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Reader's Theatre: Building a National Event
JEFFREY GENTRY

Special Feature: A Focus on the Contributions of Bob Derryberry

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Bob Derryberry of Southwest Baptist University
CAROLYN KEEFE

A Tribute to the Lexicon of Bob Derryberry: Words That Build
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A Forensic Icon at Citizen-Educator: The Citizenship of Bob
Derryberry within the Forensics Community
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The *Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* invites authors to submit manuscripts related to scholarship, pedagogy, research, and administration in competitive and non-competitive speech and debate. The Editorial Board will consider manuscripts employing any appropriate methodology and is particularly interested in historical-critical studies in forensics and forensics education. Manuscripts submitted by undergraduate students and previously unpublished scholars will also receive serious consideration.

The journal reflects the values of its supporting organization. *Pi Kappa Delta* is committed to promoting "*the art of persuasion, beautiful and just.*" The journal seeks to promote serious scholarly discussion of issues connected to making competitive and non-competitive debate and individual events a powerful tool for teaching students the skills necessary for becoming articulate citizens. The journal seeks essays reflecting perspectives from all current debate and individual events forms, including, but not limited to: NDT, CEDA, NEDA, Parliamentary, Lincoln-Douglas debate; and NIET, NFA and non-traditional individual events.

Reviews of books and other educational materials will be published periodically. Potential reviewers are invited to contact the editor regarding the choice of materials for review.

All works must be original and not under review by other publishers. Authors should submit three print copies conforming to APA (4th ed.) guidelines plus a PC-compatible disk version. Manuscripts should not exceed 25 double-spaced typed pages, exclusive of tables and references; book and educational material reviews should be between 4-5 double-spaced pages. Submitted manuscripts will not be returned. The title page should include the title, author(s), corresponding address and telephone number. The second page should include an abstract of 75-100 words. The text of the manuscript (including its title) should begin on the next page, with the remaining pages numbered consecutively. Avoid self-identification in the text of the manuscript. Notes and references should be typed double-spaced on pages following the text of the manuscript. Tables should be clearly marked regarding their placement in the manuscript.

Manuscripts should be submitted to the editor: Michael Bartanen, Department of Communication and Theatre, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA 98447. 253-535-7764. BARTANMD@PLU.EDU. Authors will have an editorial decision within three months.

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Readers Theatre: Building a National Event

JEFFERY J. GENTRY*

This article attempts to provide practical and theoretical advice to director-coaches of Readers Theatre (RT), a performance genre that has found heightened interest on the four-year level over the past decade. First it identifies certain competition patterns in RT observed over the past twenty years. Second, a few competitive strategies that have enjoyed a modicum of success are noted. Finally, the author appeals to directors, judges and governing bodies such as Pi Kappa Delta to increase the weight given to program originality and degree of difficulty, as opposed to straight acting technique, when critiquing RT performances. The author concludes that traditional conventions are needed if RT is to maintain its place as a distinct art form.

Readers Theatre (RT), the performance of literature by three or more performers, offers its audience and participants numerous cultural values. As a public performance genre, Gentry (1994) touts RT's creativity, affordability, logistical parsimony, intellectual satisfaction, attractiveness to shy students, and intrinsic entertainment value. RT is a unique vehicle of literary expression and experimentation; newcomers to the event may consult several sources to get started (e.g., Yordon, 1997).

But Readers Theatre is not limited to public performance. The competition model of RT, maintained for decades by Phi Rho Pi and its two-year school affiliates, has become increasingly attractive to four-year school participants. Every year since 1992-93, one or more forensics tournaments in the southern plains have featured Readers Theatre. In 2000, Pi Kappa Delta began offering RT at its national tournament, a move that promises a rewarding experience for participating chapters. Also in 2000, the American Readers Theatre Association (ARTa) was established to promote RT as a championship event. With Readers Theatre's rising visibility as a competitive genre, it is natural that scholarly interest in the subject would also increase. For example, Gentry (1993, 1994, 1999) has produced convention papers and workshop presentations on competition Readers Theatre, and soon the journal RT, a publication of ARTa, will begin accepting submissions for on-line publication. Unlike most of the previous literature, this article considers Readers Theatre from the competitive coach's point of view. It will briefly outline patterns observed from previous RT contests, suggest strategies for coaches, and propose a

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philosophy of judging competition Readers Theatre.

