

11-1954

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Recommended Citation

Jones, C. H. (1954). Speech training helps preaching. *The Gavel of Delta Sigma Rho*, 37(1), 17.

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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

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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

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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.

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