

THE FORENSIC

OF PI KAPPA DELTA

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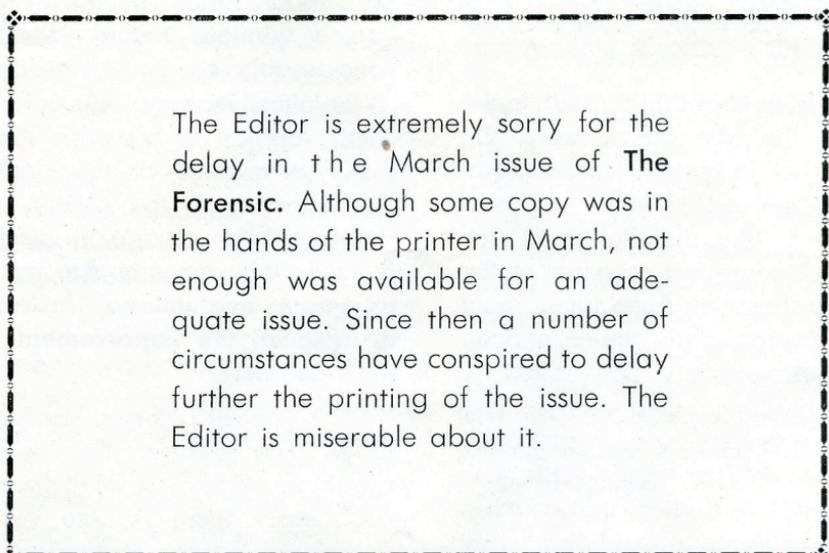
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Issued four times a year, in October, January, March and May. Subscription free to all active members. Entered as second class matter, October, 1949, at the post office at Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, under act of August 24, 1912.

SERIES 36

MARCH, 1951

NO. 3



The Editor is extremely sorry for the delay in the March issue of **The Forensic**. Although some copy was in the hands of the printer in March, not enough was available for an adequate issue. Since then a number of circumstances have conspired to delay further the printing of the issue. The Editor is miserable about it.

Let's Evaluate Ourselves

EMIL R. PFISTER, Central Michigan College

Attention has again been focused upon the values and shortcomings of forensics by the wide publication of a committee report of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The recommendations concluded with the sentence "Speech contests should be discontinued."

It is superfluous, of course, to attack the report or to defend speech contests especially in this publication. Nearly every reader of "The Forensic" realizes the value of these activities and has primary evidence on this subject gained from both observation and experience.

We realize that this is neither the first nor the last attack upon the "status quo" in speech contests. Furthermore, not all adverse criticisms come from "the unenlightened outsiders." At a recent meeting of the American Forensic Association, held in conjunction with the American Speech Association Convention in New York City, some of the "old-timers", a group, who traditionally resist any change, came forth with statements to the effect that coaches and participants should not only publicize the value of what is now being done in forensics but also, remembering that change is inevitable, should re-examine and re-evaluate what is being done and what needs to be done.

Fortunately, this belief that there is a need for the search-light of self-criticism is not indigenous to any geographical area but seems to be

rather general across the nation from Lewiston, Maine, to Redlands, California.

One way we could go about this self-improvement project is by giving consideration to several questions concerning what we are doing. The following questions concerning debate are offered as possible examples of the type we might attempt to consider:

(1) There is common agreement that one of the important objectives of debate is the improvement of the participant. Since an individual debater's win-loss record is affected considerably by such variables as (1) the effectiveness of this colleague; (2) the quality of his opposition; (3) the circumstance of the particular debate; and (4) the ability of the judge and the criteria he uses; the question that arises is: **Are we using adequate evaluational instruments to measure the improvement made by a debater?**

(II) A contest before a single critic-judge may sharpen the logic and speaking skill of a participant but doubtlessly there is also value in talking to various audiences. However, bombarding each other with technical debate terms and "facts" above the heads of an ordinary audience, lack of humor, use of "technique" and inadequacy of visual material, as well as overuse of the tournament, has contributed to audienceless debates. Men like Robert G. Ingersoll, Russell H. Conwell, and Henry Ward Beecher used logical

arguments and still kept the crowds coming. The question is: **What are we doing to secure more experiences with different types of audiences?**

(III) Students know that merely saying that something is true does not necessarily make it accepted by others. Yet making unsubstantiated statements is a common practice among speakers unaware of the subjective nature of "facts." Although propagandists maintain that if you say a given statement enough times many people will believe it, students ought not be satisfied with this method and should ask the question: **What ought we know about the nature of evidence and to what extent do we practice that which we know?**

(IV) Judging is, according to most participants, an important feature of speech contests. Even though certain criteria may be fairly agreed upon, this question is pertinent: **To what extent do we demand that our judges be adequately prepared for their responsibilities?**

