

# A Brief History of Individual Events Nationals

LINDA J. FRYAR\*

While the oral tradition may have been instrumental in producing major works of literature like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, it is not the method of preference when recounting the relatively short, recent history of Individual Events Nationals which began as an independent enterprise and which presently operates under the jurisdiction of the National Forensic Association. With the rapid turnover in the profession of directors of forensics, and with the replacement of the intercollegiate contestant pool every four years, a special need is created to detail the development of this national championship in intercollegiate speaking. This project examines the growth of I.E. Nationals during the first fourteen years of its history.

Three areas of growth and development will be examined: major tournament results and records; administrative policies and evolving procedures; and election results. Research was conducted in the N.F.A. archives located in Engleman Hall of Southern Connecticut State University. Materials examined included complete tournament results for the first fourteen years, *N.F.A. Newsletters*, and the papers of Founder and Past-President, Dr. Seth C. Hawkins.

A variety of "national" championships in the field of intercollegiate speech have long existed. The Interstate Oratorical Contest has existed for over one hundred years. The National Debate Tournament, originally sponsored by the U.S. Military Academy, has convened annually since the end of World War II. The several forensic fraternities and honorary societies have venerable convention-tournaments on yearly or biennial bases which contain both individual events and debate competition but restrict entry to member schools of each given forensic society. These tournaments, however, are not "open" competition.

Possibly motivated by this background, Dr. Raymond C. Beaty of Ohio University and Dr. Jack H. Howe of California State

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LINDA J. FRYAR is Alumni Fellow and Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Speech at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge 70803. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance and advice of Dr. Seth C. Hawkins, the Founder of I.E. Nationals, without whose cooperation this endeavor would have been impossible to accomplish.

University, Long Beach both made tentative inquiries during the late 1960s concerning the feasibility of a national championship tournament in individual speaking events. Beaty reported in a letter to Hawkins that his requests were met with laughter and derision by the debate establishment. Further, there was some doubt as to whether there was enough competition in individual events to support such a tournament.

During the 1970-71 forensic season, Dr. Hawkins concluded that the rapid expansion of opportunities in individual events competition warranted the establishment of just such a national championship. Early in the spring semester of 1971, he decided to "unilaterally invent a national championship in individual events, declare it official by fiat, and send invitations." As he did not consider Southern Connecticut State a "defensible" geographical location for the tournament, the campus of Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio, became the site of the first championship.

No one overtly protested the legitimacy of the tournament, and, thus, the first national championship opened with 23 schools, 142 slots, six events, and three rounds with a direct cut to finals. Ohio University walked away with the sweepstakes title and 205 sweepstakes points followed by Maryland's 138, Eastern Michigan's 117, Southern Connecticut's 109, and Defiance's 80. Jim Molnar of Ohio University, gearing for his 1972 pentathlon title, became the first of several to win two national titles in the same season: in 1971, it was Prose Interpretation and Poetry Interpretation. The other national champions were from four different schools: Bob Frazier of Lehigh in Extemporaneous Speaking, Lisa Uhrig of Ball State in Impromptu Speaking, Ruth Brisbain of Defiance in Persuasion, and Cathie Craig of Georgetown-Kentucky in After-Dinner Speaking.

The roster of the original twenty-three schools at the 1971 I.E. Nationals provides an interesting commentary on the changing strength of forensic programs. Some of the strongest programs of 1984 did not attend in 1971, while a few of the major powers of fourteen years ago are now moribund. The pioneers were: American (DC), Ball State (IN), Defiance (OH), Eastern Kentucky, Eastern Michigan, Evangel (MO), Georgetown (KY), Heidelberg (OH), Kentucky, Lehigh (PA), U. Maine-Gorham (now Southern Maine), Maryland, Miami (OH), Niagara (NY), Ohio U., Ohio Northern, Purdue (IN), Shepherd (WV), Southern Connecticut, St. John's (NY), St. Rose (NY), West Chester (PA), and Wright State (OH).

