

## **To Award Trophies or Not to Award Trophies: That is the Question**

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A significant issue facing the forensic community is laid bare by Ralph Waldo Emerson's quotation, "*the reward of a thing well done is to have done it.*" Do we engage in forensics for the reward of learning and growing or for the trophies signifying a thing well done? Most would agree that we engage in forensics because it is academically, professionally, and socially valuable. Traditionally, trophies have signified the external value of the activity's internal merit. However, forensics has a unique opportunity and responsibility to evaluate its trophy bearing practices. Some of my forensic colleagues have argued that awards are antiquated and bring focus on the wrong parts of the activity. Other forensic colleagues have argued that awards, usually through trophies, place value on the activity and reward the hard work of its participants.

While both sides of this argument have validity, the forensic community must reevaluate this issue and come to consensus. As a forensicator, I agree trophies have had value in our activity. As an administrator, however, I have a unique perspective. In today's environment, trophies do not support the advancement of our activity and actually place forensics in jeopardy. Administrators, those dubious people deciding teaching schedules, approving travel, and holding the purse strings, should become a much more important voice in this discussion. As an administrator, I will build my case by explicating the purpose of awards in forensics, detail the problems caused by the trophy tradition, and offer some sensible solutions that could move our activity forward.

### **Purpose of Awards in Forensics**

Forensics is a means, not an end. Trophies are not themselves important, but what they represent is vitally important. Consequently, forensics put an emphasis on competition because it creates the desire to excel, a respect for hard work, and an increase in self-confidence.

While trophies have not been the reason many students participate in forensics, trophies have served an important purpose. Traditionally, trophies have signified success both on individual and team levels. Awards ceremonies at tournaments can bring excitement, celebration, and rewards. Successful competitors and teams should be rewarded for their hard work and success. Competitors receive the glory of success. Teams are applauded by their peers when they emerge victorious. Administrators enjoy showcasing "hardware"

as proof of school prowess. These are important aspects of competition – winning and recognition. However, trophies may not necessarily best represent these aspects of competition.

Almost without exception, individuals who take membership into the forensic community emerge from the experience having grown tremendously as a person and speaker. Participants realize that it is *who* they are and the knowledge and skills they develop that is the important reward, not *how many* trophies they accumulated.

If competitors believe in the possibility of gaining power through the spoken word, forensics participation will teach skills that can apply in every communication situation encountered. With or without trophies, forensicators should enjoy the success that comes through personal, professional, and social growth found in the activity. Competitors should take great comfort in the reward that comes with a job well done. Unfortunately, trophies may very well be impeding the educational process of forensic competition.

### **Problem with the Trophy Tradition**

Students and coaches should receive recognition for forensic success. However, the usual means of honoring this success with trophies has created a tradition that is costly at best and dishonoring at worst. My issue as a former forensicator and current administrator is not in the reward of excellence, but with the manner in which our activity uses trophies as the reward. There are several issues that make the trophy tradition harmful to the forensic community:

#### *Trophy Expense*

Trophies are expensive. When I ran tournaments, the trophy bill was a significant portion of overall expense. We have to ask ourselves, in a time of financial crunch, if trophies are serving their purpose. As budgets shrink and programs decrease every year, forensics could find ways to reward students other than handing out trophies.

#### *The Trophy Closet*

Most schools do not have extensive trophy cases for displaying every trophy won at every tournament. If schools did display every trophy won each weekend of competition, the significances of such success would actually be minimized. Most schools, like mine, allow students to keep their individual trophies and we display the team awards. If you asked your students what they did with their trophies, you would hear similar themes emerge. I asked 38 of my former students where their trophies were and the responses were telling: 34 of them no longer had trophies (except national awards) and the other 4 admitted their parents had their trophies packed away in a closet. The only trophies for which my students knew their whereabouts were those

won at nationals. In several cases, these trophies were national championship “pewter” and yet, even these successes were not on display in their homes for others to see. The pewter was packed away in their own closets. If trophies are significant because they represent competitive success, why do so many trophies end up packed away in a closet? My former students can still describe performances they watched in final rounds of their very first tournament with passion and insight. They could not tell me, however, what their first trophy looked like or where it was located.

### *Trophy Overload*

When tournaments offer eleven individual events, debate, along with individual and team awards, the trophy haul is significant. Nonetheless, most competitors have an opportunity to take home dozens of trophies throughout their competitive career. At what point does the trophy’s significance diminish because its disbursement is so frequent?

### *Trophy Evolution*

The forensic community has been struggling with the trophy dilemma for years. Some schools have used the tournament to showcase local art as trophies. Other schools use charity donations as awards for competitors. These efforts are worthy in their intent because they point to the increasing realization that the trophy may have outlived its purpose. Many schools have creatively sought ways to recognize competitive success.

However, this evolution has also produced some questionable efforts to revolutionize the trophy culture. At one prominent tournament, my team won first place in team sweeps. This was considered as a national preparation tournament. It was costly for us to attend and required a significant sacrifice. When our hard work was recognized competitively, the “trophy” was a Snoopy Sno Cone maker. We were thrilled with our successes individually and as a team. We celebrated each other and talked about our rounds all the way home. We threw the Snoopy Sno Cone maker away before we left the host campus. I’m not complaining about the unusual award. It would not have mattered what the award was – our focus was on the competition itself and the results of it. The Snoopy Sno Cone does represent an evolution in awards through – we didn’t need a trophy, piece of art, picture frames, or a sno cone maker. We went home and used our results to request additional money for nationals. It was the tournament results, not the Snoopy sno cone maker that increased our dedication, work ethic, and travel budget.

### *Award Ceremony Acrimony*

Given the travel time and expense, my team and I came to dread the awards ceremony. Our dread wasn’t because we didn’t want to celebrate the successes of our peers. With the establishment of swing tournaments as a

cultural norm, awards ceremonies distract from the activity. My students would talk endlessly of the nationals experience when quarter-finalists names were dropped from a banner or shone brightly on a PowerPoint. The excitement and drama was captured in a brief and thrilling exercise. We would treasure those moments as much, if not more, than standing on a stage receiving an award. Student awards could move away from trophy laden ceremonies and focus on the excitement of the activity itself. Travel time between tournament sites and home are increasing with disappearance of teams across the country. We are traveling farther and competing more than we traditionally did a decade ago. Forensics could offer students an additional two to three hours to travel home at safer times if we reinvented the awards ceremony.

### **Administrative Reflections on Student Awards**

From an administrative perspective, forensics success has important purposes for the departments and colleges in which the programs reside. I asked two provosts, nine deans and six department heads with forensic programs in the reporting structure, their perspectives on competition and awards. Three themes emerged from these interviews.

#### *Competition is Important*

Every administrator agreed that competition serves an important educational purpose. Forensic competition serves as a conduit for the application of communication curriculum. It is through the act of preparing for the competition and the execution of that preparation that provides the educational learning outcomes administrators search for. As one department head stated, "Of more importance is the journey in preparation for the competition. The lessons learning and the relationships developed are at the very core of this institution." Competition clarifies an institution's effectiveness in meeting student learning outcomes.

#### *Results are Important*

Beyond the educational aspect of forensics, the results from the competition serve an important administrative purpose as well. The results of the competition allow administrators to sell the department's "value added" components to upper administration, community, and potential donors. As one administrator stated,

Student success is often difficult to describe to the public unless it is in terms of competition—something that U.S. culture thrives on. So, although I don't think any competition should drive the curriculum, I do think when handled correctly, successful competition allows my discipline (Communication) to tell our story.

The results from forensic competition provide administrators with a tangible device through which to demonstrate the effectiveness of the curriculum and fulfillment of student learning outcomes. Claimed one dean, "Awards and acknowledgements sell the institution to potential students." The administrators, however, were very clear that results from tournaments are vitally important to helping administration reach department, college, and university goals. Trophies are insignificant in this process.

Additionally, administrators wanted clarification on the importance of results from tournaments. One dean wanted to know the context for his students' successes. He claimed that the importance of student successes is in direct proportion to the scope and number of participants in a competition and whether it is local, state, regional, or national. A Provost said, "To be a 'state champ' in XYZ competition in a field of 10 entries is less prestigious than a field of 1,000 entries."

Administrators wanted more information about each competition to seek contextual clues about the importance of the results from each competition. A dean took this perspective one step further with her comments that,

Trophies, certificates, and physical awards are tangible artifacts of the accomplishment. They serve as a public acknowledgement of the success of the program through the individual and collective efforts of the students, faculty and staff. However, in our current culture where everyone gets a "trophy" for simply participating, it is sometimes hard to recognize an effort as extraordinary, special, or superior. I don't take trophies seriously. I take official documents reflecting the success of a program with a list of competing schools very seriously. I don't want to see trophies, I want to see results.

Results are important because they indicate the validity of success. For administrators who deal with forensics, they would rather discuss student successes and demonstrate those successes in ways other than displaying trophies.

#### *Pictures are Important*

In reflecting on forensic competition results, administrators identified an important element in their ability to understand and share team success: pictures. Administrators indicated that displaying or disseminating pictures of competition for potential students, donors, and campus community to view was important.

Administrators pointed out that trophies do not play an important role in their ability to tell the story of success. As one administrator stated,

"Trophies are not that important—except for the picture taking that goes with the award. Having a team picture and a note that explains who won what is important—again for being able to tell our story." Administrators want to share results with prospective students, campus communities, and upper administration. Trophies, however, do not help them facilitate the telling of these success stories.

A dean, new to his relationship with a forensic program, felt like pictures told a story that results sheets and trophies cannot express. He stated, "My impression is that you can talk about having an award winning team but nothing makes it clearer than competition pictures." These pictures of competition would allow campus and community constituents to put student success in context. While taking pictures would be outside the cultural norms for the forensic community, these administrator insights indicate that forensics must find ways to communicate tournament success beyond the distribution of trophies.