(V) When considering a point involving economics one usually considers it wise to consult economists who are familiar with the principles governing the operation of the economic system. Since more debate propositions may be considered from several viewpoints and involve many aspects, we should ask ourselves: **Are we using the help of specialists to judge the scientific adequacy of our cases?**

(VI) Students list contributions made to the field of logic since Aristotle. In recent years many have become acquainted with the methodology of Korzybski. Yet people en-

gaged in forensics often display a pattern of thinking that is highly rigid. Many debaters seem unaware of the multiordeinality of such words as "need", "good", "evils", and they dogmatically assert "This term means—" We should consider: **To what extent are we effective in encouraging flexibility of thinking processes?**

(VII) Since speech contests are usually "extra-curricular" it is assumed that they are something extra and beyond the regular curriculum. Thus, those who participate ought to have a background of academic course work. The question is: **Is our intercollegiate program backed by sufficient classwork and an adequate intramural program?**

(VIII) Some few say that discussion should replace debate. Another small group have little use for discussion. However, many believe that discussion of a question, if conducted correctly, should naturally precede the debate of a proposition arising from this question: We might ask ourselves: **Are we making the best use of discussion to improve the participant as well as promote forensic activities?**

Many other questions could and should be asked if we are to engage in adequate evaluation of our program of speech contests. Nevertheless, some of the foregoing questions may lead to others and perhaps some instructor or participant with an answer or an idea can present it in a future issue of the Forensic. This could be very worthwhile. Will you do it?

Oklahoma Adventure

Northeastern State College debaters added trophy number 33 to the school's collection the week-end of February 15-17, but there was a time during the trip when they would have swapped their chances for a good timing gear for the station wagon.

Coach James Robinson and the six debaters who made the trip are convinced that the old "bromide" about its always being "darkest just before the dawn" isn't a bromide at all.

Six of the college's ten debaters loaded themselves into "old faithful," the college station wagon, Thursday afternoon with plans to arrive in Emporia, Kansas late that night so they would have Friday morning before the tournament began at 2:00 p.m. to work on the newer developments of this year's national college debate question. The aforementioned "old faithful" turned into the most faithless of creatures between Dewey and Copan and had to be towed back into Bartlesville for repairs.

The only garage open regretted that the repairs would take six or eight hours and that it couldn't be finished until near noon—too late for the speakers to arrive for the first of four preliminary rounds of debate. Schedules were such that they couldn't make it to Emporia via bus or train in time and no one seemed to know of a rent-a-car agency in town.

It was at this point that the dawn began to break. A friend of the coach, Gilbert Asher—the *Tulsa*

World reporter who covered the Mosser kidnapping story and who was in Bartlesville on a special assignment—came to the rescue. Asher called his boss for permission to take Friday morning off to serve as chauffeur for the group while the coach remained in Bartlesville to await completion of repairs on the station wagon.

In the meantime Fred L. Rice, Fred Pralle, and Ray F. Hamilton—officials of the Phillips Petroleum Company—invited Asher, Robinson, and the six debaters to spend the night as guests of the company in its new apartment-hotel. After a night in the "nicest hotel we've ever seen"—as one debater put it—the speakers piled in Asher's car and made it just in time for round one at 2 p.m.

To make the story a scenario-writers dream, the women's team, composed of Virginia Burleson, Muskogee, and Helen Ann Biswell, Chandler, won first in the junior division to cop their third trophy this year and Fred White, Meeker, and James Khourie, Boynton, won seven debates in a row, only to lose in the semi-finals to Nebraska Wesleyan University. They won third in the senior division.

The third team composed of Joan Bass, Muskogee, and Bill Hall, Oklahoma City were debating together for the first time and did not do so well.

Even if no trophies had been won the debaters are convinced that it was the most exciting trip of their careers and that people are the nicest things in the world.

St. Mary's College

For a school that only last year passed out sheepskins to its twenty-fifth graduating class, St. Mary's College of Winona, Minnesota, has seen a unique and adventurous life. One of the culminations of a story within St. Mary's occurred on March 10 with the introduction of the Pi Kappa Delta National Forensic Society. The inauguration of eight members marked the fulfillment of a goal that was aimed at sixteen years earlier.

On an October day in 1934, Brother Matthew of the college posted a notice on the bulletin board that introduced formal debate, at least by name, to St. Mary's College.

His debate teams attended state forensic meets and dueled with neighboring colleges.

It was left to Brother Elzear, who became its coach in 1936, to raise sectional recognition had come to St. Mary's, the smallest school in the Minnesota college conference, in football and hockey just a few years before. Why, if it was possible for St. Mary's to have an All-American in both those sports, couldn't a school of three hundred students produce a winning debate team?

