



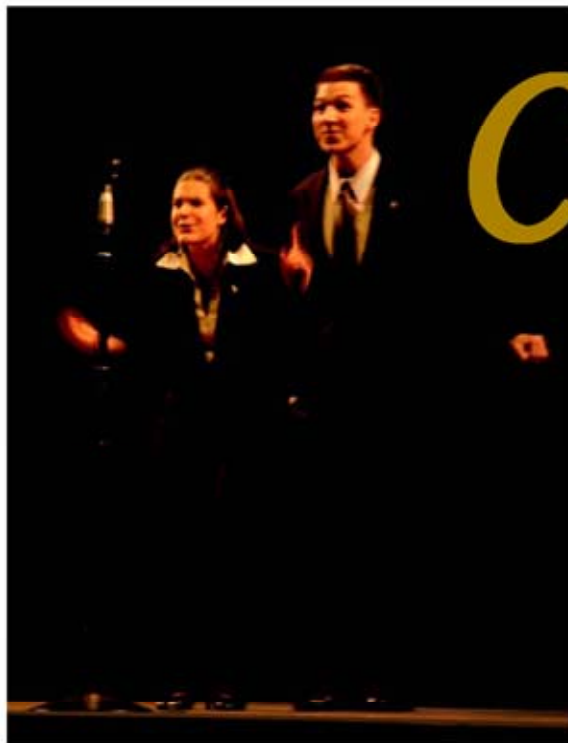
Volume 1

Issue 1

April 2007

*the*  
*NFL*

*Alumni*



*Connection*



The Schwan Food Company has grown from a one-man, one-truck operation to a global leader in the frozen-food industry. With our commitment to you and your families, we look forward to being part of the success and growth of the NFL for years to come.

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Proud to support

# Alumni Connection

*Letter from the Editor*

## *Welcome Alumni Members!*

When I started this program a year ago, I promised myself that the NFL would find ways to keep alumni involved. The *Alumni Connection* web link, the newsletters you have been receiving, and this Alumni Magazine are just a few ways we are trying to keep the NFL family together. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed creating it for you!

Our first edition of the *Alumni Connection* magazine will hopefully take you down memory lane. Remember those long bus trips, tournaments you participated in, when you received your NFL Membership Certificate, coaches who played an inspiring role in your life today and the friendships you made during that time? We hope to ignite those memories as you read through the Alumni Magazine. In this first publication of the magazine we've included alumni and coach interviews, NFL updates, and much much more! If you would be interested in contributing to the Alumni Magazine we'd love to hear from you and share your personal reflections with our readers.

There are many ways beyond just reading our publications to stay connected with the NFL. Consider volunteering at a tournament, help at a school that has an NFL program, maybe even start up a speech and debate team at your local high school!

Financial support is also crucial in recognizing students who set personal goals in their accomplishments as an NFL member. Consider giving back to the NFL yearly because your support will help the legacy of those who are following in your footsteps!

I look forward to hearing from you! Please contact me if you have any questions or if you want to find out how you can help support the NFL's mission of "Training Youth for Leadership."

Thanks again!

*Heidi S. Christensen*

Heidi S. Christensen  
Director of NFL Alumni Relations and Fundraising

"No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave." - Calvin Coolidge





# You Can Take Steps to Help Train

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**BE AMONG THE NFL SPONSORS**

# A Teacher and a Coach

## Alumni Connection

Reflections by an NFL Coach on the occasion of his NFL coach's impending retirement

**Terri** Branson never wanted me to write this article. In fact, my former speech coach and English teacher tried several times to convince me that the life of a high school teacher and speech coach wasn't for me. It wasn't enough.

**In** 1983, I was a member of Mrs. Branson's middle school speech team in Middlesboro, Kentucky. I really liked Mrs. Branson, and no one was more pleased than I was to discover that she was moving up to Middlesboro High with my class – in fact, she would be my 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher. I stayed on her speech team, becoming one of the most active members. Although I didn't win any trophies in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I did earn my NFL membership. I also fell completely in love with high school speech (and still am). Terri went through a rough divorce during my first two years in high school, and we kids on the speech team were her family and her escape. I've often thought that her loss was our gain as she gave us so much attention in part to help take her mind off her own troubles. And we did have an awful lot of fun.