### **Practical Solutions for our Trophy Quandary**

Administrators responsible for telling the forensic story and supporting forensic programs have provided important insights. Our community must engage in new practices in our distribution of awards, reporting of results, and significance of competition. I want to offer three practical and responsible solutions to the forensic trophy quandary.

*First, the forensic community should agree to limit trophy distribution to tournaments at state and national championship levels.* Trophies at this level demonstrate the significance of the success necessary to garner them. Displaying these awards would be less cumbersome. Limiting the potential for trophies to be won at state and national levels would actually increase the significance of receiving them. Students would not see them as just another trophy to put away in a closet.

For those schools that feel trophies are needed and necessary to display for competitions outside the state and national championship levels, a "value added" option could be available. Tournament hosts could offer the alternative of paying an additional purchasing, shipping and handling fee at the conclusion of the tournament for trophies to be created for event placements specific to the requesting school. For the tournaments falling outside of the state and national championship levels, placements could be announced in a variety of ways: postings, traditional awards ceremonies, PowerPoint presentations, or handouts.

*Second, tournament hosts could lower entry fees because trophies will no longer be distributed.* As funding becomes increasingly scarce as travel and competition becomes increasingly expensive, this cost saving measure could ensure more students get to compete in more tournaments than

would otherwise be possible.

*Third, tournament hosts could send results and pictures of each team competing to pertinent campus administration via e-mail.* Administrators indicated they valued a personal note with results and pictures of the students competing more than they valued trophies. This would provide results and pictures that administrators could use to support forensic programs. The administration contact information could be easily collected on entry forms. With this information, tournament hosts could provide contextual clues about the significance of the tournament by reporting number of schools in attendance, and the number of entries per event.

While these solutions may prove problematic to some, their implementation would be an important step towards improving our activity. Students would return to their campuses celebrated for their successes with their pictures in school and local newspapers and websites. Tournament hosts would save money and time. Teams could actually start the journey home earlier. With the cost savings, more students will have the opportunity to compete. Administration would receive relevant and helpful information and resources to promote forensic programs on campus and in the community.

### Conclusion

Forensics has a trophy problem. For the most part, students do not value, display, or keep individual trophies. Individual and team awards are usually stored away or gifted to local charities. Administrators have often been left confused in determining the value of each competition. If we evaluate our activity, the three solutions offered could positively impact forensics. In doing so, forensics can internalize Emerson's observation and embrace the reward of doing our activity well.

## Awards As Multidiscursive Artifacts: A Brief Analysis

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As the rise of alternative awards continues, and apparently with good reasons such as costs and an apparent reevaluation of the meaning of trophies to forensics, we must also ask whether trophies and other traditional awards continue to serve an important role in justifying programs to administrators, publicizing competitive and pedagogical success, and communicating squad history. As a contribution to this project, this paper reads awards and the communicative phenomenon of the traditional award as multidiscursive artifacts that are much more than "dust gatherers." Hermeneutically, trophies and awards seem to change from "prize," to ongoing epideictic, to mythic/magic items that speak across time and mark the continuing presence of tournaments and competitors long gone. No discussion of awards and the role they play in the culture of forensics should exclude consideration of them as they appear as multiplicitous expressions. Such appearance can only be understood from within a perspective, so the approach here is interpretive, seeking to describe awards as they present themselves. Before we decide that the award is outdated, or no longer useful, it is important to notice the things we may have missed. Traditional awards function on many levels; a discounting of them should be done with full attention to what is being discounted. As multidiscursive artifacts, trophies express more than simply the ability to "gather dust," and, it would appear, really do "matter." This paper is a brief attempt to outline some of the directions hermeneutic study of these artifacts should take.

Extant research on awards as artifacts is sparse. While research has been done on the programs winning with the most frequency, etc., little exists interrogating the award as artifact. In the mainstream forensics research, studies addressing awards include Lawson and Skaggs (1994), Keefe (1974), Howe (1958), and Battin (1954). None of these, however explicitly approaches awards as multidiscursive phenomena expressing mythic/magic and signalic modes. In the area of questioning trophies, the criticism of trophies as a perhaps questionable goal of forensics competition is nothing new, as Parker (1955) noted in his general description of the activity in his time. Additionally, Parker (1940) also noted almost seven decades ago that variance in the kind of award was a problem, especially for African-American debaters, noting that some tournaments handed out trophies, while others handed out certificates and questioning the meaning of these awards. Despite the relative lack of research on awards and trophies, especially in the area of semiotic or hermeneutic research, reminders exist of the basic thrill of receiving a trophy for being articulate and academic: Shaw (1995) and Manchey (1986) remind us that, especially to younger competitors and small



programs and schools, trophies often make a huge difference in support and student enthusiasm.

While this is not the place for a history of the trophy, and our concern here is with contemporary forensics awards, we may note that trophies have always been multidiscursive. Greek and Roman trophies were religious, not commemorative. They were arranged representations of humans with magic/mythic power (Picard, 1957). Roman trophies were trees to which captured soldiers were chained (Greeks) or mounds adorned with the arms and names of defeated tribes, dedicated to deities and the emperor (Hope, 2003). Thus, as record, the original term "trophy" expressed multiple levels of meaning, including levels beyond the simply signalic.

The "record" of a forensics tournament becomes a changing communicative event even before the tournament is over. Interpretation of the experience of the tournament is ongoing. Later, accomplishments are recorded in official archives of organizations, the history of teams, and in the lore of the community. Stories are told and retold about famous final rounds and other happenings. We must acknowledge that the reconstruction of these events is much longer-lived than the events themselves. In fact, as Nietzsche (1873/1979) argues, any truth is a piling up of abstractions, a moveable army of metaphors and metonymies. We may understand these communicative forms as signalic, having merely codal power; mythic, having power as part of a justifying story; or magical, having power as identity-forming phenomena (Kramer, 1997; Gebser, 1985). To understand trophies, or any other communicative phenomena, as uni-discursive phenomena is incorrect.

In fact, in addition to the modes of expression noted above, such items have the power to define the self and other through expressing identity and alterity (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). An artifact can constitute my identity part of my history, as part of my substance, to use Burkean terms. To win a national championship is to forever be a "former national champion," even in areas of one's life that have no connection to forensics. A competitor who struggles to win only a few trophies in his career may have his identity constituted by a trophy/accomplishment. Alterity is expressed in trophies because to not have won a certain award expresses what the person is not. While this might not be absolute alterity, since one may one day win that award, it remains in opposition to one's identity, negatively defining it, until one's career ends or one wins the award.

Given the inherent multi-discursivity of human activity, reconstructing memory of forensics events becomes a matter of framing and representation. In this case, the trophy does matter as "matter," as tangible evidence of accomplishment. Obviously, one can order up any trophy that says anything, so the merely signalic mode of a trophy is only one aspect of the item as a cultural expression. It is the addition of the memory of accomplishment, of the social ecology in which it was awarded, the culture of

"the circuit" at the time, one's friends in the activity, etc., that give it meaning. As part of a justifying story, and as identity object, the trophy has other modes of meaning. This is the mode of meaning for the participant. At the level of identity, my victories are me. I identify with and by them. I will list my wins on my resume and graduate school applications. I will tell my parents and perhaps show them during break. Within my squad also, my trophies will communicate. New students and novices will see them. My peers will see them. I will be identified by the eagle I won at USAFA, etc. Long after I am gone, they will speak for me as a signalic representation of success, but also as mythic justifying story and as magic identity item. Outside my squad but in my school as well, this process will continue. As someone passes by the trophy case, they understand the sign for "win," or "success."

At the level of culture, the group understanding of awards and the events they reconstruct is mythic, meaning it provides a justifying story. This story may be implicit or explicit. Nearer in time to the win, the story will retain more identity. As we move away in time, identity will reduce toward the signalic. Like archeological sites, they will be parabolic. The trophy will lose mythic power slowly until, at a certain point, the trophy will begin to gain power as the winners of the trophy become wholly imagined beings. That trophy from 1935 in the squad room might be more mythically powerful than one I actually won myself.

For the administrator, the recording of the accomplishment is expressed differently. In this case, the signalic level of meaning is important. The need of the administrator is for demonstration, and, in fact, for situational demonstration. Administrators only need proof of the importance of the program at certain times. At other times, the trophies may serve no function for an administrator who is not directly connected to the program, as other research in this issue demonstrates (Lowery-Hart, 2008). Here the concern is quantification of accomplishment. They can be counted, and usually are, at the tournament, and after as well. Value is important here, too. The culture believes in not only commemoration, but also in reward. My work should produce success, which should produce material. This is why newcomers to the activity are surprised by t-shirts and other nontraditional awards. They are still sho-shin (beginner's mind) and understand what we have learned to think of differently: That awards should be awards. The less like awards they are, the less the accomplishment means to the signalic communication needs of the administrator. T-shirts would never be given as trophies at nationals.

Temporally, awards function on many levels. They represent a necessarily constructed past which also functions as justifying story. Stories of the greats who came before have always been a part of forensics and are a critical part of motivation for many students. Awards in cases re-present these figures from the past for the specific audience of current and future competitors, contributing to the mythos of the activity. At this level of

meaning, they are mythic and magic, providing a story and contributing to identity.

For the present, awards obviously function epideictically, celebrating the current accomplishment. Interestingly, the awarding of the trophy is a speech act and also a magical incantation, a vocal transformation through ceremony that transforms the winner into something else like a state or national champion, or the winner of a prestigious tournament. The awarding serves this important ceremonial role.