Competition History

The author's involvement in Readers Theatre began nineteen years ago on the Rocky Mountain two-year school circuit. My coaching experience is on the open level in the Southern Plains, where both junior and senior colleges participate in roughly equal numbers. Since 1993 I have produced nine annual public performance RTs, each of which has been entered into competition (see Appendix B: Original RT Productions). The event is usually offered two-to-three times per year at forensics tournaments offered by members of the Great Plains Forensic Conference (GPFC). In Fall 2000 I also offered a one-day RT festival on the campus of [school name], where RT had been offered among our regular tournament events over the previous six years.

One clear pattern about RT competition is that it pays to enter. Like communication analysis, participation in RT is usually limited. This is due to the spotty tournament offerings for teams who would like to compete. With only two or three teams entered, a trophy and sweepstakes points usually await the intrepid groups which take the time to prepare a script, cast speakers, block the movement, and rehearse the program. Compared to the hotly-entered prose interpretation, chances of winning a trophy in RT are great—that is, when it can be found on the tournament calendar.

Another pattern in RT competition is high level of volatility in judging. Clearly, forensics competition is inherently subjective (a fact that never comforts students receiving final-round rankings of one-two-five). But Readers Theatre witnesses even more judge variability than other events. At the Great Plains RT Festival held at [school name] in December 2000, judges issued a wide variety of scores. The top two teams split back and forth on rankings, ratings, and critics' preference, with four different teams receiving first place from at least one of the nine judges. RT coaches are wise to prepare new students for this uncertainty ahead of time. Otherwise, their frustration at this apparent arbitrariness can potentially lead to abject discouragement.

A possible explanation for the higher standard deviation in RT judge scores could be the lack of tournament offerings. Frequency instills norms and conventions, which haven't yet gelled on the four-year level. The newly-founded ARTa (2001) acknowledges this "creative risk." At its 2001 inaugural championship tournament (ARTc), it called on "critics to evaluate performances without dependence on regional norms or traditional standards. Recognizing the inherent complexities of judging artistic performances, ARTc will strive to provide the most fair and open critique system of any national tournament" (n.pag.). Thus the founders of ARTa agree that RT judging is highly subjective. With such observations in mind, it may be helpful to consider a few basic strategies for new coaches.

Coaching Strategies

The first concern when coaching any event is likely to be a consideration of its overt written rules (see Appendix A: Readers Theatre Rules). RT rules vary among the various organizations and individuals who sponsor it. For example, Pi Kappa Delta uses the same rules established by Phi Rho Pi, which now calls the event "Interpreters Theatre." Included in these rules is a requirement that performers hold manuscripts. However, ARTa, recently founded by Phi Rho Pi members, makes even the use of folders optional. Naturally, the Pi Kappa Delta coach needs to ensure that her students hold manuscripts so as not to be penalized or even disqualified.

Phi Rho Pi/Pi Kappa Delta rules also list what production values are acceptable, such as ensemble dress, reading stands, chairs or stools, props, lighting and sound effects, music, and movement. Similar rules govern the southern plains-area tournaments cited above. These detailed standards lay in stark contrast to ARTa's rules, which are nearly non-existent. The only actual rules are that Readers Theatres must have at least three performers and that performances are limited to 25 minutes (not counting set-up and takedown, which should take a "reasonable" amount of time). Phi Rho Pi/PKD rules allow two extra minutes for set-up and take-down; southern plains-area tournaments permit only 25 minutes total. Directors, therefore, need to adapt their scripts to the slightly different time demands of each format.

In addition to the stated rules are certain unwritten RT conventions. Traditionally, RT discourages speakers from looking directly at each other, favoring more of an off-stage focus. And previous judges did not take well to speakers touching each other. These non-verbal norms are no longer at issue for most judges. Touching has become acceptable, as has staring directly into each other's eyes. Speakers often discard their manuscripts entirely so that they can assume full physical action, and then pick up the folder again later. As a matter of taste, however, some judges are more conservative than others. These judges are concerned about preserving the integrity of the *written* word, thus preventing RT from crossing over completely into staged theatre. Clearly, these individuals are swimming against the tide, as exemplified in the liberal rules of ARTa. But such differing tastes likely account for the unpredictability in RT judging observed above.