Only four colleges have entered contestants at all fourteen I.E. Nationals, and only three people have been present at all fourteen.

The four colleges are Eastern Michigan, Ohio University, Southern Connecticut, and Southern Maine. In addition to Hawkins, Donald F. Peters of Niagara and Walter S. Stump of Southern Maine have never missed an I.E. Nationals.

With Hawkins on leave during 1971-72 at Bowling Green, it was convenient to retain the site of Ohio Northern for a second year. Still with three rounds plus finals, the 1972 I.E. Nationals attracted 33 colleges and 206 slots. Ball State won its only national championship to date, although, if the NFA sweepstakes system adopted the following year had been in force, Ohio University would have claimed the honors. Parkersburg became the first two-year school to attend and immediately broke into the top ten in sweepstakes. Finally, the 1972 tournament was the only I.E. Nationals held entirely during May.

Only one event was added during 1972, but it provides a curious historical footnote. Called Dramatic Pairs, it was the forerunner of the present-day Duo Interpretation. However, since east coast colleges offered the event as an acting event (without scripts, in costume, with blocking) and the midwest performed the event substantially as it is done today, both styles were allowed at Nationals. Apparently there was no judging bias, as the percentage of pairs in each style in finals roughly approximated the number of slots entered in each style.

Hawkins resisted continuing pressure from the midwestern forensic community which favored the creation of a governing organization for I.E. Nationals. A draft constitution for a National Forensic Association was produced at a "secret" meeting, convened at Miami University in Middletown, Ohio, by Raymond C. Beaty in January, 1973. It was presented to Hawkins as a *fait accompli*, and he contends that the tournament was removed from his control by "political pressure." While he recognizes the political reality that the NFA has become, even today Hawkins contends that "the tournament was taken away from [him] by arbitrary means" and that "one should have the right to operate something that one has invented."

A 65-college I.E. Nationals, with a dramatic increase in slottage, opened in 1973 at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. A business meeting to approve the NFA constitution took considerable time, as it was approved article by article essentially as written by Raymond Beaty and edited by Hawkins. The only significant addition was the elected position of a Student Representative on the Executive Council. Carolyn Unnever of Central Connecticut State College narrowly defeated a then-unknown Plattsburgh under-

graduate named Edward J. Harris who was not at the meeting and was unaware that he had been nominated.

Hawkins defeated Eastern Michigan's Dennis M. Beagan for the presidency by a 42-9 margin. The vice-presidency went to Howe who was lauded in a nominating speech that made reference to the work he had put into the national intercollegiate results book. Raymond Beaty was elected as the first executive secretary, a post which includes certifying entries, scheduling the tournament, and supervising tabulations. Beagan and Peters became the first at-large Executive Council members.

In competition, home team Eastern Michigan won its first of seven national championships, while David Beale, a pre-tournament favorite, was Ohio University's last national pentathlon champion. Hawkins introduced the Founder's Cumulative Sweepstakes Award, punning years later that the award was his "defense against historical revisionists who might 'unfound' the tournament." His "fears," however, were unfounded. Ohio University, with the accumulation of points from a championship and two second-place finishes, won easily.

The NFA Constitution brought the 10% rule into effect, allowing non-finalists in events with large numbers of participants to qualify for Nationals. The concept of state championship waivers from the 7 school-12 contestant rule was legitimized, but the "no-5-Nationals" proviso and the "eight semester rule" remained unwritten law leading to challenges in later years. Due to the rapid growth of I.E. Nationals, preliminary rounds were extended to four, and sweepstakes and pentathlon awards lengthened to ten places.

1974 Nationals at Plattsburgh reached the 101 college mark (plus the only international entry ever — the University of London, England), a watershed that has been maintained each year since. Expository Speaking was added as an event, and a much needed expansion to semi-finals was begun in 1974. The business meeting produced both a new event and some controversy. Rhetorical Criticism was approved as an event for 1975 following a motion by Grace Walsh of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and Hawkins was directed to draft the event rules. A heavily-debated proposal to remove Dramatic Duo was initiated by the suggestion that duo is not an *individual* event by strict definition. The vote to remove the event and replace it with Single Interpretation of Drama resulted in a tie which was broken when Hawkins, presiding as NFA president, cast his vote in favor of continuing Dramatic Duo as an individual event. In a second record-breaking action, Peters became the first person re-elected to any office in NFA.

