

NADSA'S PRESIDENT GREETES DELEGATES

Editor's Note: Allen Williams, President of the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, extended the greetings of his organization at the New Orleans convention luncheon on December 29. The text of his remarks follows. Williams, a member of the Grambling College faculty, is currently on leave to continue graduate study at Indiana University.

Mr. President, Officers and members of the Speech Communication Association, Ladies and Gentlemen, I bring you greetings from the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, (NADSA).

The National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts is a professional affiliation of teachers, students, technicians, and craftsmen of the theatre, and allied areas of interest. NADSA was founded in 1936 through the efforts of one man — Dr. S. Randolph Edmonds.

NADSA's general purpose is to provide a professional organization for teachers and students of the theatre and the communicative arts. More specifically the purpose of NADSA is twofold: to encourage the establishment and conduct of programs in theatre and communicative arts at member institutions, and to provide pre-professional and professional experience for students of these schools which have interest in or special recommendations for professional work in speech and drama.

NADSA is unique in that it affords students an opportunity to participate in professional activities and not just observe them. This special feature attracts the attention and interest of persons from all over America.

Who belongs to NADSA? Members of college and university faculties in the specialized areas of theatre and communicative arts and their students. By communicative arts is meant all divisions of speech and drama curricula. In addition, teachers and directors of high school speech and drama programs and those who are interested in theatre and communicative arts regardless of training or specialized interest may join.

NADSA is divided into five geographical regions: Northeastern, Northwestern, North Central, Southeastern, Southwestern. Programs in each region are coordinated by a regional director. Activities at this level traditionally include exchange programs within states, and regionwide conferences. The Association meets as a conference body

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RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT 1970

Excerpts from the Address to the General Session of the Convention of the Speech Communication Association
The Jung Hotel, New Orleans, December 28, 1970

by
Donald C. Bryant, President

Vice-President Howell, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Welcome to the first annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association. May you all *speake, communicate, and associate* to your satisfaction and profit — in both the hard, real world of professional discourse and the frivolous, fictional world of Bourbon Street and the Sugar Bowl. . . .

Under the circumstances of the present time in American society and the world at large, in the context of the toil and trouble of educational transformation and of student and faculty insurgence, in the midst of reconstruction within our national association and centrifugal flight throughout our professions, I find it a very formidable undertaking and a humbling responsibility to address a body of my educational colleagues. I find it easy to search for wisdom, but hard to come by any. Fortunately, however, our President's Address occupies the chronologic position, and therefore invites the substance and spirit, of valedictory rather than inaugural. The President does not hazard a program; he is spared the obligation of laying planks in a platform; he need not make promises for a future which he must undertake to mold and direct. He is to animadvert on a glorious past and breathe out rosy (or threatening) clouds for a future in which he will be no decisive instrument. . . .

This past year has been busy and important in and for SAA/SCA. There have been many distinguishing events and developments, of which the three-stage National Project on Rhetoric is of special importance. The development preoccupying all of us most directly and immediately at this convention, however, is the transformation we are managing in our organization and our mode of functioning. We here are in the first critical phase of learning to rearrange and regroup ourselves to advantage, to reform the manner and means of conducting our affairs, and to reconceive and modernize the ends and vehicles of our professional activity and our social transactions. The way is now open, so far as organizational structure in the association alone can open it, for facilitating — though obviously not guaranteeing — the achievement of that rebirth and redirection for which Douglas Ehninger pleaded two years ago. To him more than to any other one indi-

vidual we owe the opportunity which the new name and new constitution afford us. . . .

And now, in the idiom and temper of valedictory, I would turn to retrospect and prospect and speak of the scholarship and the teaching in our Association and our professions.

As most of you have been told, and as one or two may vaguely remember, our first national organization — in spite of the sterile establishmentarianism which is now freely charged upon us — was conceived in discontent, was gestated in rebellion, and was born in secession, in the years 1913 and 1914. I was not then a teacher of speech, but I was an amenable speaker of pieces in the elementary school classroom, to the satisfaction of my parents and the edification if not the envy of my classmates. Perhaps in that capacity I was a small contributor, by negative example, to the radical reform taking place in the teaching and among the teachers of speech; — for the discontent of our forefathers arose from the preoccupation of departments and teachers of English with elocutionism on the one hand, and on the other with non-orality in practical discourse. The rebellion grew within departments of English and the National Council of Teachers of English until secession was ripe. After two successive years of debate among those whom we might now call teachers of speech (excuse me, *communication*), a mass exodus took place — seventeen members walked out and formed the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (NAATPS), separating themselves from the NCTE and the Speech Arts Association (the SAA).