Despite recent trends, regional tournament and festival hosts are free to place restrictions on nonverbal action. In the Fall 2000 festival at [school name], for example, written rules prohibited speakers from touching each other; the same with specific properties and overt costuming, although free movement and ensemble dress were permitted (see Appendix A). A team that had been accustomed to having two speakers' touch during one scene pulled back and pantomimed the action, thus *nearly* touching. Looking directly at each other was allowed under the rules, and the resulting effect may have even been more powerful than if they had actually touched. The best advice to

directors is, carefully read the written rules in advance, and keep minor adaptations in mind for each environment.

Regardless of written rules and tastes, however, a few universal qualities do seem to find favor with all RT judges. One of these universals is energy. RT audiences appreciate strong voices and dynamic physical delivery. The worst thing that can happen in a 25-minute interpretation is for the performance to drag. Although appropriate changes of pace and mood are always in order, the audience should be energized by the program. Picking up cues, avoiding stale concentration, and a general desire to please are always rewarded by audiences and judges.

Familiarity with the script is also essential to high marks in RT. Eye contact has long been a disqualifying factor in oral interpretation competition—stare at the page and lose. But the ensemble nature of RT requires group practice, which is difficult for many of today's busy students. The team that puts in the practice time needed for extended eye contact and precise timing is usually the team that wins. This includes the oft-cited need to stay involved and out of the manuscript while others are speaking. Judges appreciate students who prepare well enough to give a polished and near-memorized delivery. And they reward diligent groups that work together enough to reflect teamwork and unity of purpose.

Beyond high energy and high familiarity, few universals in RT judging exist. Some judges favor elaborate blocking and precision ensemble movement. Other judges favor "acting pieces" that showcase advanced emotional development by individuals. There seems to be no bias in favor of drama or comedy. Unlike the apparent trend in solo and duo interpretation, comedy seems relatively un-stigmatized in RT, so there is more of it.

However, comedic interpretation requires comedic timing, which not all students possess naturally. Comedy also requires students who aren't afraid to appear foolish (as may be required of their characters); who can smile; who can overcome their inhibitions. Likewise, intellectually-challenging scripts require the students to "get it"—to understand on a deep level the themes that the director hopes to communicate. Student who audition for Readers Theatre because they assume it is less work, or that it requires less sensitivity than acting, will hamstring even the best-conceived programs.

Single-author scripts do well, as does the multiple-selection script. However, multiple-selection scripts bear the burden of written transitions and extra work to maintain thematic coherence. Music can bring an advantage, but it can also be a trap. Recently, judges have tended to judge singers and accompanists by professional standards, wiping out the gains of their added effort. A philosophy of judging addresses such questions of taste below. In sum, despite certain areas of general agreement, sure-fire coaching strategies in Readers Theatre remain elusive.

Archetypes of Excellence

As a public-performance genre, Readers Theatre is a hands-down success. Director and cast are free to use whatever media of expression they believe will best stimulate the audience's imagination. However, RT as a competition genre is highly inexact, even compared to other forensics events. If directors and students are philosophical about wide judging latitudes, this fact presents no problem. And the author has come to accept and even appreciate the diverse tastes of critics. However, students tend to be competition-oriented. More coherent standards of excellence in RT might convince them that judging is not so arbitrary, as it seems today. In this final section I suggest a philosophy of competition in three arguments: (1) Readers Theatre needs rules, (2) judges should consider originality and degree of difficulty in their critiques, and (3) the pure festival format is the only statistically-rational scoring method for RT. If the growing Readers Theatre community takes these arguments to heart, perhaps the competition model can match the success of the public-performance model.