In terms of the future, awards express the pregnancy of the moment and the potential for future accomplishments. They mark time's passage in the time unique to tournament competition that time competitors and coaches resume when they arrive at the next tournament. Much like the dream lives of magic/mythic cultures, the tournament life is in many ways more "real" than everyday life for many competitors. Awards provide material demonstration of the existence of and potential for continuance of that life. Semiotically speaking, awards express the past, present, and future simultaneously. They reach into the past, celebrate the present, and present us with *possibility* for the future.

Trophies matter, as matter. They are material and multidiscursive before they have been *awarded* (magically transformed through incantation), while the epideictic is occurring, and even after the death of the winner of the award. No trophy is merely signalic; no trophy merely "gathers dust." The community should be certain that alternative awards can also serve the identity and mythic functions of traditional awards before replacing them completely. Culturally, forensics does much of its work through the same processes as larger cultures: Stories are told and identities are developed. Awards that function by relying on more signalic awards (generic objects, etc.) will thin that function out. Before abandoning the traditional award, the community should consider these roles seriously. While this short study has obviously not been exhaustive and many of the claims here are debatable, that traditional awards do more than gather dust is difficult to argue with, once we step out of that which we are used to seeing, the weekly awarding of "just another trophy," and remember that the trophy is never just hardware.

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## **The Trophy Case as a Clue to the Past, Present, and Future: Toward (Re) Constructing the Collective Memory of a Nearly Forgotten Forensics Program**

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During the spring semester of 2007, while interviewing for a visiting assistant professor position calling for someone to teach a senior research capstone sequence at Lewis-Clark State College, I became pleasantly surprised to learn that the search committee also had hopes that I would consider directing a forensics team as well. The surprise came due to there being no mention of the forensics team in the job advertisement, nor in any other preliminary discussions leading up to the campus visit. Forensics was an afterthought to the job description; and in fact, as would soon be discovered, the team was simply not a priority from an administrative perspective prior to my arrival. Notwithstanding a faculty member who signed some paperwork for a loosely organized student-run club, and a couple of novice competitors with hazy memories of traveling to tournaments with a previous Director of Forensics, the team was defunct. There was no one available to convey where the team had been or where it was headed—knowledge that is “invaluable in helping to make informed decisions about how to change and how to maintain the status quo within the program” (Jensen & Jensen, 2007, p. 24). For that matter, there were no signs of any “routine forensic program features” (Derryberry, 2005, p. 21) at all. These features, according to Derryberry (2005), which include day-to-day activities such as regular squad meeting times, are not only critical to the goals of accomplishing the task-related work of a team but are also vital to establishing and maintaining “a team tradition with relational implications” (p. 21).

As the new Director of Forensics, a role forged as an afterthought to the initiation of the search process, I was faced with the task of coaching a team for which there were no regular squad meeting times, no practice schedules, and no stories conveying the character and focus of the team. Furthermore, there was nobody around who would even have access to the knowledge pertaining to those types of rituals. The previous Director of Forensics was two years removed from the team and the remaining team members were not in any way a part of the interview process. For that matter, they were not even aware that there was an interview process occurring that could potentially produce a new faculty member interested in coaching them. It was not until after my arrival on campus that they were aware of any faculty interest in rejuvenating competitive forensics. I contacted them, introduced myself, mentioned my interests and asked them of their interests. From that point forward, we began the process of cultivating the habits of an active forensics program. To be sure, it is a slow process.

In retrospect, it is interesting that the first encounter with the names of a couple of those students occurred through examination of the trophy case located at the Student Union Building. In fact, a brief encounter with the case proved to be the most informative part of the interview in relation to the forensics team (other parts of the interview were certainly very thorough and inviting). Even after leaving the interview, being offered a position, accepting it, and arriving to a near-vacant campus during the summer break, the trophy case stood for weeks as the most descriptive portal into the workings of the team. Multiple visits to the trophy case occurred before ever meeting anybody on campus remotely interested in participating as part of the team. That time spent in front of the trophy case has led to many significant observations—many of which will be reported upon during the course of this essay; suffice it to say however, that the most significant of these observations is the exposure to the names of those individuals whom are currently on the team.

Initially those individuals were merely names without empirical identities—only imagined, archetypal ones. These imagined identities were created through the transposition of my own past experiences with, expectations of, and anticipations for forensics team behavior onto the space in and surrounding the trophy case. I know for instance about the process of researching, writing, and rehearsing a persuasive speech capable of winning an award at a tournament, and after seeing such a trophy in the case, my imagination began to wander through visions of that process being carried out by individuals—with no faces—in the very space where I was standing. I also know about the process of hosting a tournament—the hustle and bustle of finding judges, reserving rooms, scheduling rounds, preparing brackets, setting up a tab room, etc. And after discovering a trophy in the case awarded by the very program I was about to become a part of, I began to imagine all of those tournament hosting activities happening right there in front of me. The trophy case began to etch out a space in my consciousness devoted to the team. In many ways, the awards left behind to this nearly forgotten forensics program were the best—from among the very few—clues that a program had ever even existed. The analogy of visiting a ghost town comes to mind as I try to describe my initial exposure to the trophy case—I could see with my own eyes the progress made by the organization as it is symbolized through the hardware; yet, the people, processes, and organizational structures helping to achieve the progress were long gone.

Then, after finally meeting a couple of the people whose names do appear in the trophy case, the previously mentioned imagined identities of people with no faces began to become very real. A couple of those names are now people whom I have spent a great deal of time with and admire greatly. A few more of those names are now people with at least a story behind them—knowledge contributing to the understanding of the legacy of forensics at LCSC. The trophy case played, and continues to play, a significant role in

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bringing us together to make an effort at rejuvenating the team—it earmarks a legacy and provides some motivation to not let that legacy die (or more precisely, to begin CPR immediately). Thus, this project seeks to continue to unpack the significance of the trophy case at LCSC by asking the following research question: What can the trophies in the trophy case communicate about the historicity of the forensics program? While the answers to this question may or may not be of great importance to large programs with the levels of funding and administrative support necessary to prevent the near death experience that occurred at LCSC, they are likely to resonate with the many small forensics squads out there who live from semester to semester, or even from tournament to tournament. Given my own situated-ness to the subject matter and the extent to which I am the key informant, the vantage point of the reporting of the answers makes the most sense as an autoethnographic one (see Crawford, 1996; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; and Merrigan & Huston, 2004). In other words, the aim of this essay is to report upon the cultural knowledge learned about the forensics team through interacting with the trophy case and viewing it as a text archiving the team's historicity. As this personal cultural knowledge continues to grow, the clues in the trophy case should ultimately lead to interviews with people who have helped and are helping to fill the case.

Much like hikers lost in the woods who leave clues along the way in the hopes that somebody will find them, various individuals involved with the forensics team over the last hundred years or so have left clues documenting their accomplishments. I have discovered these clues and hope to utilize them to help unearth the legacy that seems to have a lengthy, but sporadically active history. But not only have I discovered clues from the past, the current manifestation of the forensics program is also leaving its own clues for those who happen to stumble down the same path in the future. All of these clues are integral to interpreting the past, present and future of the forensics program at LCSC. In order to begin to unpack the importance of the trophies, I begin by diving into some of the literature helping to frame the direction of what is a very new focus on the topic of awards. Then I report on significant observations made about the trophies at LCSC. Finally, I propose a methodology for learning more about the legacy symbolized through the trophies. This essay is intended to be the beginning of a project for LCSC--one that needs to continue if forensics is to ever flourish again at the institution. Hopefully though, this essay will not only be useful to LCSC, but to other programs as well – especially the small, struggling programs out there who are happy just to make it to the next tournament and then are ecstatic when they bring home a trophy. But the story should also be informative to the entire forensics community as we consider the significance of trophies.

### Reflections Upon The Meaning(s) of a Trophy

It is really quite intriguing to be in the unique position of thinking about the meaning of awards in forensics, especially since it is an essentially new focus of academic inquiry. Taylor (2007), Williams and Gantt (2007), Worth (2007), and West and Swafford (2007) seem to be the first to scratch the surface with revised versions of the latter three of these studies being published here in this special issue. Reading the work of Williams and Gantt (2007) in particular became integral to my own approach to this essay. Part of what they do is review work from at least a couple of different disciplines to begin formulating a perspective on the significance of awards in forensics. The authors begin by reviewing work from the forensics pedagogy literature addressing the role of competition as a catalyst to participation in forensics. Hill (1982), Williams, McGee, and Worth (2001), Paine and Stanley (2003), and Littlefield (2001) for examples, have all investigated the significance of competition in terms of its effect on the degree of enjoyment for competitors. While the results of these projects vary, they stimulate important pedagogical thought over a topic that is certainly related to the current one. However, Williams and Gantt (2007) recognize that the focus of the literature deals with a topic only indirectly related to awards; thus, they turn to the discipline of educational psychology to narrow the focus (see Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985; and Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). By bridging the two disciplinary perspectives together, Williams and Gantt (2007) do an excellent job of creating a starting point from which to begin a theory-building effort focused on examining the value of awards in forensics.

Because the authors do such an excellent job of laying the groundwork, it seems more apropos at this point to begin exploring the resonance of their literature review effort than it does to seek out additional literature to review, or to make the even less useful effort of re-reviewing the same literature. Rather than trying to reinvent what the authors have already done, the effort here is to try and hone in more specifically on some of the ideas identified by using their work as a chance to reflect upon some of my own personal experiences with and observations about awards. Not only is this approach ideal for the purpose of building upon the literature in a positive way by applying theory to empirical encounters with the phenomenon under investigation, but it becomes especially apropos given the autoethnographic voice of this essay. Since I am bracketing myself as the key informant (see autoethnography citations above), an individual with a history with forensics awards that is different from any other individual, it seems absolutely necessary to provide some sense of that background—one that foregrounds a more current experience with awards.