A precedent was well set by those "Seventeen Who Made History," as the late Andrew Weaver called them in an article in *QJS*. That precedent has animated us repeatedly over the years, and I hope that we will never abandon it. Healthy discontent — and even unhealthy — is the fuel of change, and even of improvement. I hope that it will not burn out. From time to time, too, there is call for rebellion, because vested interests must sometimes be dislodged if not overthrown. I trust, however, that secession will not become the common recourse of impatient dissidence. Fractionation, as we may have learned

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through our own history, is not the *universal* cure for internal stress and discord — in associations or in departments.

Our associational forefathers wrought well. Over a couple of decades they brought into American education fresh prospects in the scholarship and teaching of public communication. They saw in the 1920's and 1930's that what was needed was exploration of the potential of a revived Aristotelianism — or at least a new classicism — in rhetorical studies: redevelopment, after a century or so of obscurity, of the implications of a rhetoric of public discourse above and beyond the familiar rhetoric of poetry — of literature. The new rhetorical studies thrived here and there throughout American Academia — at Cornell and Iowa, for example, at Wisconsin and Michigan, at Princeton with Hoyt Hudson, though not at Harvard and Yale. A need was met, a new scholarly venture created. Its monuments, though not so numerous as those in the older studies, are subjects of rightful pride in our profession. You are familiar with them. I grew up among them.

In teaching, too, fresh developments began, for our professions have always been first of all teaching professions and only secondarily research professions. New textbooks were written on new principles, contemporary psychological principles. As Campbell, Blair, Kames, Priestly, *et al* had done in the eighteenth century, so, for example, did Winans and Woolbert in the twentieth. Only this time the basis was not the refurbished faculty psychology of Christian Woolf, or Hartleyan associationism, but the pragmatic psychology of William James, or Watsonian behaviorism, or Gestalt theory.

Historical-rhetorical-dramatic studies managed to get along well with scientific, psychological explication and teaching of communication in the Association and in schools and universities, and they both got along well, too, with physiological-neurological studies in speech correction. Perhaps that was because the practitioners were young and innocent or were all outcasts together, but I don't think so. I think that a more fundamental reason for what I remember as mutual support (though it may have been only mutual disregard) is that the scientist-pedagogue and the historian-theoretic-critic (often in the same person) were both *generating* new views of the study of verbal, especially oral, communication, and new insights into the contemporary processes and the historical phenomena.

So the discontent, the rebellion, the secession of our founders — honor to them! — brought the positive achievement of which we are the fortunate legatees. It brought also, it seems to me, a perhaps less happy consequence.

Like other rebels and separatists, our first fathers not only abjured the sterile, non-relevant practices of their parents in English and in the Speech Arts Association, but in their eagerness to be as unlike their former colleagues as possible, they seemed to repudiate the best along with the worst — to neglect verbal felicity in their teaching and doctrines of communication, and to belittle the study of literature because the professors thereof seemed to take too small an interest in practical communication. To celebrate their escape from the confines of the purely literary and of preoccupation with style and delivery, some of our professional fathers seemed to advocate for the teaching of speech a kind of work-a-day Stanislavskianism: think the thought, feel the feeling, be the person, and the rest will take care of itself. They didn't mean it just that way, to be sure, for they were men well educated in liberal studies, and though they could deny their allegiance they could not expunge their heritage. But their students and their students' students were under no such restraint.

In scholarship — in rhetoric and criticism — the atmosphere of emancipation was fixed, in effect, by Hudson's "Field of Rhetoric" in 1923 and Wichelns' "Literary Criticism of Oratory" in 1925. Those two essays, and especially Wichelns', were landmark manifestoes for the new study and scholarship in our fields. But they may also have had the effect of undergirding a comfortable conviction that we did not need our old connections, or any others for that matter, and that we were entitled to academic respectability and honor because we said so.

Whatever the causes and however just the claim, I have been disturbed over the years at the large amount of space in our publications devoted to reproaching or defying our academic "enemies," and the volumes of gas released in our conventions over the rightful place denied to Speech in the educational family and over the just position of our departments and our associations in the academic and scholarly pecking order.