Need for Rules

The newly-founded ARTa (2001) attempts to address judging concerns by doing away with rules altogether. It's founders state that shunning "norms" and "conventions" is "the most fair and open critique system of any national tournament" (n.pag.). The face value of this strategy is strong, as it appears to satisfy both traditional directors and daring innovators. A group wishing to preserve the integrity of the written word by holding folders and not touching would be judged within its own context, as would another group that eschewed manuscripts and touched extensively. Neither group would be penalized in relation to the other, so both would have an equal chance of winning.

A more realistic examination suggests otherwise. Invariably, the edgier performance, the one without scripts and using more realistic acting movement will win. Probably every time, even if the traditional Readers Theatre is moderately more advanced in other areas. The losing ballot will read something like this: "An excellent script, but your non-verbal choices weren't as challenging or entertaining." Thus while not explicitly banning folders and off-stage focus, competitive realities will soon force all ARTa schools to abandon their manuscripts. This is because of the simple fact that *competition follows incentives*. When students learn that the top three RT's at their national tournaments had no manuscripts, this will become a smothering unwritten requirement. It doesn't take two-plus decades in forensics to come to this conclusion.

At first glance, it could be argued that discarding folders is inherently good for the activity. After all, this would communicate to students and audiences that RT is serious performance art, requiring advanced physical technique and memorization. And audiences

would be less thrown off by its differences from straight theatre. Unfortunately, there are real problems with the acting model of Readers Theatre. I use the phrase "acting model" because that's exactly what Readers Theatre would become, a cut-down play. ARTa rules entail that only one difference remains between RT and a short play: that RT more often incorporates prose and poetry, as well as dramatic literature. This shift would be unfortunate because the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) has recently adopted a short play contest that is practically identical to the acting model of RT. Ironically, the only difference is that ACTF's written rules prohibit props and set pieces (although these rules were reportedly flouted at the regional festival in Texas in 2001).

Rather than operate at the whim of strict realism, RT best serves as the theatre of the mind, where the "action" takes place literally in the audience's imagination. This means that competition RT should require that manuscripts be held, that performers not touch each other, and that specific properties and costumes be imagined, not represented. Opening up the rules of Readers Theatre further would invariably result in an iron-clad orthodoxy of acting over interpretation. Plenty of avenues already exist for pure acting in American higher education. Readers Theatre can survive as a separate entity only if it chooses to be different.

Originality and Challenge

A second way to reduce the arbitrary nature of RT judging is to educate critics on the value of creativity. Some directors spend months pouring over various literary selections, preparing entertaining transitions, and even writing original scenes for a multiple genre script. Other directors simply photocopy a one-act play, with no additional creative contributions. Unfortunately, most judges today see no difference in the originality of these two scripts, even if the first RT identifies itself as "an original adaptation" or "an original script." But the audience should be impressed, as it is being treated to nothing less than a world premiere performance. As in gymnastics and diving, the more creative group should receive a slightly higher top-end potential score than the team presenting the stock acting piece. Otherwise, there is no incentive for coaches and students to strive for originality.

Degree of difficulty manifests itself in several other areas, as well. Ensemble scripts require more from the cast than would a series of dyadic vignettes. Scripts requiring larger ensembles are harder to perform well than those using smaller casts. Singing and live accompaniment reflect courage, range, extra work, and enhanced entertainment value. Scripts with advanced intellectual content should enjoy a slight advantage over "fluff" material that is designed merely to amuse. These concerns need not become normative or disqualifying, but judges should give credit to challenging logistics, diverse skills, and challenging material. Otherwise, we exaggerate the value of pure acting technique. Instead of being one of several impor-

tant criteria, acting becomes the dominant criterion of evaluation.

Judge education can help equalize the status of originality, creativity, and acting technique. At the Fall 2000 GPFC festival in the southern plains, the following note was added to the written rules: "Suggested judging criteria include creativity/originality, thematic coherence, artistry, and technical merit." Regardless of individual taste, directors and governing bodies can help ensure that Readers Theatre is not regarded as a cheaper version of a play. Therefore, I formally recommend that Pi Kappa Delta adopt the [school name] Readers Theatre festival rules for use at its tournaments beginning in St. Louis in 2002 (see Appendix A).