As a prerequisite (or perhaps even a formality) to my reflections upon the meanings of awards, the notion that any given trophy could have



a static unchanging meaning over time and place needs to be dispelled. Deferring here to Hans Georg Gadamer (1960/2003), I simply want to bracket the notion that an award could never be intuited as an object in a vacuum—free from interpretation based upon a unique, personal history with that particular award—not to mention a history with other awards in a variety of contexts which help frame the meaning of the particular award being intuited. To exemplify, as this essay is being written and I am learning from trophies won decades ago, I think a lot about whether those individuals who won the awards had ever considered the possibility that their accomplishments would have such an impact for someone like me. Did they have any idea that their accomplishments would still be very meaningful today? Or more specifically, did they have any notion that the awards signifying their accomplishments would still be meaningful today? Even though the meanings have changed, their awards are still very meaningful. Without the awards, there is virtually no way for me to have the experience of being changed by their experiences. Awards being awarded in the present are symbolic of an experience that happened in the past—a successful competition of some sort; but the award also becomes a different experience in and of itself each and every time it enters the awareness of an observer.

### **Playing the Devil's Advocate: A Critical Look at the Symbolism of the Trophy**

As a beginning point to my reflections upon the meaning(s) of trophies, it occurs to me that I have perhaps romanticized the nature of trophies to this point in the essay. This probably results from the fact that my most recent experiences with awards have been very positive; thus I am eager to elaborate upon and analyze those experiences. However, I would not be very honest with the reader by ignoring some of the very negative experiences that are part of my history with awards. The temptation to win at all costs is obviously a very negative experience symbolized through, or even caused by awards. There are others of course and it is important to conduct a negative case analysis prior to making what is ultimately a very positive interpretation of awards in forensics. Doing so places my conclusions into context and acknowledges the reality that even my own interpretation will be different over time and place, not to mention the fact that other people's interpretations will surely be different than my own.

#### *The Competition/Education Tension*

To begin, there is plenty of evidence suggesting that competition can have a less than desirable effect upon forensics as an educational activity. The challenge of finding balance between the values of competition and education is to be sure, one that has left question marks for many scholars of forensics pedagogy. Littlefield (2006) for instance, reviews literature dating back to as

early as 1935 (Mundt) to illustrate that the debate over the delicate balance between the two sometimes-competing values has likely been going on since the inception of forensics as a competitive activity. Two articles in particular illustrate the nature of this debate: Burnett, Brand, and Meister (2003) and Hinck (2003). The critique of forensics as an educational activity is apparent through the title of the formers' article: "Winning is everything: Education as myth in forensics." The response to the critique is apparent through the title of the latter's article: "Managing the dialectical tension between competition and education in forensics: A response to Burnett, Brand, and Meister." Littlefield (2006) overviews the debate and makes the argument that it ought to be a moot point, claiming that forensics is *epistemic*—knowledge in its own right. He advances the notion that even if at times, the pursuit of a trophy leads to some questionable, anti-educational practices, competition itself is not to blame. It is in fact, according to the article, part of the learning process to discover the tension.

The "rhetoric as epistemic" stance calls into question the Platonic notion that rhetoric is simply a means to convey knowledge and defends a more or less sophistic notion that rhetoric is knowledge. Accordingly, it is possible that a participant in a forensic activity could leave that activity without being able to recount one fact used as evidence during the course of competition and still come away having learned something. The process of the activity, in and of itself, not only produces knowledge according to Littlefield's argument, it is knowledge. By participating in forensics, "students are better able to respond and act with certainty to the world in which they live than they would have been without the forensic experience" (p. 4). The patterns of thinking stimulated by the process of forensics activities demonstrate the intrinsic educational value of forensics as epistemic. Participating in a debate round over the most mundane resolution possible is still an exercise in *logos*. Even if the content of the debate "conveyed" through speeches is not necessarily highly educational, the process of organizing the message, presenting the message, establishing an argument based upon syllogism, refuting arguments, managing the time constraints, learning to solve disputes through discourse, etc. are all proof positive that forensics, as a competitive activity, is epistemic.

However, though I happen to agree with the forensics as epistemic claim, and do not believe that isolated incidents of anti-educational practices could ever be credible as an indictment of the activity itself, I also believe that because those isolated incidents do occur, the discussion over the value of competitive forensics is a healthy one to have. There is a great deal of validity to the claim stating that competition can lead to bad habits such as students improvising sources in extemporaneous speaking, delivering the same "impromptu" speech round after round, plagiarizing evidence in debate, stealing evidence from other teams, etc. As forensics educators, we have all heard about and/or witnessed such ethical violations taking place and must

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privity to the potential for competition to become a catalyst of such anti-educational practices, recognizing that the effort to interpret the meaning of a trophy should take this criticism into account.

### *When Competition Overcomes Dasein*

Another negative potential of competition, symbolized through the trophy, is the extent to which some competitors (and maybe even some coaches) become so consumed by the desire to win that it overcomes their entire beings. Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time* (1996 trans.) helps to explain the implications by describing being as *Dasein*, or the “understanding of being itself”/“being in the world” (p. 10). Explaining further, *Dasein* provides an understanding of being that integrates an ontic (existential or psychological) reality with an ontological (philosophical, self-reflexive meta-awareness of one’s own existence) one (p. 11). A bit later in the book, Heidegger more concretely explains that the whole human being is broken down into body, soul, and spirit and that when individuals lose sight of the connections between the three pronged nature of being, they go through “depersonalization” (p. 45).

I can remember personally going through a sort of depersonalization in the hands of forensics competition—probably on multiple occasions, but particularly one summer at a high school debate workshop at which I became consumed by the desire to win that I, in a sense lost my “self” to that pursuit. My entire being temporarily became consumed by improving at debate skills and cutting cards to enhance the chances of winning over the course of the season. I would not take the time to eat or sleep but instead, became consumed by the pursuit of accomplishment. Fortunately, at the end of the two-week debate workshop, recognition set in that I had become a shell of my “self” and, after getting some sleep, slowly fell more into a balanced existence. Surely we have all, at some point, gone through something like what was just described. Sadly though, there are some who seem to take much, much longer than others to re-discover their “selves;” or even more disheartening is to find out that some never do. I have known individuals, and have heard of others, who have essentially thrown their whole lives away in the pursuit of winning. Some individuals have become addicted to drugs that prevent sleep because sleep stands in the way of cutting cards—causing them to get very ill, both physically and mentally. Some individuals have intentionally delayed graduation for years, transferring from school to school to preserve eligibility with the hopes of becoming good enough to have a major breakthrough at the ADT tournament. In essence, they became professional forensic competitors and many of them never accomplished their competitive goals. Some of those same individuals completely ignored their academic goals by never earning a degree, which sort of defeats the purpose of viewing forensics competition as a co-curricular activity.

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In a collection of essays entitled, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Heidegger (1977) through a critique of technology, expounds upon a phenomenon he calls “enframing.” He explains the potential for things “out-there,” external to one’s own ontic-ontological essence, to become internalized such that those external things begin to order one’s internal existence—and does so without one’s awareness of it even happening. He explains that:

Enframing comes to presence as the danger. But does the danger therewith announce itself as the danger? No. To be sure, men are at all times and in all places exceedingly oppressed by dangers and exigencies. But the danger, namely, Being itself endangering itself in the truth of its coming to presence, remains veiled and disguised. This disguising is what is most dangerous in the danger. (p. 37)

It is important to note that while Heidegger is describing the influence of technology—a thing external to the essence of humanness, as being capable of being dangerous, it is not the very existence of that external thing that is dangerous, but the tendency for it to begin to order *Dasein*. The same lesson should be considered as we ponder the meaning of trophies. The pursuit of a trophy can be quite positive if we keep that pursuit in perspective, realizing that when the pursuit comes to an end—regardless of the result, that the pursuit is only useful insofar as it leads to self awakening. In other words, we come back to Littlefield’s (2006) forensics as epistemic argument described above.

### *The Trophy as Dead Weight*

There are to be sure, many other critical observations to be made about the meaning of trophies. I will not try to mine all of them; but there is one more that definitely needs mention given its function of contrasting my current experience of awards at LCSC. I recall being a graduate forensics assistant for a large, well established, and highly successful forensics program to whom which winning a trophy, in and of itself, is hardly worth blinking an eye at unless that trophy is won at the highest of levels (e.g., a prestigious national tournament). On occasions, taking home a trophy for this program was even seen as more of a nuisance than anything else. Questions such as, “How will we cram it into a fifteen passenger van already crammed full of luggage and humans?” and “Where will we put it once we get back to the squad room?” are some fairly typical questions I remember dealing with while a part of that squad. While the act of winning the trophy was always a very positive one given that it contributed to a national ranking and/or earned a leg towards qualifying for nationals, the trophy itself was not always seen

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### *The Brighter Side of Trophies*

With the criticism out of the way, I turn towards the brighter side of trophies. Ultimately, I am convinced that trophies are an important and necessary part of forensics competition—particularly for very small programs such as the one at LCSC.

### *Affirmation of Competence*

From among all the analysis provided by Williams and Gantt (2007), there are two positive functions of awards in forensics that stand out as resonating most with my own positive experiences with awards. One of these functions is an award as an affirmation of competence. I can remember for instance, winning my first forensics award as a novice Lincoln-Douglas debater in high school. It was my first tournament and to be honest, it was one of the more momentous occasions of my life. Having been exposed to the successes of the experienced competitors on the squad, and seeing the mountains of trophies they brought home weekend after weekend, doubt set in that I would be able to follow their lead and be successful through intellectual competition. Winning an award at the first tournament however, erased that doubt—at least long enough to sign up for the next tournament. As modest as the award was, it was as an important affirmation of competence. Even though that trophy is now buried somewhere in the attic of my parents' house, it changed me in profoundly significant ways. It is possible that without having won it, my life would be drastically different than it is today.