1974 and 1975 produced the first consecutive championships at I.E. Nationals: Ohio University in sweepstakes and Bobbi Rowe Baugh of Stetson University as pentathlon winner. Further, the 1975 Niagara tournament saw the expansion of the Executive Council with the addition of two more at-large seats for a total of four. Howe became the first person re-elected to a multi-year term (as vice-president). Richard Haven became the first former contestant in I.E. Nationals to win an Executive Council position other than, of course, student representatives (he had competed at Nationals in 1971).

In 1976 I.E. Nationals came to California. Eastern Michigan began an unprecedented series of six consecutive national championships. Irene Zeigler's first place pentathlon finish set a record with three straight pentathlon titles for the same school. This mark was matched in 1981 and broken in 1982. Catherine C. Beaty, of Parkersburg, became the first community college coach to join the ranks of the Executive Council, but Ruth Bacon, of Heidelberg, had beaten her by one year for the distinction of being the first woman member of the governing board. Peters became Executive Secretary, the first move from an at-large seat to higher office. Quarterfinals were mandated in 1976 and the National Assembly later ratified the action. Ohio University became the first school to win the Founder's Trophy twice, and Raymond Beaty retired from forensics with three national championships and three second-place finishes in six years.

In 1976 Pensacola Junior College and the University of West Florida were discovered to have been competing as one school during the regular season and were forced to compete as separate teams at Nationals. It became necessary to define a "school" when it was discovered that Morehouse University and Spelman College, separate degree-granting institutions, were engaging in a similar practice in 1977.

George Mason University hosted the 1977 tournament at which Eastern Michigan completed the first "triple crown": first place sweepstakes, first place pentathlon, and first place Founder's Trophy. EMU added a second "triple crown" in 1980, and Bradley University performed the same feat in 1984. Initiation of two-year, staggered terms for at-large council positions was begun. Harris (Penn State) and Anita C. James (USC) were the first doctoral candidates elected to at-large positions, as all previous NFA positions, excepting student representatives, had been filled by full-time faculty. The presidency was turned over to Michael P. Kelley of California State University, Los Angeles, and the term of

TABLE 1  
I.E. Nationals: Locations and Results, 1971-1984

YEAR	LOCATION AND HOST	REGULAR SWEEPSTAKES
1971	Ohio Northern University Margaret Ann Riggle	Ohio University
1972	Ohio Northern University Margaret Ann Riggle	Ball State University
1973	Eastern Michigan University Dennis M. Beagan	Eastern Michigan U.
1974	Plattsburgh State University Al R. Montanaro, Jr.	Ohio University
1975	Niagara University Donald F. Peters	Ohio University
1976	Calif. State U. Los Angeles Michael P. Kelley	Eastern Michigan U.
1977	George Mason University Bruce B. Manchester	Eastern Michigan U.
1978	Monmouth College of N. J. William A. Yaremchuk	Eastern Michigan U.
1979	U. Wisconsin at Whitewater Richard Haven	Eastern Michigan U.
1980	University of Montevallo Robert R. Kunkel	Eastern Michigan U.
1981	Western Kentucky U. Larry A. Caillouet	Eastern Michigan U.
1982	Ohio State University David A. Radanovich	Bradley University
1983	Illinois State — Normal Connie Day + Doug Jennings	Bradley University
1984	Georgia Southern College Janet B. Bury	Bradley University

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office was reduced constitutionally from a 4-year to a 3-year term. By 1978 most association decision-making was taking place by mail ballot rather than at the National Assembly. As a result, Kelley chaired smaller meetings at Monmouth, New Jersey while Eastern Michigan won an unprecedented third straight championship. George Mason University became the first school to win the Founder's Trophy without having won regular sweepstakes at least once. The Trojans of USC produced a flamboyant pentathlon champion, William Allen Young, noted for wearing white gloves to claim his trophies.