Scoring Validity

A final area of concern lay not in the judging of Readers Theatre, but in how critiques are interpreted. It is my contention that due to the inherent subjectivity in RT judging, Pi Kappa Delta's pure festival format is the only statistically rational method of scoring. At Pi Kappa Delta, individual events—and RT—are scored via proportionate rankings, not elimination rounds and cut-throat breaks. For example, if 20 RTs enter at the Baltimore convention and tournament in 2003, they will each perform three times, with no elimination rounds. At the awards banquet, two groups will win a superior award, four will receive excellent, and six will earn "good" ratings for their schools.

At Pi Kappa Delta, there is no attempt to say that one superior-award team was better than the other, only that both earned such strong scores that they should be recognized as truly outstanding. With a total of thirty percent winning an award, Pi Kappa Delta acknowledges the subjective enterprise of RT judging, and allows a wide margin of error in giving awards. I believe Phi Rho Pi still uses a roughly similar proportionate method.

ARTA, on the other hand, offers six preliminary rounds at its national championships (ARTc), and cuts to eight semi-finalists. With so many preliminaries, and allowing eight to advance, ARTc also attempts to reward many groups. Presumably, they will adjust their elimination round breaks to the number of entrants, and award all those who advance. But once the final round is tabulated, ARTc will attempt to validate one group over all others. With the predictable wide range of judges' preference, declaring one winner is probably statistically dubious. Even with nine judges in the final round, it is possible that the winner's ranks will cum as a tie with second place, with judge idiosyncrasies and tab-room hair-splitting determining the winner.

Pi Kappa Delta better keeps competition more in perspective. Those who win "excellent" awards would not receive recognition in an AFA-type format. Especially in Readers Theatre, AFA-style breaks, used at ARTc, will likely confound students and coaches alike. Until ARTa fleshes out its community norms (which may threaten Readers

Theatre as a separate art form), there may be excessive hurt feelings at its national championship events. Six preliminary rounds cannot erase the inherent subjectivity in judging art. Nevertheless, ARTa and Pi Kappa Delta should be congratulated for extending the magic of Readers Theatre to four-year schools nationwide.

This paper has attempted to provide insights, strategies, and appeals designed to ensure the continued growth and cultural value of collegiate Readers Theatre. Unlike previous literature, this paper has specifically addressed the competition model. Although clear archetypes for competitive RT remain elusive, efforts such as this can begin to build a general consensus on basic judging criteria. Specifically, one hopes that respect for the printed word, script originality, and degree of difficulty will each stand alongside acting technique in the minds of judges. Regardless of competitive considerations, however, our community should celebrate the intrinsic values Readers Theatre has to offer. May there be more of it.

Appendix A: Readers Theatre Rules

1) Phi Rho Pi Interpreters' Theatre Rules (Pi Kappa Delta uses same rules in "Reader's Theatre")

a. Interpreters' Theatre is defined as interpretation of literature by a group of oral readers who act as a medium of expression for an audience.

b. While Interpreters' Theatre is both oral and visual, the emphasis is on the oral interpretation of the printed word and its resultant effects on the minds, emotions and imaginations of the listeners/viewers. The audience should have the feeling of a unified whole in which each performer at all times contributes to the total effect desired.

c. The time limitation for the performance is twenty-five (25) minutes. An additional 2 minutes shall be allowed for set-up and take-down of material.

d. Interpreters' Theatre is a team entry and is included in the six (6) teams per college limitation. A team is limited to a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of fourteen (14) participants.

e. Programs are not allowed in this event (handouts).

f. Mechanics of presentation are limited as follows:

1. The audience must have a sense of production being interpreted from a manuscript. Director, performer, and judges should be allowed freedom to exercise artistic, interpretive judgment; however, manuscripts must be interpreted from during the presentation.

2. Suggestions in contemporary or ensemble dress may be used. The literature should determine the nature of this suggestion, although costuming should not be a focus of this presentation.

3. Reading stands, chairs, stools, ladders, platforms, steps, props, lighting effects may be used. HOWEVER, facilities limitations (space equipment, time, etc.) should govern a director's choice. Readers may stand, sit, or both and may move from one reading stand or locale to another so long as the movement is consistent with the ideas or moods

of the literature and the director's concept.

