

11-1954

Speech Training Provides Solid Background for Industrial Relations

Donald Sherbondy

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/gavel>



Part of the [Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sherbondy, D. (1954). Speech training provides solid background for industrial relations. *The Gavel of Delta Sigma Rho*, 37(1), 16-17.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Gavel of Delta Sigma Rho* by an authorized editor of Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Maine, Muskie, and Delta Sigma Rho

by BROOKS QUIMBY*

How did it happen that Maine elected a Democratic governor? Television and radio commentators, news weeklies and editors have all had their guesses; here is the forensic explanation!

The Republican national committeeman from Maine said after the election, "Ed Muskie and Frank Coffin have become political dictators of Maine," which, in non-political language, means that these two young men are responsible for this remarkable campaign result.

Little did the staunch Republican members of the Bates College chapter of Delta Sigma Rho see anything ominous in the motion at their 1953 annual meeting of Frank Coffin ('40) that the chapter send its sympathy to Edmund Muskie ('36) who had fallen and broken his back in a repair job in his home. Both young lawyers had been active in Democratic politics in Maine after graduating from Harvard and Cornell Law Schools respectively, but Maine folks are tolerant of such eccentricities in young people!

But in 1954, neither was present at the annual June meeting; they were busy setting up a remarkable political campaign, with Frank as state chairman of the Democrats and Ed his candidate for governor.

Maine Democrats had never conducted such a campaign before. Perhaps a turning point came when Ed repeatedly challenged his Republican opponent, a governor running for the traditional second term usually given to incumbents of that office, to debate the issues of the campaign on the same platform with him.

There arose a forensic dilemma: the governor was sure to be defeated if he accepted the challenge and debated; so he refused—and lost the election!

This proves nothing to Maine folks, except that when a couple of Delta Sigma Rho members set out to win votes and influence people, even Maine Republicans can't stand the impact!

*Brooks Quimby is sponsor of the Bates College chapter of DSR.

Speech Training Provides Solid Background for Industrial Relations

by DONALD SHERBONDY (OWU '30)*

Since graduating from college in 1930 I have been a teacher, a lawyer, and now the director of industrial relations for a company. I can say without hesitation that the preparatory work in college which has helped me most in each of these professions was my training in public speaking and debating.

Certainly an absolute requisite of a successful teacher is the ability to stand before a class and present the subject in an effective and convincing manner. Public speaking gives that training. I have known some brilliant scholars who were not successful teachers because they lacked such training. On the other hand I have known teachers who were not outstanding scholars but who were great teachers. Their success lay in the fact that they could present the fundamental truths in such a clear and persuasive way that they made an enduring impression upon every student who was privileged to sit at their feet.

Most people, even those who know little about the practice of the law, will agree without further discussion that the lawyer should have training in public speaking. To the average layman the lawyer's stock in trade is the ability to engage in brilliant forensic encounter with an opposing lawyer in the courtroom. That is an important part of legal practice. Today, however, most legal work is not done in the courtroom, but across the conference table. Training in public speaking is just as important there as in the courtroom. The peaceful and successful settlement in the office of possible litigation takes great persuasive ability both with the lawyer's opponents and with the lawyer's client. Public speaking, especially college debating, is with-

(Continued on page 17)

*Mr. Sherbondy is Director of Industrial Relations of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., One Gateway Center, Pittsburgh 22, Pa. He is also a lawyer, with degrees from the American University, George Washington University, and Georgetown University. As an undergraduate at Ohio Wesleyan, he was a leading debater and, in his senior year, president of the student body.

Speech Training Helps Preaching

by CECIL H. JONES (OWU '34)*

My college training in speech has been invaluable to me in my profession as a minister. I can best summarize its help as follows:

1. The Importance of Good Material

It is not fair to say that speech training is solely a "technique" course. My teachers always stressed the need for good material, and we were encouraged to read widely in both classical and modern literature. The study we made of some of the world's great orations was especially stimulating. As a minister, one of my constant tasks is the preparation of sermons, speeches, etc. I am thankful that I know how to look for and find material that I can use.

2. Good Organization of Material

Actually when one comes to the final preparation of a speech upon which he has spent time and thought, he usually has more material than he can ever hope to present. Cutting and selection of material are of paramount importance. Speech training has prepared me for this task.

3. Effective Delivery

It goes without saying that a speaker must get his material across. Speech training has helped me in the care and development of the voice, and in the formation of good speech habits.

4. Logical Thinking—Especially on One's Feet

I think this has been the most important result of my own speech training. I had considerable work in debate, and this was an excellent exercise in quick, logical thinking.

Industrial Relations

(Continued from page 16)

out question the best preparation for the conference table as well as the courtroom.

The field of industrial relations—the developing of techniques for improving labor-management relations—offers one of the greatest challenges today to college graduates. In no field of human endeavor does training in public speaking pay greater dividends. The

man who can stand on his feet before an audience of laboring men or of management personnel and present a point of view effectively is marked for success in the field. Collective bargaining between labor and management is the newest field of forensic activity. Training in public speaking can make a profound contribution to both sides of the bargaining table. Without such training, predicated upon effective presentation of the truth, the field of labor-management relations will be dominated by demagogues and charlatans rather than by men of good will.

Valuable as training in public speaking is as preparation for one's profession or vocation, it is equally valuable in one's community life. The individual who can present his position, whether before a large group or to only one person, in an effective and convincing manner is a leader in his community.

Cross-Examination

(Continued from page 12)

One school, last year, replied to our invitation with the statement that they would like to attend, but unfortunately they debated the orthodox style only. We are convinced that the loss is theirs, and not ours. Fortunately enough schools feel otherwise to provide us with good competition despite the unfamiliarity and difficulty of the medium.

Perhaps the unwillingness to lay themselves open to embarrassing questions is partly responsible for the fact that debaters are not avidly sought to appear on public platforms. We at Pitt are convinced that orthodox style would never have kept awake the 28,000 high schoolers who were in our audiences last year; time and time again it was a sharp exchange in cross-examination that brought listeners to the edges of their chairs. Our tournament is a major training ground for audience appearances.

The Pitt Cross-Exam, then, incorporates three ideas which deviate from standard practice, and on which its uniqueness depends: cross-examination technique, measurement of proficiency by judges' ratings, and a reward system with meeting a distinguished opponent at its apex. The value of the tournament is undoubtedly increased by the participation of a British team; but the basic structure has its own purposes and values.

*Minister at Grace Presbyterian Church, York at Vista Road, Jenkintown, Pa.