YEAR	PENTATHLON WINNER	FOUNDER'S TROPHY
1971	Paul Balon Southern Connecticut	(not yet established)
1972	Jim Molnar Ohio University	(not yet established)
1973	David Beale Ohio University	Ohio University
1974	Bobbi Rowe Stetson University	Eastern Michigan Univ.
1975	Bobbi Rowe Stetson University	Ball State Univ.
1976	Irene Zeigler Stetson University	Ohio University
1977	Michael Garcia Eastern Michigan	Eastern Michigan Univ.
1978	William Allen Young U. Southern California	George Mason Univ.
1979	Michael Denger Eastern Michigan U.	Stetson Univ.
1980	John Capecci Eastern Michigan	Eastern Michigan
1981	Jon Capecci Eastern Michigan	Ohio University
1982	Teresa McElwee Eastern Michigan	Bowling Green State Univ.
1983	Mike Jones Eastern Michigan	Illinois State—Normal
1984	Brad Johanson Bradley University	Bradley University

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Some incidental records were established in 1979. Wisconsin Whitewater, the host school, achieved the distinction of being the only Nationals to record a snowfall. The NFA added a second yearly business meeting at the Speech Communication Association convention. Anita James ended her Executive Council tenure after having represented three different schools in three years. According to Hawkins, the tournament results were "predictable."

A series of constitutional changes were set in motion at the 1980 Montevallo tournament, the most noticeable effects of which were the standardization of time limits of events. SCA affiliate status

Table 2  
National Forensic Association Election Results to 1984

Term Began: April of	President	Past President	Vice- President	Executive Secretary	
1971	[Seth C. Hawkins, Southern Conn.] <sup>1</sup>				
1972					
1973			Jack H. Howe, Calif. State Long Beach	Raymond C. Beaty, Ohio University	
1974					re-elected
1975					
1976		Donald F. Peters, Niagara University			
1977	Michael P. Kelley, California State-LA	Seth Hawkins <sup>2</sup>	Albert Montanaro, Plattsburgh State		
1978					
1979			Catherine C. Beaty, Parkersburg	Edward J. Harris, Suffolk University	
1980	Donald F. Peters, Niagara University	Michael P. Kelley	re-elected		
1981				Harris-Leiboff (see text)	
1982					
1983	Edward J. Harris, Jr., Suffolk Univ.	Donald F. Peters	re-elected; office split (add Kelley)	Michael D. Leiboff, Mansfield Univ.	
1984			C. Beaty + M. Kelley		

<sup>1</sup>There was no NFA in 1971; Hawkins was simply “in charge” of I.E. Nationals with appointed Board of Advisors.

<sup>2</sup>Upon expiration of term as Past President, NFA voted that the lifetime Executive Council position of Founder be given to Hawkins



	At-Large Seat 1	At-Large Seat 2	At-Large Seat 3	At-Large Seat 4	Student Representative
1971					
1972					
1973	Donald F. Peters, Niagara University	Dennis M. Beagan, Eastern Michigan			Carolyn Unnever, Central Connecticut
1974	re-elected	Michael P. Kelley, California State-Los Angeles			Paul Van Dyne, Penn State
1975	re-elected	Ruth Bacon, Heidelberg College	Ron Bough, Stetson Univ.	Richard Haven, Wisc.-Whitewater	Denise Gorsline, Eastern Michigan
1976	Kelley	Catherine C. Beaty, Parkersburg CC	Al Montanaro, Plattsburgh State	Michael D. Leiboff, Mansfield State	Chip Letzgas, Ohio University
1977	Anita C. James, Univ. of Southern Calif.		Ed Harris, Penn State		Shawn McGee, Ball State
1978	James, now at Santa Rosa J.C.	C. Beaty		re-elected	Molly Spengler, Illinois State
1979	James, now at Ohio Univ.	Jane Benson, Wisconsin-Whitewater	Montanaro		John Boone, Morehouse College
1980	Robert R. Kunkel,			re-elected	Kevin Dean, Bowling Green
1981	Montevallo	Chip Letzgas, now at Morehead State	Montanaro		David Voss, Occidental College
1982	Robert Rosenthal, North Carolina-Wilmington	Christine Reynolds, <sup>3</sup> Univ. of Minnesota		Connie Day, Illinois State	Dan Donellon, Bowling Green
1983	Jack Kay, <sup>4</sup> Nebraska-Lincoln		Keith Semmel, Ball State		Tracy Anderson, Bradley
1984	John Williams, Western Carolina	Reynolds, now at Wisconsin-Eau Claire		Montanaro	Anderson + John Broer, Miami (OH)

