduated in 1927 and at OU where he received his A.B. degree in 1931.

Upon graduating from the university, Albert was chosen as a Rhodes Scholar from 1931 to 1934. He earned two degrees in Law from Oxford University in England: Bachelor of Arts in 1933 and Bachelor of Civil Law in 1934.

During World War II he entered the Army in June, 1941, as a private and was discharged a lieutenant-colonel in February 1946. Albert was awarded the Bronze Star while serving in the Pacific theatre.

As the Democratic "whip", Carl Albert holds the third highest office of the Democratic party in the Congress. As part of his official duties he recently had the opportunity to exercise some of his Oxfordian courtesies. In the absence of the House Majority Leader, Albert conducted England's Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, through the Congress chambers.

Oklahoma's outstanding Congressman has established the "Carl Albert Award" at three of his state's colleges in his congressional district. The twenty-five dollar cash award goes to the outstanding student in forensics at Southeastern State, Murray State School of Agriculture, and Eastern Oklahoma A and M colleges.

In a letter to the Theta chapter secretary, Albert expressed the following sentiments regarding his initiation:

*"I want to thank everybody that had anything to do with my initiation into Pi Kappa Delta and how proud I was to have received this honor. The participants in this fraternity share the interest I have always had in public speaking. I have long wanted to be a member of Pi Kappa Delta and am happy that I can now say I am."*

Pi Kappa should be proud also to have as a member this outstanding Congressman whose reputation as an orator is a national one. His initiation lends additional honor to an honorable organization.