4. Music/sound effects recorded or live are acceptable as background accompaniment and part of the context. Since the emphasis of Interpreters' Theatre is on oral interpretation, complicated musical arrangements that dominate or distract from the oral interpretation will be considered inappropriate. A performer whose sole function is to play a musical instrument on or off-stage will be counted in the 14 persons limit.

II) American Readers Theatre Association Event Rules

Generally, readers theater involves the performance of single or multiple literary works developing a theme or themes. Performance technique often includes the use of manuscripts. These are guidelines that competing theaters should be familiar with, but are not explicit rules of ARTc.

In keeping with ARTa's goal of advancing the art form, ARTc supports only the following strict rules:

ARTc Rule 1: All readers theaters entered must consist of three or more students.

ARTc Rule 2: The time limit for each performance is 25 minutes. Reasonable time for set up and take down shall be permitted and shall not be counted in the 25 minute time limit.

Therefore, use of any objects beyond the performers and the literature shall be at the discretion of the competitors and their directors. Artistic choices should be evaluated by their effectiveness, rather than compliance with explicit rules or norms.

III) Southwest Oklahoma State University Readers Theatre Festival Rules

General rules: Readers Theatre is a group performance of literature for 3-12 students. Time limit is 25 minutes, including set-up and take down. Any combination of published or unpublished literature may be used. Audio-visual aids, ensemble dress, and movement are permitted. Suggested judging criteria include creativity/originality, thematic coherence, artistry, and technical merit.

Delivery/other rules: As this is an oral interpretation event, manuscripts are required; performers may not touch each other; props and costumes are not permitted. Stools/ chairs/theatre blocks are allowed, as is musical accompaniment. Only students may serve in any performance capacity. Any program that hits 28 minutes will be abruptly interrupted to permit the next program to begin on time. To avoid this unpleasantness, directors should carefully hold to the 25-minute time limit. Know your length in advance. Judges can and should penalize programs that exceed 25:15.

Appendix B: Original RT Productions (directed by the author)

"Wonka 2000: The Real Story." Ninth annual Readers Theatre program, November 2000. Co-wrote, adapted and directed. Original story by Roald Dahl, songs by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley. Additional material from Sean Abley.

"Stories and Poems From Central Africa." Eighth annual Readers Theatre program, November 1999. Adapted and directed. Book by Philip Gourevitch. Poems by Catherine Obianuju Acholonu, Amelia Blossom Pegram, Roland

Tombekai Dempster, Gabriel Okara, Matei Markwei.

"Curmudgeons On Parade." Seventh annual Readers Theatre program, December 1998. Co-wrote, adapted and directed. Other writer: Jon Winokur.

"Quest For the Clio." Sixth annual Readers Theatre program, October 1997. Co-wrote, adapted and directed. Other writers: Mitch Markowitz and Heath Doerr.

"The Lighter Side of War." Fifth annual Readers Theatre program, April 1997. Co-wrote, adapted and directed. Other writers: Aristophanes, Tim Conard & Todd McClary, William Stafford, Randal Jarrel, and Ambrose Bierce.

"Painful Adjustments" (co-directed with Sherrie Sharp). Fourth annual Readers Theatre program, November 1995. Co-wrote, adapted and directed. Other writers: Anton Chekhov; Judith Voirst; Alfred Yankovic; Oppenheimer, Pugh, & Carroll.

"Seeker." Third annual Readers Theatre program, November, 1994. Wrote all spoken dialogue and one song (words/music; musical arrangement by Jennifer Travis); adapted and directed. All other songs by Cat Stevens.

"Isn't It Romantic?" Second annual Readers Theatre program. November, 1993. Co-wrote, including one song (words/music; musical arrangement by Jennifer Kurtz); adapted and directed. Other writers: Edna St. Vincent Millay, Anton Chekhov, Bernard Malamud, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

"Siddhartha." First annual Readers Theatre program, November, 1992. Adapted and directed. Book by Hermann Hesse; songs by Cat Stevens.