Moving beyond the individual perspective, I have also witnessed the way in which one award can serve as an affirmation of competence for an entire squad—not just individuals who are members of it. I am speaking about the experience of coaching a brand new team with no history whatsoever. As the only coach, I remember talking to the founding members at various points and times about the stock issues, fiat, counterplans, disadvantages, presumption, cost benefit analysis, and other theoretical ideas that distinguish academic debate from everyday argumentation—they looked at me with a look on their faces that essentially said, "What the hell?" They were not convinced that this theoretical knowledge was useful for success in the activity; they had no grounds by which to evaluate my credibility as a coach; there was no history at the school or anywhere else in their background indicating that this sort of information was the least bit useful. In fact, I am fairly certain that for a few weeks, they thought I was crazy—making words up just for the fun of it. However, when we finally went to our first tournament and they saw other teams utilizing the terminology—winning trophies in the process and then especially after the novice team won their first trophy, we—as a team, took that experience as an affirmation of competence. The students began to trust

me more from a coaching perspective, and I began to enjoy coaching them more.

### *Collective Memory*

Another perspective introduced to me by Williams and Gantt (2007) is perhaps the function of awards that best serves the current manifestation of the forensics program at LCSC. It is a function of awards that I had never really considered until reading their manuscript and thinking about it in terms of my initial encounter with the trophy case here. Compton (2006) initially introduces the topic as an important one for forensics pedagogy and then a year later, the previously mentioned Taylor (2007) essay establishes an important connection between collective memory and trophies.

Essentially, collective memory is necessary to any organization for it to be able to convey to members or potential members that they are contributing to, or could contribute to something that is greater than the sum of its parts. Ideally, the collective memory of a program is passed along from coach to coach, member to member, coach to member, and member to coach utilizing a variety of different media. Many of the most effective media are informal in nature—stories told on van rides and at squad meetings, while other media are more formal—archiving the tradition through photo albums, videos, and oral histories (see Compton, 2006; Taylor, 2007<sup>1</sup>). Compton (2006) explains that a “collective memory theoretical perspective gives view to what a group remembers, what a group forgets, and when a group brings these constructs of the past to the surface to ‘make sense’ of the present” (p. 28). Given the organizational function of collective memory, it should come at no surprise that collective amnesia, much like what was experienced at LCSC, is a serious threat. Taylor (2007) explains the problem posed by gaps in the collective memory of a forensics program:

When the collective, or institutional, memory of a community leaves out significant details and stories from the past, it can create problems in the present and future. When the successes, excitements, and experiences of previous competitors are lost, then the current and future competitors lose out on living those experiences with them. Sometimes not knowing history does not doom one to repeating it, but will keep one from ever experiencing or enjoying it. (p. 90)

The ultimate implications for a program not in touch with its history includes the difficulty of conveying to current and potential members that they are or

<sup>1</sup> See also Jensen and Jensen, 2007; Derryberry, 2005. Though these authors, to the best of my reading, do not necessarily incorporate “collective memory” specifically as a theoretical construct, these articles in particular were integral to my understanding of the construct for the purposes of writing this manuscript.

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could be a part of something larger and more important than any one member or coach could be (see also Compton, 2000; Compton, 2006; Derryberry, 1991; Derryberry, 1997; Derryberry, 2005a; Derryberry, 2005b; Embree, 2001; Jensen & Jensen, 2007; Redding & Hobbs, 2002). In the case of the forensics team at LCSC, the gap in collective memory posed difficulties in even identifying who the current members are—much less the tradition to which they are a part of and contributed to. As the introduction explains, my introduction to the current members of the team happened via the trophy case; after learning their names, I was able to find them and introduce myself to them.

### **Toward (Re) Constructing a Collective Memory**

There are a variety of different meanings that could be attributed to awards in forensics. And it is now, after taking the time to focus on awards as an object of academic inquiry, more obvious than ever before that the meanings of trophies won vary depending upon the unique perspective of a program as well as the unique perspective of individuals from within the program. Whether the trophy is seen from the perspective of the coach of a well established, prominent program, or an individual competitor winning her first trophy ever, the hardware assumes drastically different meanings. Furthermore, the meanings of those trophies change over time as our perspective broadens with ever-expanding opportunities for self-reflection. The meaning of any given trophy in the past will not be the same as it is in the present, nor as it will be in the future. For my current program, at this particular point and time, the trophy case means something much different than any other trophy case I have had attachment to. It offers a glimpse into the "collective memory" of the program—a theoretical perspective that, as mentioned above, helps interpret the past, contextualize the present, and anticipate the future of this forensics program.

#### *Interpreting the Past: Observations of the Trophy Case*

This section of the essay picks back up where the introduction left off. Remember that my first look at the trophy case was during an interview—a process during which I was attempting to determine what the job would be like and to decide if it is one that I was capable of doing/would enjoy doing. Since the forensics part of the job was not disclosed until my arrival, and since there was no one available to talk to me whom had ever been actively involved with the team, improvisation was the name of the game while trying to learn as much as possible in a very short period of time. The trophy cases were the best sources of information available; considering the circumstances, a great deal of information was gleaned about the forensics program by examining them. Many of the conclusions drawn, based upon information communicated



through the trophy case, have proven to be accurate.

There are two trophy cases in the Student Union Building ("the SUB" as it is known on campus). One is a built-in unit—a permanent fixture within the architecture of the building and is displayed prominently on the second floor of the building in front of one of three stairwells leading up to the second floor where the offices of the student clubs and organizations are located. The case is very visible to the student body, faculty and staff members having anything to do with student clubs and organizations, as well as any visitors to the school. Given the visibility and the fact that it is a permanent part of the school's architecture, I quickly came to the conclusion that the program is an important part of the school's campus life in some shape or form, or at least that it has been at some point in the past. This conclusion is the first significant observation made based upon interacting with the built-in trophy case.

Other conclusions began to form by looking inside. The built-in trophy case is divided into multiple sections—categorized roughly by time periods. In one of the sections, there is a sign that looks to be printed by a word processor (though not a late model printer), that says, "LCSC Speech and Debate Team: 1902-1979." Knowing that the school was founded in 1893, it would appear that the speech and debate team is almost as old as the school is; so the sign instantly communicates a history going back a long time and beckons for even closer inspection. Upon that inspection however, the discovery is made that the oldest trophy in the case is dated 1940. There are actually five awards total from the 1940's: 2 from 1940 and three from 1948<sup>2</sup>. But then, to date the next oldest trophy in the case takes us to 1969—twenty-one years later. There are several trophies dated in the 1970's including one from 1979. In fact, there was one award honoring an "Assistant Professor of Speech," from 1967-1977. After the late 1970's, observers must look to other sections in the first trophy case to notice that there is another big jump in time to the next set of trophies beginning in the mid 1990's when they become more abundant. The latest trophy in the built-in trophy case is dated 2001. The more recent trophies are found in a second case.

To summarize a key reaction to examination of the built-in trophy case is that while forensics at LCSC dates back a long way and the institution seems to be proud of that fact, given the enormous gaps in time between awards, it would seem that the school has not always been committed enough to the program to ensure that its existence continues in a competitively stable way. Of course, I cannot assume that every trophy ever won by the program is displayed in the case; but given the facts that a) I was not interviewing for a position advertised as a forensics position and that b) I was not even aware of the potential to direct forensics until arriving on campus, the trophy

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly they were all presented by Linfield College, a college that shows up a great deal spanning the entire history of the trophy case.

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case reinforced what I already suspected—that there was not a long term commitment to forensics on campus. In fact, while talking to an administrator during the first couple of weeks after beginning employment, I learned that, to the best of her knowledge, the way in which I fell into the "Director of Forensics" position was pretty typical. She indicated to me that the school had never really sought a forensics person *per se*. The only way they were able to provide forensics at the school was if somebody who was hired primarily for something else also had a passion for forensics. Thus, while the forensics part of my *vita* was definitely a plus in the eyes of the search committee, it was far from being the primary goal of their search. The gaps in the history communicated through the built-in trophy case helps provide context for this conclusion.

A second trophy case (heavy and sturdy, but not immovable) is found just down the hallway from the permanent one. It continues to communicate a timeline of forensics at LCSC. Though there is some overlap with the built-in trophy case considering there are a couple of trophies from the late 1990's, the trophies for the most part, date from 2001 to 2005. This means, according to my interpretation, that there was about a decade—give or take—of active competition at LCSC, which ended two to three years ago in 2005. Most interestingly, one of the 2005 trophies was awarded by LCSC. The text reads, "2005 LCSC Forensics Invitational" trophy for "Top Novice Speaker: After Dinner Speaking." Ironically, the last year in which LCSC actively competed, according to the trophy case, was also the year in which it hosted its first collegiate tournament. This is ironic (and sad) that a program could dissipate so quickly after being able to host a tournament. Hosting a tournament is a sign of a program's health, at least according to my sensibilities, as I would personally not even consider hosting a tournament without an experienced team that I could depend on. However, it seems to be the case that the year after hosting a tournament, the team's activity seems to have disintegrated. As I came to learn, the Director of Forensics left and there was no effort made to fill his role. It was not until a couple of years later that the school stumbled upon a person who would be willing to try and pick up the pieces. Now, as we are adding a couple of awards dated 2008, there will be a roughly three-year gap between trophies. The gap communicates to observers—both current and future, a lack of administrative attention to the team. It symbolizes two to three years in which a school missed out on the advantages of forensic competition.