**At** the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade, my family moved three hours away to Bowling Green, and while my new school had a speech team, they didn't do a lot. There was no NFL chapter there, so my high school connection with NFL was over. Terri stayed in my life, though, helping me become the first state winner of a new speech contest by listening to audio cassettes I'd make of my speech and then mail to her for critique. She always replied, and she always helped. Even if it wasn't official, she was still my coach. She gave me her time and her talents. I was able to do my best because she gave me her best.

**Terri** moved to a new school when I was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and when I went to college nearby, I became her assistant coach. Here the die was cast, for there was nothing I loved more than working with those kids on their competition pieces. When I told her I planned to teach high school English and coach a speech team, she sat me down and told me not to – that I had too much potential to “just teach” – that I wouldn't be doing enough with my talents and my life.

**I** ignored her, got my first teaching job, and over the years I ended up starting two different teams at schools that didn't have them and establishing two different NFL chapters. In the sixteen years I've taught, Terri and I have attended over a hundred speech tournaments together. At first we were rival coaches

traveling together with our own teams, but now she works for me (for free) one day a week – reminding me that her name is the first on the judge list for NFL Nationals. I must confess that the two or three times I've been there without her, it's not been nearly as fun. We have had some grand adventures over the years, from sitting together on a church pew in Atlanta for seven hours (afraid to lose our seats before our first finalist ever began to compete) to Olympic bobsledding (I rode it; she cheered) to Broadway shows and a million self-esteem speeches and Abridged duos in between.

**As** we've traveled, she's never stopped coaching me, helping me temper my too-direct nature and be kinder in my comments to kids. Coach Terri makes me a better Coach Steve because she listens to the kids and makes them feel special, and she tells me when I need to do more of that too. I feel like I learn as much as the kids do from her guidance.

**In** the novel *The Prince of Tides*, narrator Tom Wingo reflects on his life: “I am a teacher and a coach. That is all and it is enough.” I've been reflective about my former coach this year, for this summer Terri Branson is retiring from both teaching and coaching. I will miss her greatly as part of my speech team life. Yet like Tom Wingo, I've come to a realization. I can point to many kids I've had a lot of fun working with over the years, but if I want to justify my hours after school and on buses and in rounds, I can point to many kids whose lives are greatly different because I did spend those hours with them – kids who learned to be their best selves and to communicate clearly. I didn't listen to what Terri told me, but I do instead what she showed me. I try to give my best, my time and my talents, to always reply and always help. She showed me a fine way to live life. And it is enough.

*(Steve Meadows is a two diamond coach at Danville High in Kentucky and has served ten terms as Kentucky District Chair.)*



Steve Meadows

# Alumni Interviews



**Sarah Hinkfuss**

Sarah Hinkfuss, a 2006 graduate of Rufus King High School in Milwaukee, (WI) and a freshman at Harvard University, attributes much of her success in high school to the speech and debate program she was involved in. She actually started in middle school and by the time she was ready to start High School she was also ready to get involved in the NFL speech and debate team. I asked Sarah what she enjoyed most about the NFL she said... "it has taught me to be more adaptable. I like to be organized and on top of things. When preparing for tournaments you have to learn to adapt." Being part of the NFL has also given her an opportunity to travel and build new relationships. "I've made friends all over the country, the NFL has given me a link to so many wonderful places and people."