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A Profile of a Long-Term Forensics Director: Bob Derryberry of Southwest Baptist University

CAROLYN KEEFE*

In 1985, Fayetteville, Arkansas; in 1987, LaCrosse, Wisconsin; in 1989, St. Louis, Missouri; in 1991, Eatontown, New Jersey; in 1993, Tacoma, Washington; in 1995, Shreveport, Louisiana; in 1997, Highland Heights, Kentucky; and in 1999, Fargo, North Dakota — at these eight successive Pi Kappa Delta National Biennial Convention-Tournaments the debate-speech teams from a small university in southwestern Missouri took first place sweepstakes. Even before this astounding series of wins, the teams were accustomed to placing in PKD's top ten percent; by 1985 they had already reached that level four times. The director of forensics behind all these wins and countless others is our colleague Dr. Bob Derryberry, Senior Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication at Southwest Baptist University.

No doubt many of the forensics educators who have witnessed SBU's repeated capturing of top crowns across the country have asked themselves, "How does Bob manage to do that?" Inasmuch as this essay is not a how-to-do speech, and in deference to his rather formal lexicon, that question had best be rephrased by one raised about another outstanding person: "What manner of man is this. . .?"

For the answer it will not be necessary to have Bob Derryberry psychoanalyzed, tested, hypnotized, or gene-split. His words, deeds, and impact on his students provide all we need and have a right to know about this extraordinary man.

The writings of this thirty-one year veteran of the forensics circuit show a strong commitment to the principles that comprise his philosophy of forensics. The foundation consists of the dual conviction that forensics exists to further the educational development of students and that forensics has a unique potential to enhance that development.

There is nothing remarkable in Bob Derryberry's adherence to this

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bedrock of forensics. Had not the 1974 National Developmental Conference on Forensics adopted the position that "although the forensics educator has significant roles in the development of theory, in research and scholarship, and in the administration of forensics programs, the primary role is as teacher" (McBath 18)? Until the outsourcing of the 1990s, almost every intercollegiate forensics director had a professional base in the academy. By virtue of interest (sometimes even passion), study, and experience, they were educators, and forensics was a part of their educational responsibility to students. Derryberry comes from that generation of forensics educators, and he, understandably, is concerned about "any practices that diminish our scholarly place and reputation," such as "forensics becoming separated from academic departments" (Letter).

Where Bob Derryberry excels is in the way he has built a superstructure above the foundation. Like a master builder, he knows the functions of the groundwork:

Philosophy influences the educational goals we set for individual students and how entire forensic teams are organized; it affects how students and coaches visualize competition; and it determines the way programs see the communities in which they function ("Toward a Philosophy" 3).

Derryberry has developed a program that in broad outlines has three pillars. Each rests on a conviction stemming from his value system and upheld by his unflagging dedication to the forensics endeavor.

Pillar One: *The forensics program, director, and participants should model ethical standards and behavior.* Bob Derryberry uses many direct and indirect ways to carry out this emphasis, but at no time is the effort more concentrated than during his annual "State of the Year" speech. His August 23, 2000 presentation illustrates his approach.

Derryberry's talk had both informative and persuasive goals. He announced weekly squad meetings, faculty office hours, and additional scholarship dollars and explained the way speeches are readied and approved for competition. But most of his message aimed at building positive attitudes and inspiring ethical behavior. Derryberry stressed the importance of developing team cohesion through mutual support, cooperation with team members and staff, minimizing stardom, looking ahead rather than back to high school forensics or even to Southwest Baptist University accomplishments, and reflecting well on the alumni, university, and self. The qualities of open-mindedness, industriousness, and patient persistence were identified as valuable for the squad. Derryberry also reminded the students about the decorum code: they were to look and act their best. "WE ARE AND WILL BE A TEAM," he stressed ("State"1). The talk abounded with imperatives: "know," "remember," "recruit help," "demonstrate," "ask," etc. In his own way, he laid down the law by suggesting that if new recruits could not accept his right of hearing and approving

every speech, they "should rethink what forensics is all about ("State" 1).