Perhaps I exaggerate our defensive self-depreciation. I hope so. In fact I think that I hear now less talk of the injustice and contempt of our "enemies" and "opponents," and more talk of the remediable ignorance and the correctable misconceptions of our "colleagues" in other studies; less dogged defense of

our self-proclaimed frontiers against the encroachments of English, history, journalism, for example, and of some of our own professional progeny like AETA, ASHA, and ICA, and more exploration of possible interdisciplinary undertakings in the interest of revitalized teaching, scholarship, and service. Nothing in this situation is more encouraging than the two national conferences, or behavioral studies and on rhetoric, which we have recently managed; nothing less so than the continuing partition of departments; the multiplication of speech, drama, communication associations; and at the grass roots in school and college the isolation and insulation of teaching.

I am no militant ecumenicist, no treasonous "English-lover" (in spite of my long domestication among professors of literature), no apostle of a bland nutriment skimmed from "the best of all the elegant arts"; but I do permit myself publicly to deplore the proud, self-satisfied ignorance of humanistic inheritance which I find too often in undergraduate majors in speech who seek to be graduate students—scholars—in rhetoric and public address and the sciences of communication, and even, *mirabile dictu*, in theatre and interpretation! Nor do I seek my comfort in nostalgia for the good old times: in a neo-Aristotelian Nirvana. Congressman Mills' message years ago to the young Republicans of New York goes a little too far: "Gentlemen," Howard Brubaker paraphrased him as saying, "Fixing our eyes upon our glorious past, let us back forward into the future."

I must admit, however, that though I admire Antonius in Cicero's dialogue, I love Crassus more. I therefore wish for our professions not less expertise, but more learning; not less emphasis on research (or even REsearch), but deeper development of humane scholarship not less enthusiasm for contemporary studies—for the application of our fine techniques to the exciting, immediate, pressing social problems and issues of today—but more concern to support such enthusiasm, study, and involvement with the resources of perspective and depth of context. There is eminent good sense in Hannah Arendt's call, quoted by Larry Rosenfield at our last summer's conference, for *erudition*, and not "original scholarship" only. Perhaps some of us are wrong in supposing that we can see far because we stand on the shoulders of giants; perhaps, as alleged, they were really only pygmies, though I do not altogether agree. But even calling them pygmies is a sort of

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concession to disclaimed inheritance, to the "establishment." *What can be seen* by those viewers of the future who stand only on their own long, thin legs rising out of the primeval slime? A forest of other long thin legs?

Of course there have always been learned men and women, men and women of depth of erudition, in our professions—the Hudsons, the Hunts, the Baldwins, the Coopers and Caplans, the Bairs, the Wichelnses, to mention some from an older generation—in school, college, and university; and there are such today. I could name a few if pressed—you, for example. But I think that they are getting fewer, proportionately at least, and I do not find in that a healthy trend.

In seeking to restore and preserve erudition and learning, the humane scholar, I would not enshrine the generalist on the one hand or the pedant on the other. We have had and we do have generalists a-plenty, and inevitably so. The good teacher of public speaking, debate, oral interpretation, discussion, voice and phonetics, drama and theatre, in his daily preoccupation with the eternal sophomore, must have ready knowledge of most of life. And in the other direction, pedantry is the blindness of learning and erudition, not their necessary consequence. Nor are the erudite, the learned as I see them, universal scholars. The possibility of any such died if not with Aristotle or Bacon then with Diderot and the *Grand Encyclopedie*. The learned man whom I seek does not take *all knowledge* for his province, as Alexander took all the world for his. But the learned man, the erudite, is broadly, deeply, wisely at home in *all the pertinent knowledge* of his province, and of the provinces adjacent to his and allied to his, and of the intellectual context from which his province draws or should draw its life and consequence. He is no peddler of the facile dodge, "I don't need to know it if I know who does or where to find it." He is no borrower or thief of his scholarly substance, but the owner not only of the tools of his trade but the material of his calling—or he is the purchaser at the cost of his own study. We recognize him, we admire him, we envy him; but we do not meet him daily among our colleagues, or read him quarterly in our journals.

We are of the learned professions, as teachers and students at whatever story in the educational edifice, and unless some of us—many I should say—pursue learning—erudition—, and unless all of us honor and cherish it, we

are no more than what we are called by our denigrators—that is, more competent or less competent technicians contentedly following outmoded highways or eagerly taking off on any roads that look as if they might lead to something new to do with our shopworn tools.