Nicole was very successful with the NFL in high school which catapulted her into the Julliard School for Drama. She said, "I never would have gotten into it without the NFL...it was great going to classes and actually recognizing other students who I competed against in the NFL." She went on to say, "you can always tell who the NFL'ers were...they have an iron clad mind...they just got it!" The ambition and drive that she gained at such a young age was what made her feel prepared for Julliard. When interviewing Nicole, she was upbeat and very insightful. She was grateful for all Coach Rob Dodson had done for her and what he had instilled in her! Just another testament on how coaches can affect the lives of NFL students in so many ways. I'm sure this won't be the last we hear of Nicole. She has her sights set on TV and film next. I am sure with her determination and passion we can look forward to seeing her on the big screen!



**Nicole Lowrance**



**Michael Abbott, Jr.**

Michael Abbott first found his love of speech and theatre at age 10 as an Elvis impersonator. Years later he graduated from Morristown West in East Tennessee with many successful years in speech and forensics. He went to Nationals in 1998 with Humorous Interpretation as his main event. He attributes much of his speech success to his coach Susanne Terry. He said "schools would be lucky to have a coach like her...everyone could use more coaches like her." I asked him what kept him participating in speech throughout his high school years, he said, "I knew I had found my niche in forensics and theatre. Kids need an outlet and forensics was that for me. I found a family and it was a way to focus my youthful energy."

# Alumni Interviews



**Guy McHendry**

"As NFL alumni, we are compelled to give back to the activity which gave so much to us. Three weeks ago, a student of mine asked if I would advise an intramural speech team at Colorado State. I was reminded of the passion the NFL inspires in its members, often driving them to continued involvement past high school graduation. The drive by the NFL to establish an active alumni network is proof of the work to be done. As former participants, we are a support network of judges, coaches, and teachers for the activity which inspired passion and confidence in each of us."

"My events were Original Oratory and Extemporaneous Speaking. I also dabbled in novice debate. These events helped me to appreciate the importance of developing structured and logical arguments in my writing and speaking, and of course, the importance of being able to think on my feet. Team members would put in countless hours of practice, and we were driven to perform at our absolute best."



**Gary Rodman**



**Natalie Sintek**

"I think that we, as NFL alumni, have a unique opportunity to affect real change. Volunteering at a local high school to coach, logging NFL points, or organizing fundraising drives will not only give back to the activity that has given us so much, but it will bequeath all the things we love about forensics to the next generation of communicators. Even if you don't have the time to commit to a coaching position or to regularly volunteer, an impact can be made in other ways. It is as simple as volunteering to judge for a local tournament or supporting their fundraising efforts. Remember, every little bit can make a huge difference in the life of a forensicator."



# Alumni Interviews



I still remember receiving an invitation to be on the Harrisburg High School (IL) speech team in third period Honor's English. I could not believe that out of the hundreds of kids at my school, the speech coach actually took the time to send a special letter for me to join his team to the shy, awkward kid. However, it was on that fateful day that someone took a chance and told me "I could." Without hesitation, I joined the speech team and since then have continued my forensics experience with a host of positive experiences and treasured memories.



**Tyler Billman**



**Michael Urie**

Michael started his career right where many alumni did...the hallways of an NFL high school. Michael grew up in Plano, Texas and was coached by Ms. Karen Wilbanks. He says the best thing about speech in high school was that his coach "never stressed about winning." It became about doing good work and we were praised for what we accomplished!" He and his teammates were taught the motto "do it to do it again!" It's not about who you beat, but rather getting to perform it again in front of a captive audience. Ms. Wilbanks is certainly praising him now. . " When interviewed Michael said how lucky he was to have an NFL background because it gave him an edge against his competition. "If you can get in front of complete strangers who control your fate for those few minutes without being nervous, you will continue to do well, and you will continue to do better every time you perform. I learned that from the NFL!"