Anyone who is well acquainted with Bob Derryberry can hear in the above summary his rare quality of polite authority. If an oral interpreter performed that speech, he or she would need great skill to communicate the kindness and weight that he must have displayed to his team. If the reader barked out Bob's words, the effect would be inauthentic. "He's not authoritarian," reports Matt Morrow, Executive Officer for the Home Builders Association of Greater Springfield, "but he is so respected that his students would never intentionally disappoint him or let him down in any way." Another SBU graduate, Melissa Roberts Reynolds, a high school English teacher and forensics coach, writes, "I don't ever remember him being angry or raising his voice. He was always such a 'southern gentleman.'"

Few academicians have the moral courage to advocate in print a high behavioral standard that someday might be used as a measure against their own words or actions. Not so with Bob Derryberry. In 1992, at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, he stated, "Forensic educators must accept the challenge of providing model leadership for student competitors and future forensic educators" ("Ethical Decisions" 16). How well he measures up to that standard is evident in the words of law firm partner Billy Randles: "I was so impressed by him. He became my mentor. . . . He creates such a professional ethic in you, you demand so much of yourself." Melissa Roberts Reynolds amplifies her southern gentleman description of Bob by saying that he is one of the most Christian persons she has ever known, a man who "set an incredible example of living a good life."

Pillar Two: *Forensics programs should provide multidimensional opportunities for student development.* For Bob Derryberry the multidimensional approach to forensics education is a program with a clear philosophical base and a wide variety of purposeful communication experiences that lead to individual and team learning. They take place on the forensics circuit, within the university curriculum, and in the public arena.

Bob Derryberry is a firm believer that neither debate nor individual events can provide the educational and team benefits of the two combined. That is why he challenges his students to take on as many forensics offerings as they can as the year progresses. In this way they not only broaden their ability to meet the preparation and delivery demands of different types of speeches and performances, but they gain a sense of contributing to the team's overall success ("Total Forensic Program" 21-22).

For Bob Derryberry, who is never content to skim the surface of anything, "multidimensional" involves more than coaching his students in both debate and individual events. A hallmark of the Derryberry programmatic approach is what he calls "integrating

forensics." Simply stated, this term means utilizing resources and opportunities beyond the forensics circuit to enhance the learning that is so copious within it.

It is not surprising that the perceptive forensics educator with over thirty-five years experience as a department chair would find an integrating opportunity in the curriculum. His insights from both his roles have fueled a concern about the inability of many contestants to command ideas from liberal arts disciplines, such as philosophy, English, history, and political science, and their habit of resorting to personal examples and shallow journalistic analyses. To counter these weaknesses, he urges an integrative strategy:

We in forensic communication must continually examine our courses, requirements, and cocurricular activities to determine if students invest their time and talents in programs that establish and maintain high standards. With equal earnestness, we should insist that our students are exposed to the best possible core offerings provided by other disciplines. To fail. . . has consequences for higher education as a whole and especially for speakers ("Forensic Preparation" 164-65).

Constantly Derryberry is searching for ways that his team can use their communication skills for their betterment and that of others. One means he has found is yet another approach to integrating forensics community service. Before long his students learn that the educational benefits from debate and individual events are increased when they venture into public communication settings, so they forage for the additional gains by speaking to university classes, service clubs, religious organizations, and at open team workshops. In conjunction with the department, they also host open debates and speech programs. Through these diverse experiences, the students discover how to adjust their delivery to various physical environments and their messages to audiences with challenging demographic and attitudinal characteristics. Quickly discovering that the ballot-writing judge is an anomaly, the students profit from the larger audience feedback about many communication factors, such as speaking rate and complexity of ideas. For Derryberry these opportunities outside the forensics circuit are of such great importance that he makes them an integral part of his forensics program.

Pillar Three: *Forensics programs should build team traditions.* Overarching all the SBU team traditions is the tradition of excellence that has been handed down by successive and successful teams. Spreading the word, so to speak, have been units of the university community, including the educators, students, administrators, staff, alumni, and in-house publications, as well as the external mouthpieces — parents, friends, competitors, and various media. From all this information dissemination has come a deserved halo that radiates a magnetic power. Attorney Sandra Herren Colhour specifies "SBU's excellent forensics tradition" as motivational in her first-year