### **Contextualizing the Present: Contributing to the Trophy Case**

Examining the trophy case provided much more information than just an overview of what the program has accomplished in the past. It also provided some context to the present goals of the team. On a very practical

level, the trophy case played a part in the planning of the first year's travel schedule. Being new to the competitive region, I had no idea about how to go about planning a travel schedule—particularly being confined to an uncertain—sure-to-be very minimalist budget. I knew the region produced very competitive teams on a national circuit, and suspected that there would be some opportunities for accessible regional travel; however, I did not really have an idea as to the extent of those opportunities until examining the trophy case. In fact, after googling forensics programs whose names were discovered from the trophy case, and e-mailing some of the very friendly and helpful coaches, we were very quickly plugged into the Northwest Forensics Conference e-mail list. Soon, we were up to speed on the available options and could more competently start begging for resources. While there were undoubtedly other means by which to ascertain the information, the trophy case played an integral role in getting us started with travel and competition.

On another very practical level, as the introduction explains, the trophy case provided important clues as to who might still be on the team two years after the team stopped being competitively active. Since this observation has already been described, I will not go into depth about it; it is important to note that this revelation led to a significant observation about the importance of names in general within the trophy case. Naming individuals associated with particular trophies is absolutely critical to an effective trophy case and I am delighted that the majority of the awards in the trophy case at LCSC have names attached to them. For most of the awards leading up to 2001, the names appear to be professionally engraved in the awards themselves. After about 2001 however, all of the name presentations seem less professional<sup>3</sup>—either word processed or written out and attached to the award with scotch tape. Regardless of the appearance of the names, that the names are there is very significant for a variety of different reasons. For one, the names are integral to methodology proposed later in this essay. But for another, having one's name in the trophy case concretizes a place in the legacy of the program. And I now turn to a recent contribution to the trophy case—the first contribution in roughly three years, as demonstration. After competing in the novice division of a recent tournament, and missing an elimination round by one preliminary round victory, we (myself and the one team competing at this tournament) were surprised to hear our school name called out for a sweepstakes award:

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<sup>3</sup> The dichotomy of the appearance between the name presentations begs the question of where the source of the dichotomy comes from. To what extent are the names on the trophies the product of the tournaments awarding the trophies versus the work of the faculty advisors attaching names after the fact? That is certainly a question worth pursuing as we ponder the significance of awards in forensics. Most modern day tournaments do not bother with name engravings on awards. Is that something that could enhance their significance? While it would be very impractical to have the engravings done between the time in which the final rounds end and the awards ceremony begins, it could certainly be accomplished in the days following the tournament and name plates could be sent via mail for attachment to the awards.

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third place in the four year school division. It was a very small tournament—there were only three or four (I intentionally left the exact number unknown to my students) teams entered in the four-year school division. In some ways, the trophy was bittersweet considering that the competitors on the team almost felt insulted by the award—as if they were being treated with the pre-school mentality that “everyone wins” by participating. Even though I tried to get them to focus more on the work they did to come so very close to clearing to out rounds, than on the award we were bringing home, the pep talk did not work and they remained skeptical of the value of their award...until our next squad meeting that is. After showing off the plaque and bragging about the competing team members to those who did not attend the tournament, one of the competing members asked, “Will that award go in the trophy case?” I responded that it would. She then asked, “Will my name be on it?” I responded that it would. She then smiled and I think, began to appreciate the value of that award. I had already known that this student had gone to a couple of tournaments during the time in which the previous Director of Forensics was around, but later learned that she did not win anything and that she was upset that her name was left out of the trophy case and hence, the legacy of the program altogether. That definitely bothered her; but finally, her name is permanently a part of the legacy. I was very happy for her. Hopefully, she will be able to add her name a few more times before she stops competing.

In closing this section, readers should know about the only other award we have won this year, and the way in which this award demonstrates just how important awards are as both affirmations of competence and as symbols of collective memory—especially to small programs. Recently, we went to a very competitive tournament at which teams from around the country attended and entered two teams in the novice division. Both teams would have cleared to an elimination-round with one more victory. To us, this accomplishment was a significant sign of growth—we were better than we were when we went to our first tournament of the year. For starters, we entered two teams instead of just one; so quantitatively we had grown. But qualitatively, we knew we were improving because the debaters knew more and spoke better. In fact, one individual even won a speaker award. It was a significant accomplishment given the context of our program—one that surely serves as a momentum builder for the rest of the season and hopefully into next season. It is an occasion that we would like to archive and put on display for the rest of the campus community to see.

Winning the speaker award was truly a momentous occasion. The problem is that instead of receiving a trophy, plaque, or some other traditional form of an award that is easily displayable, the speaker award winner was given a t-shirt with the name and logo of the debate program hosting the tournament. It is a nice t-shirt, one that I would be proud to wear but it does not communicate a sense of winning something; instead, its communicative

function is more along the lines of a souvenir—much like the t-shirt my parents brought back from Las Vegas when I was young which said, “My Parents Went to Las Vegas and all They Bought me was this Lousy T-shirt.” And I do not say this with any malicious intent towards the program hosting the tournament. It is their tournament after all and it is entirely their prerogative to give out whatever awards they deem appropriate. Furthermore, we were very impressed with many other attributes of their tournament and would gladly go back for a variety of different reasons. The competition was phenomenal; the hospitality was far above average; the collegiality could not have been better. In the grand scheme of things, the t-shirt is not an enormous issue, but I must confess that it was a bit of a letdown—at least that is what the student who won the t-shirt reported to me.

My understanding is that this tournament has given similar types of awards year after year, so it is not as if the type of awards given would be a surprise to programs with more of a collective memory than ours. In fact, as I was preparing to display the t-shirt in the trophy case, I laughed upon noticing coffee cups in the trophy case from the same program awarding the t-shirt. The coffee cups did not communicate that they had been won by anybody for any particular reason at any particular time; they simply communicated that someone had visited this particular college and brought back souvenirs. So, it makes me wonder why this was the case. My guess is that, based upon the literature reviewed above and given the size and history of their very successful, nationally prominent program, they have grown tired of stacking trophies up tournament after tournament and view the trophy from the “dead weight” paradigm described above in the literature review. Or, maybe they feel like by de-emphasizing the awards and the awards ceremony in general, that they can divert more of the emphasis to the educational value of the activity as opposed to the competitive value. In fact, it was interesting to observe just how informal their entire awards ceremony was compared to other awards ceremonies that I have been to. People were talking, laughing, walking in and out of auditorium-style classroom where the awards ceremony was taking place. It was very difficult to even hear what events were being awarded, much less the names of the people who were receiving them. I would almost go as far to say that the function of the awards ceremony was being mocked by the way in which it was being conducted.

By describing this experience, my intent is not to be cynical of the way in which this program chooses to view awards—it is their tournament and it was a tremendous experience for us overall; I simply want to illustrate the point that awards have different meanings to different people over place and time. In fact, I can remember a time when I would have appreciated the way in which this awards ceremony was conducted. Having been involved with programs that have won a lot of trophies, I can certainly understand where the tournament director is coming from. But from my vantage point at the time

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of this particular tournament, I can say with certainty that my students would have benefited from a more formal affirmation of competence. It would have been more of a positive contribution to the collective memory that we are not just attempting to recover but that we are attempting to create.

### **Anticipating the Future: A Methodology for Writing the Team's History**

A collective memory perspective advises a forensics program to remember its past so that the present has some context and so that the future can be anticipated with the benefit of hindsight and a stable identity as a program. Since the program at LCSC has lost touch with its past, the work of finding our identity as a program is proving to be rather difficult. In many ways we feel like we are starting with a blank slate; however, the trophy case indicates otherwise. It indicates that the forensics program has had a modicum of success in the past; it indicates where and when this success has taken place; and it indicates who has earned the success on behalf of LCSC. The trick is of course to maximize the utility of the trophy case in an effort to (re) construct the collective memory of our program. This essay is only the beginning as it offers a surface-level description of the types of information communicated through the trophy case—clues to the past and present. As we move forward as a program, it is important to use utilize those clues to gain a greater understanding of our program's history.

Redding and Hobbs (2002) concur with the analysis presented in this paper, stating that understanding and being able to convey a program's history is important to the team's collective memory from a membership perspective. However, they also point out that being able to do so is important from an institutional perspective as well. They write that, "A forensic program, like all other aspects of the Academy, is constantly asked to justify its existence" (p. 25) and answer the question, "Does forensics provide significant and unique benefits to the students of the college or university?" (p. 25). Writing a history of a forensics program is a way to provide critical evidence helping to justify the program's existence. The authors write that:

A history provides a narrative of the role of forensics at your college or university. A historical narrative documents the importance of a program to the school and to the students who have participated in debate and individual events at that school"(pp. 25-26).

But not only do these authors advocate writing a team history, they offer guidance for how to do so. Taylor (2007) reinforces many of those same ideas and further, makes the connection between such a history and the trophies that indefinitely remain with a program. The method proposed here builds primarily from both of these essays—it is an effort to connect past members

with the present members while writing a history of the forensics program in anticipation of the future.

The method is very simple. The trophies in the trophy cases, as well as other trophies in storage at LCSC, are viewed as archival documents available for description and historical analysis. The first part of the methodology is to contextualize the trophies further by placing them within the broader history of the institutional evolution of LCSC. The school began in 1893 as a normal school and has undergone many institutional changes since then. So, the history of the forensics program is a subset of the broader reaching organizational change of the institution. Understanding that organizational change is important. This can be accomplished by examining historical records such as the local newspaper, local museums, and etc. This work could take some time since according to the sign in the trophy case, described above, the forensics program began in 1902.