I know that the concepts erudition, learning, even humane scholarship, tend to suggest the historical, the critical, the literary and philological, the philosophical, and to separate those disciplines from the scientific. I suspect, therefore, that if for no other reason, you may think that I am moving towards advocating revival in new contexts of the academic connections which our first fathers intentionally broke, that I would wish to shore the humanistic in our professions against inundation by the social-behavioral-scientific. No doubt I am and no doubt I would. But I would no more wish now to restore the old monarchy after the rebellion (or the old union after the secession) than I would have after 1914.

The rebel-secessionists of 1914 and their immediate followers, as I have said, generated a vital new scholarship and new teaching. But new views and new insights grow "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable"—that is, sterile and stereotyped—faster and faster as social and intellectual change accelerates. Methods and modes of approach to problems of scholarship and teaching quickly turn ritualistic or mechanical with unventuresome, unimaginative use. "Generation" slows up or stops, but teaching and research go on, repeating and repeating themselves. Discontent and rebellion seem called for anew.

So during the 1950's and 1960's we have sensed widespread weariness and disillusionment (which you may suppose that I do not altogether share) with the familiar pursuit of rhetorical studies and with time-tried practices in teaching the essentials of intelligent, sensible, orderly, even perhaps graceful, public articulateness. This widespread reaction to the limitations and misapprehensions of customary studies sought its new direction in enthusiastic resort to immature if not premature behavioral science. The new Aristotelian rhetoric of the '20's and '30's and the new psychological pedagogy of that time had to be replaced, in the opinions of some of our new thinkers, by behavioral science in communication—for research and for teaching.

"Replaced"—there, I think, is the crux of the problem. The mistake of our fathers is made over again. The new view is not to correct, reform, rebuild and enlarge the old. It is to secede from the old, to abrogate history, and to deny

significance or worth to anything but the predictions of science. It is to declare to the student of communication that only the *mechanisms* of communication are worth attention; that the context of communication, the corpus of communication, the social-historical matrix of communication are somebody else's affair, if indeed anybody's serious concern; that contemplation of the natural human phenomena in their natural circumstances, past and present, by whatever means are available, is to be supplanted by the continued measurement of manufactured phenomena in manufactured situations. I do not here characterize the view held by the best of the scientists in our profession, for they are new men with old backgrounds and the wisdom of perspective and enlarged view. But their students, the generation of new men without old backgrounds, have no such inhibition, no such potential enlarger of their vision. No harm, perhaps. But let us remember that ritual is ritual, sterility is sterility. Change is opportunity for improvement, but no guarantee of it.

I will not presume upon your patience at this time by entering extensively into the prolific new discussion of the conflict between the social-behavioral and the historical-critical in our professions, and of the potentials for reconciling the divergencies. Many of the young and bright among our colleagues are taking the problem seriously and the wisest of them are on the track of new jointly-found harmony.

One would be silly to make believe that there is not a kind of warfare of new and old, of ancient and modern, of "science and religion," among the students of speech communication. When have there not been some good, stimulating quarrels? In my youth they were there, but as I recall, the issues were not whether speech scientists or humanists rode the wave of the future, but whether the future of speech education or scholarship should belong to Wisconsin or Cornell, to LSU or OSU, to Densmore or Mabbie. Now the disagreements are more consequential and more serious and call for some mutual illumination among the specialists of both kinds. Something of the sort can be stimulated without anyone's loss of integrity, for example, in the new structure of SCA, and in our national conferences on research, development, and teaching—past, present, and to come.

I have great hopes for the new SCA Division of Rhetorical and Communication Theory as the French Academy of the '70's. It arrives on the scene at the