<sup>3</sup>Letzgas resigned; Reynolds appointed to fill unexpired term, then elected in her own right.

<sup>4</sup>Rosenthal, taking appointment at Suffolk, was forced to resign unexpired term due to provision in NFA Constitution; Kay appointed to complete term in office.

was confirmed, facilitating the movement of NFA in the direction of a scholarly, journal-producing organization. Eastern Michigan won the "triple crown," earning enough points to take a third Founder's Trophy in ten years.

It was in 1981 at Western Kentucky, however, that the EMU dynasty reached its peak. Eastern presented retiring director Beagan with a sixth consecutive national championship. In the eleven years Beagan coached EMU to I.E. Nationals, the school recorded seven national titles, two seconds, and two thirds; three Founder's Trophies; and four national pentathlon championships, with Jon Capecci matching Bobbi Rowe's back-to-back first-place finishes. EMU continued to win pentathlon trophies until setting a record of five straight, climaxed by Mike Jones' 1983 mark of 105 points.

In 1981 Chip Letzgus of Morehead was the first former student representative to win an at-large council seat. He later became the first Executive Council member to resign. Michael D. Leiboff of Mansfield State began his sixth consecutive year as an at-large officer, then moved up to Executive-Secretary Elect in 1982.

In 1982 Ohio became the first state to host three national tournaments when Nationals convened at Ohio State. Bradley University became only the fourth college to win a national title, ending the EMU string and beginning a dynasty of their own which has now reached three straight national championships. The Rhetorical Criticism rules were expanded, in Hawkins' words, "rather as one widens a needle's eye to resemble the Marianas Trench." Bowling Green became the first college to elect a second student representative.

*The National Forensic Journal* was first published in 1983. To make the editorial position a non-voting Executive Council post, the vice-presidency was split to include administration and professional relations. Catherine Beaty assumed the position of Vice-President for Administration and Kelley became Vice-President for Professional Relations. Peters became Past President; Harris assumed the Presidency; and Leiboff assumed the post of Executive Secretary. Peters assumed his fourth different position in NFA, but Kelley topped him by taking his fourth different position without ever having been Executive Secretary. Robert Rosenthal was forced to resign his at-large position because of a constitutional provision against two officers representing the same school. Rosenthal had moved from North Carolina-Wilmington to Suffolk, from which school Harris functioned as an Executive Council member. In 1984 Tracey Anderson of Bradley became the first

student representative to run for re-election and win. She also became the first student co-representative sharing the post with John Broer of Miami (Ohio) when the National Assembly approved the action after a deadlocked election in the Student Assembly.

Some present office-holders have devoted a considerable number of years to the NFA. Seth Hawkins, of course, has served the association continuously since its inception. Peters has served a total of eleven years; Kelley ten years; Leiboff and Catherine Beaty nine years; and Harris and Montanaro eight years.

With a consistent attendance of over 125 colleges and over 1700 slots per season, I.E. Nationals is a viable entity. The continued growth of scholarly activities, including the National Forensic Journal and S.C.A. convention programs, points toward a healthy future for individual events competition and I.E. Nationals.