The second part of the methodology is to hone in more specifically on the individual trophies in the trophy case and the names and events associated with them. A list of those names will be created and they will be categorized in chronological order. Alumni records and other resources in and around campus including faculty, staff, former students, phone books, etc., will be consulted to try and obtain contact information for as many of the individuals as possible. This will be done in conjunction with the task of trying to assemble a research team—students on the speech and debate team interested in connecting with the team's past. Bringing in the competitors is an essential part of the methodology. Taylor (2007) writes, "The alumni and the current competitors will likely share stories back and forth, finding similarities in their experiences and gaining a sense of being part of the same team and tradition" (p. 93).

The third part of the methodology then, is to contact the alumni of the forensics program and ask them to answer the questions found in the appendix of this essay. Ideally, a member of the research team will ask questions during a face-to-face interview—perhaps even in conjunction with a team function on campus (recorded for the purposes of transcription with permission of the interviewee). If this form of questioning is not feasible or desired by the interviewee, then phone interviews and/or written responses will be requested. If this form of questioning is not feasible or desired by the interviewee, then we will request that they provide a written response to the questions via mail or email. In fact, regardless of whether an interview takes place or not, we are likely to provide interviewees with a copy of the interview guide so that they can think about the questions ahead of time and/or in case they think of something important once the actual interview is over. As part of the third part of the methodology, we will make efforts to identify the names of other forensics competitors and coaches from the past (see questions in the appendix) to create a snowball-like sampling procedure.

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Finally, after obtaining a few interviews and transcribing them, we will begin interpreting the results and writing about our interpretations. Though we anticipate this being an ongoing project for years to come, we will begin sharing the results with alumni, college administrators, fellow faculty, other students on campus, and other supporters of the college. Bringing these people together through a shared understanding can only enhance the success of forensics at LCSC.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this essay is to contribute to the understanding of the significance of awards in forensics from the perspective of one Director of Forensics at a program that had had a near death experience. Despite having a lengthy, over one hundred-year history of activity, the activity is sporadic to say the least. For whatever reasons, the administration has not been successful in securing the resources to maintain stability from one Director of Forensics to the next. Somehow though, a legacy, regardless of how vague it may be, is visible and has been documented primarily through one medium—the trophy case. Without it, there would be very little evidence that speech and debate has ever been active on campus. This essay has attempted to expound upon the trophy case's function as that medium through an autoethnographic voice. Primarily, it is one person's story conveying the effort made to understand where the program has been and where it is now, for the purpose of anticipating where it could go in the future. While the effort includes references to key work in the forensics pedagogy literature and elsewhere, the literature review is not exhaustive. For a more complete literature review, readers should turn to other essays in this special issue in much the same way as I turned to the work provided by Williams and Gantt. They help to identify multiple angles related to awards in forensics, both positive and negative, and I apply some of the angles that resonate most with my own experiences with awards. While those experiences are diverse and many, they all frame the way in which I now currently view the significance of awards at Lewis-Clark State College.

While there are important criticisms of competition generally and hence awards by extension, it is my conclusion that awards in forensics are very important and that as forensics educators, we should do what we can to make sure that importance of awards is not taken lightly. This essay has alluded to literature suggesting that from among other reasons, awards provide an affirmation of competence and a means by which a program can document its history—a critical task from a collective memory perspective. Given the context of LCSC's forensics program, the magnitude of the importance of trophies is intensified. Without the trophy case to examine, I would have had no idea about the history of the program. The trophy case led to a very cursory understanding of the history in a very short period of time and provides a



means by which to continue to develop an understanding of that history. As we begin to add our own trophies, the trophy case provides this program an opportunity to begin to connect present members to the legacy of the past, an important relational communicative function as we anticipate the future.

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## Appendix

### Interview Guide

- 1) During what years were you involved with the LCSC Speech and Debate team? (if not known before the interview...were you a competitor, coach, or other?)
- 2) What was your academic orientation while at LCSC (i.e., If former student, what was your major/minor? If coach, what division were you in? What classes did you teach?)
- 3) What else were you involved with on campus? (other extracurricular activities, service organizations, etc.)
- 4) What forensics events were you involved with? What were your favorites? Which ones were you best at?
- 5) How often, if ever, do you reflect back upon your experience with the forensics team?
- 6) Do you still keep in touch with the people you knew while participating with the team? If yes, could I obtain their contact information? If not, do you at least remember some names?
- 7) What are your favorite memories about competition?
- 8) What are your least favorite memories about competition?
- 9) What are your favorite memories about the social aspects of being involved with the team (van rides, motel stays, eating meals together, etc...)?
- 10) Were you friends with anybody on the team (i.e. did you spend time with people outside of team events)? Please describe.
- 11) What are your least favorite memories about the social aspects of being involved with the team (van rides, motel stays, eating meals together, etc...)? Did you spend too much time with the same people?
- 12) What did you go on to do professionally after leaving LCSC?
- 13) Did forensics play a significant role in preparing you for a professional life after leaving LCSC? If yes, how so? Could you speak specifically to the specific skills of researching ideas, organizing ideas, presenting ideas with confidence, and critical thinking/problem solving?
- 14) Could you compare what you learned through participation in forensics with what you learned in a more traditional classroom setting? (i.e. was the learning more beneficial, less beneficial, similar in the amount of benefit, or perhaps just not comparable?)
- 15) More specifically, could you describe learning from the forensics team in

terms of "connecting learning to life" (a slogan claimed by LCSC, see [www.lcsc.edu](http://www.lcsc.edu), last accessed 1/16/08)?

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## An Alternative to Trophies in Forensic Competition

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The awarding of trophies is a long-standing practice inherent to forensics competition. Whether traditional trophies, plaques, medals, or the creation of a local artist or business, forensic tournaments and debate elimination rounds typically conclude with the long-awaited presentation of awards to those who have succeeded in that weekend's competition.

The role of competition has certainly been explored extensively in the forensics literature. The query into the relationships between forensics, education, and competition has been traced to 1915 with Lane's article in the inaugural issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Public Speech*, "Faculty help in intercollegiate contests."

Forensics competition literature has attempted to assist coaches through study of practices which tend to lead to competitive success (Dean, 1985; Reynolds, 1983). These studies range from suggestions of how an event should be coached to analyses of those performances deemed the most successful.

Still other studies have looked at the activity from the inside out to determine whether there are existing practices or variables which alter the competitive balance in tournament speaking and debating (e.g. Allen, Trejo, Bartanen, Schroeder, & Ulrich, 2004; Loge, 1991; Williams, McGee, & McGee, 1999). These authors have explored budget, prior experience, travel schedule, institutional support, and gender, among other variables to further understand the competitive landscape of intercollegiate forensics.

More recently, Burnett, Brand and Meister (2003) and Hinck (2003) continued the long standing debate on the perceived tension between competition and education in forensics pedagogy. Are the competitive elements so strong and reinforced that they supersede and dilute the educational value of the activity? Or, does it help identify excellence in practice that can be monitored and directed by forensic educators? Questions such as these have been at the heart of investigations by forensic scholars concerned with the educational mission of tournament speaking and debating.

While competition has clearly garnered the attention of forensics directors, coaches, and students, the actual forensic award has been left relatively unevaluated. This essay will look at the forensics award (trophy, plaque, etc.) and suggest an alternative which might serve a function that differs from how awards are typically viewed.

Following a brief consideration of the function of awards, this essay will suggest that tournament awards can be holistically revised to serve the function of preserving program and organizational memory for student participants.

## The Function of Awards

The function of awards in forensics might be viewed from three different perspectives: recognition, motivation, and memory. Students, coaches, program directors, and tournament directors' views of the function of awards can greatly affect their view of tournaments and the activity as a whole.

### *Awards as Recognition*

Awards as recognition would suggest the award is a logical outcome of tournament competition, and little more. This perspective is somewhat consistent with some respondents' views in a study conducted by Paine and Stanley (2003). These researchers explored the role of "having fun" in forensics and how it related to commitment and student retention. In addressing factors which make forensics fun, some students reported that competition and accomplishment serve that end. Students noted that fun was "a product of working hard" and "seeing one's own hard work pay off" as well as "having an overall sense of accomplishment" and "feeling that you have done your best" (p. 45). These views would seem to be consistent with the perspective of awards being the recognition of that sense of accomplishment. This perspective does not necessarily hold the award as the goal of participation in forensics, but simply the symbol of having done so successfully on that weekend.

### *Awards as Motivation*

The perspective of awards as motivation is significantly different and much more complicated to unpack. This perspective sees the award as the desired outcome of tournament competition, something students and teams should strive for. This perspective, in part, is addressed in literature investigating the competitive aspect of intercollegiate forensics.

Ascertaining the prevalence of this perspective, with regard to rewards, is somewhat difficult as studies generally do not ask students about awards specifically. However, research on the role of competition in forensics and relevant education literature does shed some light on the subject.

Hill (1982) reported that debaters surveyed listed competition as the most frequently cited reason for why they participate. Over thirty-five percent (35.5) listed competition followed by enjoyment/fun (34.4%), and travel (34.4%) as their motivations for participation. While this study did not specify that students view trophies as a function of competition, it is reasonable to assume that those who prioritize competition highly would regard trophies as a function of competition.

Other studies have suggested a less-prominent role of competition in students' perception of intercollegiate forensics. McMillian and Todd-Mancillas (1991) found that only 7.6% percent of respondents indicated

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they participated in collegiate individual events because "he/she enjoys competition, challenges, and desires to win awards" (p. 5). References to competition and awards were absent from the top 10 items listed as either benefits or disadvantages to debate participation in Williams, McGee and Worth's (2001) study of collegiate debaters. However, results of Littlefield's (2001) similar study conducted on high school debaters indicated that 4.44% of respondents (25 of 562) listed "competition/politics/judging issues" (p. 88) as disadvantages of participation.