In his first year as coach, Brother Elzear had his squad from the hill-



top college engage in a radio debate with La Crosse Teachers College that spanned over thirty miles of Mississippi water. That broadcast of a college debate was an auspicious start for such an activity. For the first time the debate team began to tour the midwest in a four state circuit that included the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

Again it was through the influence of Brother Elzear that St. Mary's inaugurated an annual Interscholastic Debate Tournament for Catholic High Schools in the Midwest. The tournament was stopped during the war years and because of crowded conditions resulting from post-war enrollment it has not as yet been revived.

In 1939, as the threat of a European war hung over the world and the high school debaters were discussing the problem of an alliance with Great Britain, St. Mary's freshmen and varsity debaters were on a twelve-day 2500 mile itinerary with competition from the Universities of St. Louis, Northwestern, Marquette, and Wisconsin.

At the death of Brother Elzear in 1941, Brother J. Philip, present debate coach at St. Mary's, continued the program much as it had been.

By 1944, despite interest from V-12 personnel who attended St. Mary's, travel restrictions and wartime curtailments made interscholastic debate a near impossibility. Deferments were being cancelled, only six seniors were to be graduated by spring, when Brother Philip announced that the inability of St. Mary's College to schedule meets forced a cancellation of debate.

With the war's end, the debate

program began anew in December, 1945. The first post-war tourney showed the weakness of inexperience, but by 1949 debate had again risen to pre-war import at the small school on the hill. Of thirty-one schools in the Eau Claire tournament, St. Mary's bowed only to the Universities of Notre Dame and Wisconsin. St. Mary's went on to win the St. Thomas Debate Tournament and later participated in the nationals at West Point.

If admission to the Pi Kappa Delta Society is an achievement, it is also a challenge. True, it fulfills a sixteen year goal that Brother Matthew had in mind as early as 1934. Yet any attitude of complacency would be fatal, especially in a college that today boasts an enrollment short of five hundred fifty. Frequent forensic meetings and the enthusiasm of student debaters are insurance that debate at St. Mary's will continue on as one of the most important activities of the college.



Dr. PAUL CRAWFORD, Northern Illinois State Teachers, Spoke at the Central State Speech Teachers Meeting in Milwaukee in April.

You Don't Have To Win

At the 1928 Convention of Pi Kappa Delta there appeared an unusual group of talented speakers, many with little experience, but great ambition. It is reassuring to observe that many of them who placed low in the contests of that particular tournament have won high recognition in the years since.

From California, there was Roy McCall representing the University of Redlands. Two years later he and his colleague won third at the National Tournament. At present Doctor Roy McCall is Chairman of the Department of Speech at the University of Oregon, and is recognized as one of the outstanding leaders in the field of speech education. He is author of *Fundamentals of Speech* published by MacMillan in 1949.

From Colorado, Wayne Reitz came to participate in oratory. Since then he has received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, and has served as Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Florida, as Economic Consultant, United Growers and Shippers Association, Orlando, Florida, Chief of the Citrus Fruit Division, Production and Marketing Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture, and at present is Provost of the College of Agriculture, University of Florida.

Forest Wahn represented Kansas State Agricultural College with the oration, "Common Sense." He did not place. Since then he has published twenty-six volumes of research studies on radio audiences,



Dr. Roy McCall



Dr. Forest Wahn

each study running approximately one hundred pages. In addition he is the co-author of the book, *How To Debate*, and has written extensively for both speech and business periodicals. He is listed in *Who's Who In America*, and a number of other biographical journals. At present he is Professor and Head of the Department of Speech at Wichita University.

One of the representatives of Emporia State Teachers College was Darrel J. Mase. At present Doctor Mase is Coordinator of the Florida University Center of Clinical Services. In this position it is his duty to co-ordinate the work of the following clinics: Bureau of Vocational Guidance and Mental Hygiene, Speech and Hearing Clinic, Reading Laboratory and Clinic, and Medical Diagnosis and Treatment Clinic. His honors have included the following: serving as President of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, being one of fifty-two participants invited by the United States Commissioner of Education to consider the issues of education for exceptional children, serving as a member of the New Jersey Governor's Committee on Youth, and representing the American Speech and Hearing Association on the Advisory Council at the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth.

From Gustavus Adolphus in Minnesota came Wilton Bergstrand and Edgar Carlson, who two years later were to win the National Tournament in debate. At the Ohio Convention, however, neither was a winner. Since then Doctor Edgar Carlson has become President of Gustavus Adol-

phus, and a brief account of his career appeared in the January (1948) *Forensic*.

Delyte W. Morris representing Park College in oratory made the semi-finals with the oration "Part of Us." Doctor Morris has served as Chairman of the Speech Department at Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, as Professor of Speech and Director of the Speech and Hearing Clinic at Ohio State University, and since September 1948 has been President of Southern Illinois University. From 1940 to 1948 Doctor Morris was secretary-treasurer of the American Speech and Hearing Association, and upon his retirement as President in 1949 was voted the "Honors of the Association" for his "distinguished contribution to the field of speech and hearing."



Dr. Delyte W. Morris