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opportune time. Behavioral science in Speech Communication was born—or I had better say “made his barmitzvah”—at New Orleans in 1968; and unquestionably a rejuvenated, forward-looking rhetoric is arising from the Bitzer Project of this year. The colors of the rhetorical plumage coming from the aviaries of Wingspread and Pheasant Run are already visible in the Official Report of the Rhetoric Project—and they are brilliant. Even before the full published volume from the Project appears in April, I urge you to beg, borrow, or steal a copy of the twenty-paged, mimeographed document, whoever you are and whatever your “interest group.” Read it with care and meditate upon it with active and open mind. I think you will find it the abstract of a manifesto for a new humanism in the study and teaching of communication. Even if you are too busy with your own vital problems—of devising an interdisciplinary student-oriented format for your course in voice and diction, of finding and testing hypotheses about source-credibility in guerrilla theatre, of classifying the semantic-phonemic segments in the poems of Dylan Thomas, or applying Chi-square to Union Square—if you are too busy with such things to go through the whole twenty pages, then read at least the excerpts in the December *Spectra* or pages 18 and 19 of the Report, the section called “The Project in Relation to the Public Interest.” You will be shaken, and you will be rewarded. You will read that:

Were the judgments of our conferences accepted, sweeping changes would be necessary throughout the educational establishment of the nation. In the humanities and in the several fields of social inquiry especially, “scientific models” would be relegated in application to those matters of detail in which “fact-nonfact” judgments are possible, and a “rhetorical model” specifying that human valuation is all that men can attain would control the analysis and presentation of most major data and its uses in these branches of learning. To adopt such emphases in research, teaching, and public affairs would be revolutionary and would require ways of thinking, communicating, and evaluating scarcely noticed in Anglo-American thought since the so-called “Age of Enlightenment.”

And you will seek with me for the learning, the erudition, in our professions to master the meaning of such a

declaration and to begin in the 1970's to fulfill its promise. . . .

I would conclude . . . by quoting an acquaintance from whom I have profited much in long familiarity—Edmund Burke.

Civil freedom [he wrote in 1777 during the madness of the war with the colonies] . . . is not, as many have endeavored to persuade you, a thing that lies hid in the depth of abstruse science. It is a blessing and a benefit, not an abstract speculation; and all the just reasoning that can be upon it is of so coarse a texture as perfectly to suit the ordinary capacities of those who are to enjoy, and of those who are to defend it. Far from any resemblance to those propositions in geometry and metaphysics which admit no medium, but must be true or false in all their latitude, social and civil freedom are variously mixed and modified, enjoyed in very different degrees, and shaped into an infinite diversity of forms, according to the temper and circumstances of every community.

For us here and now, in our condition and in our circumstances, I would extend Burke's civil and social freedom to comprehend professional freedom and scholarly wisdom.

On another occasion, Burke wrote: “People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors.” In my Retrospect and Prospect I have sought both views. And now, My Colleagues, Associates, and Friends, may I thank you for placing upon me the obligation to contemplate our condition anew, and to articulate today some of the yield from that contemplation.

Editor's Note: The full text of the foregoing address, with citations, will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*.

Spectra, a publication of the Speech Communication Association, is sent to all members in October, December, February, April, June and August. Annual subscription rate for non-members: \$2.50. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, William Work, Speech Communication Association, Statler Hilton Hotel, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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to: Robert C. Jeffrey, Department of Speech, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712. Additional information about the 1971 Summer Conference will be distributed to all members in early April.

Institute Directory Available

Reprints of the 1971 *Directory of High School Summer Speech Institutes* will be available in late February from Allan Kennedy, Department of Speech-Communication, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio 43606. Please enclose ten cents to cover mailing costs.

The *Directory*, prepared under the aegis of the SCA, lists all colleges and universities that have reported sponsorship of high school speech institutes and debate workshops for the summer of 1971. Such information as the mailing address and the name of the director in charge are included along with the dates and a brief description of the instructional program and entrance requirements.

Write: *Communications, Department of Communication, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois 61761 for information about a new monthly bibliographic publication edited by William E. Arnold and Thomas A. McCain.*

According to a recent dispatch from Reuters, the Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry has released the results of a study that shows that of a large sampling of persons who died at age 90 or older, approximately 75% liked sweet foods and almost 99% were regarded by their relatives as “talkative.”

“Viewing the recent campus disturbances from a position of scholarly detachment, it seems unusual if not distressing that departments of speech have not been uniquely identified with the substantial amount of discussion and communication that has surrounded the contemporary American political scene. As professionals in oral discourse we should serve as the leaders in initiating discussion, we should be the agents for communication activity within the academic community, and we ought to be able to act effectively as mediating instruments when communication difficulties threaten the very lives of our institutions.” (James V. Gibson, in an editorial, “Campus Crisis: A Criticism,” *Central States Speech Journal*, Summer, 1970)