In an attempt to bring coherence to the varying reports on the role of competition in forensic education, Wood and Rowland-Morin (1989) compared Hill's (1982) results with those of data gathered in 1983 and 1987. Items indicated by students as motivations for participation in debate included "competition" and, "winning." Out of 33 items, competition was ranked first (Hill, 1982), first (1983 data), and then ninth (1987 data) in prominence. Winning was ranked sixteenth, ninth, and fifteenth in the same data sets.

It seems safe to argue that the community perception on the role of competition varies. However, it also seems safe to argue that the role of competition is prominent in students, coaches, and directors' concerns with the pedagogical view of intercollegiate forensics. Burnett, Brand and Meister (2003) likely speak for many when they observe:

While forensics typically has been promoted as an educational activity, our contention is that forensics is, in reality, highly competitive. That is, current practices in forensics focus on competition and not on an often-referenced educational model. (p. 12)

The role of awards and competition in the forensics realm can be illuminated with a look at education literature which addresses competition and awards as extrinsic rewards.

Research on rewards has been led largely by the work of Edward L. Deci, and Richard Ryan (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). Rewards have been classified into five types: task-non contingent rewards, engagement contingent rewards, completion contingent rewards, performance contingent rewards, and unexpected rewards. The first three awards recognize "showing up" for whatever is requested, participating in a requested task, and completing the task. Unexpected rewards are received when a task is accomplished and the student did not expect to receive any compensation or recognition. The reward most pertinent to forensic competition is the performance contingent reward. These rewards usually are given to people who out-perform a percentage of others, often for those who out-perform 80 percent of the other participants. A similar conceptualization of awards, competitively contingent rewards, is given to those who defeat others.



Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) is at the heart of discussions regarding rewards. CET suggests that intrinsic motivation is primarily influenced by one's needs for competence and self-determination. Deci, Koestner and Ryan (2001) explain:

[T]he effects on intrinsic motivation of external events such as the offering of rewards, the delivery of evaluations, the setting of deadlines, and other motivational inputs are a function of how these events influence a person's perceptions of competence and self-determination. (p. 3)

Rewards tend to have a dual, opposing effect on student motivation. Rewards provide information to the student regarding their level of performance. The information can convey self-determined competence and enhance their intrinsic motivation. However, rewards also convey a controlling aspect in that a student's performance is being controlled with the promise of a reward. This controlling aspect is external to the student and can therefore inhibit intrinsic motivation.

Deci, Koestner and Ryan (2001) acknowledge receiving the award will enhance intrinsic motivation. "In those cases, there would be a tendency for performance-contingent reward to affirm competence and thus, to offset some of the negative effects of control" (p. 5). In forensic terms, those who make finals or out-rounds receive awards and confirmation of their competency. This confirmation will help outweigh the notion that their behavior is being controlled by the constraints of what it takes to win the reward. However, those who do not make finals or out-rounds risk perceiving that they lack competence in addition to possibly perceiving little self-determination as they try to alter performances in order to win. As Dyer (2002) notes:

[T]he atmosphere of competitiveness in education may communicate to a participant who is not among the top performers that his or her skills are not valuable. Although the limited number of awards increase the desire for attaining them, the majority of students competing in a single event do not receive an award for that event. (p. 5)

Students who do not win awards may receive internal motivation through other means. Verbal praise is one of the best means to enhance one's intrinsic motivation. Praise from coaches, fellow students, parents or friends can sufficiently appeal to students thus enhancing their level of satisfaction with forensic activities.

Students might also acquire intrinsic motivation by viewing their forensic participation as preparation for a particular career or as an opportunity to express themselves through performance. Absent intrinsic rewards students are left to rely on extrinsic factors, such as trophies, if they

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This perspective on rewards and how rewards (trophies) can exert a controlling behavior on forensic students sheds new light on discussions of coaching performances and selecting arguments to win ranks and ballots as well as the ability or inability of students to take risks in forensics. Student who tend to receive awards in forensics competition are sometimes viewed as those who are able to work with their coach(es) and conform to the desires of the community of judges. Thomas and Hart (1983) concluded from their study on ethics in speech events “[i]n competition, winning provides the ultimate justification for behavior” (p. 95). They also suggest “[t]his study indicates that for most participants, contestants and judges alike, the primary rationale for forensics is to develop excellence in contest techniques, not necessarily excellence in rhetorical skills” (p. 95).

Hinck (2003) offers an alternative view of competitive success in forensics. He notes “[t]ournaments invite comparison and evaluation according to standards for judgment. What wins reflects community standards for excellence” (p. 63). He continues to suggest that we should focus efforts on ensuring that those standards of excellence are valid and appropriate.

While the research on forensic competitiveness rarely addresses the role of trophies, these external rewards are part of the desired outcome for some in the activity. The view of trophies, as part of the motivation for competition, is much more complicated than the view of trophies as recognition. Trophies as motivation involve the element of competition, to what degree competition controls performances in forensics, and the effect of trophies (performance contingent rewards) on students' intrinsic motivation.

#### *Awards as Collective Memory*

The final conceptualization of awards suggests that they can serve an important function in creating competitor, team, and organizational memory of forensic participation. Brian T. Taylor (2007) wrote of the need to develop collective memory in forensics education and how we need to strive to maintain a sense of history. Taylor notes that his notion is not foreign to forensics literature as others have addressed similar needs over the past several years (e.g. Compton, 2000; Compton, 2006; Derryberry, 2005a, 2005b; Jensen & Jensen, 2007; Redding & Hobbs, 2002).

Collective memory which Taylor (2007) describes as “the shared identity and understanding of the past for a community” (p. 89) was introduced in 1925 by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Weldon and Bellinger (1997) provide context by noting the dimensions of collective memory. They explain that remembering is a social activity. The social group (community, culture) leads members to use memory in specific ways. Memory can direct how information is shared within the group, or withheld from members of the group. Collective memory also “affects people’s perceptions of individuals,

groups, and events, and has consequences for actions and reactions toward them" (p. 1162).

Taylor (2007) argued that "holes" in the collective memory of a forensic program affect all involved. Alumni often find their stories and experiences are lost. "With the exception of a few trophies and photos, there may be very little left from their time on the team" (Taylor, 2007, p. 90). Current students lose out on a sense of being part of something bigger and more significant than the status of the program immediately preceding and immediately following their final season of involvement. This disconnect with the program is also felt by the coaches and administrators who have difficulty expressing traditions and practices of the program. Repairing these holes takes place, according to Taylor, by recording the stories, bringing alumni to share stories, and gathering materials to continue to tell the stories.

Viewing the forensic award as an artifact of collective memory can assist in the gathering and telling of stories. Traditionally, the forensic award is a trophy, plaque, or possibly a more creative creation with a local flavor. While the more rare creative creations might be kept and reflected upon by the student, all too frequently the trophy ends up buried in the school or student's storage space. This partially stems from the perspective of the award as recognition or motivation.

Transitioning the award in our collective experiences as an artifact of collective memory will make the award more meaningful, long-term, and assist programs and the forensic community in telling their stories and maintaining their heritage.

To assist in this transition, we propose that tournaments eliminate traditional trophies and plaques from their budgets and tournament hosting preparations. Instead, forensics organizations can follow the model of Little League Baseball with the creation of tournament pins. While Little League pins are largely used for trading and a means of increasing socialization among participants, they also represent having reached a level of success in tournament play. Forensic tournament pins would not necessarily be traded, but could replace individual events and debate trophies as awards for student achievements.

Individual tournament hosts would create their own tournament pin, as individual teams in the Little League Tournament do. The tournament pin design can be a constant over the years or can change annually. While the pins would still represent first through sixth place finishes and out-round victors, the uniqueness of the pin can help students reflect on the tournament experience beyond the attainment of the award. Looking at the Texas Tech pin and how it differs from the Colorado College pin can remind students of the trip to Lubbock, dinner at the Double Nickel restaurant and meeting other students at the tournament from Tech, West Texas A&M, and Texas State University. The uniqueness of the pin will help distinguish it, and the

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The pin is also more likely to foster and recall memories by its owner because it can be more easily maintained and displayed. Active competitors may acquire a large number of trophies over a competitive career and quite frequently those awards end up in storage boxes with one tournament trophy having little distinction from another in terms of remembered experiences. However, tournament pins (like Little League pins) can be collected and easily displayed, thus more frequently reminding the recipient of the award and the experiences at that tournament.

Creating a stronger collective memory for competitors and teams can also create stronger forensic alumni. Dyer (2002) encourages the creation of programs to keep alumni involved with their forensics programs. Active alumni benefit programs through student recruitment, program innovation, financial support, and judging assistance.

Tournament pins also carry pragmatic benefits for forensic programs and students. The cost of hosting a tournament can be significantly reduced. Purchased in bulk, pins with a unique design can be less than \$2 each. The savings can be diverted to other needs of the tournament or program. Students' storage of pins will be easier during the season and after their competitive days have passed. Pins can be displayed in an organized manner on whatever the student chooses. This would be less cumbersome and more easily maintained as years pass. The use of pins as artifacts of collective memory will also help alumni of forensic programs remember the experiences with their team as opposed to just the victories signified by the competition oriented traditional trophy.

This essay has suggested a perceptual move by the forensics community to view forensics awards as artifacts of collective memory as opposed to forms of recognition or results of competitive success. We believe it is the totality of forensic experiences which form the collective memory of intercollegiate teams and organizations. Such a perceptual shift in how we view awards may help continue the telling of forensics stories which comprise that collective memory.

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