I would like to personally invite you to join us  
at the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual NFL Alumni Reception

2007 National Speech Tournament  
Hyatt Regency  
Wichita, Kansas

~ Mark your calendar for ~  
Thursday, June 21, 2007

Starting at 2 pm

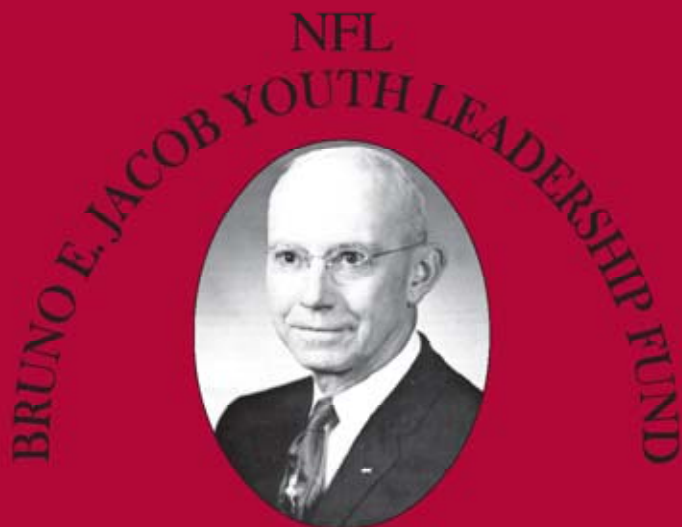
Please RSVP  
Email: [hchristensen@nflonline.org](mailto:hchristensen@nflonline.org) or  
Call: 920-748-6206



Heidi Christensen  
Alumni Director



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"The National Forensic League embraces diversity, interconnection, and visionary leadership.

We empower students to become effective communicators, ethical individuals, critical thinkers, and leaders in a democratic society."

Please help us provide additional opportunities for our students by donating to the NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund

## NFL BRUNO E. JACOB YOUTH LEADERSHIP FUND

One way to ensure many years of future NFL success is to join the the NFL Society of Giving. Your generous commitment to the 93,000 active students of the NFL is greatly appreciated.

### SOCIETY OF GIVING

Diamond Donor	\$15,000 or more
Level of Distinction	\$10,000 - \$14,999
Level of Excellence	\$5,000 - \$9,999
Level of Honor	\$1,000 - \$4,999
NFL Founder	\$100 - \$999

## NFL BRUNO E. JACOB YOUTH LEADERSHIP FUND

I/We want to support the Bruno E. Jacob NFL Youth Leadership Fund by giving \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please direct this gift toward  NFL's Greatest Need  Program Development  
 Student Scholarships  Coaching Resources/Development  Other \_\_\_\_\_

This gift is In Memory of/In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

- Payment Options:
- Check enclosed payable to NFL Youth Leadership Fund
  - This is a pledge. Payment will be made on or before \_\_\_\_\_ (date)
  - NFL is in my will
  - My company will match my donation

*Be a part of the inaugural family of giving!*

Payments can also be made online at [www.nflonline.org/gift](http://www.nflonline.org/gift) with credit card or by calling the NFL office at 920-748-6206

Gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law

**What is the vision of the NFL?**

The National Forensic League is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit educational honor society that promotes secondary school speech and debate activities and interscholastic competition as a means to develop a student's lifelong skills and values, as well as the public's awareness of the value of speech, debate and communication education. The organization serves as the central agent for coordination and facilitation of heightened public awareness of the value of speech communication skills, development of educational initiatives for student and teacher training, excellence in interscholastic competition and the promotion of honor society ideals.



*Upon your first donation, you will receive an NFL Bruno E. Jacob Society Certificate of Recognition.*

*Upon your second year of consecutive giving, you will receive a commemorative Bruno E. Jacob Society pin*

**What is the NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund?**

The NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund is an opportunity for alumni, parents, and all friends of the NFL to contribute to the implementation and achievement of the NFL mission. Your contribution assists the NFL in providing essential tools for an effective speech and debate program. Student and coach scholarship programs, coach/teacher education and workshops, individual school program development, financial support through school grant programming, curriculum development, and regional office development are among the primary uses for the NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund.

**Why is it so important to donate?**

Each year, the NFL sponsors the speech and debate educational activities for over 93,000 students and nearly 6,500 educators at over 3,000 high schools throughout the United States and U.S. territories. Since its founding, the NFL has enrolled over 1,224,095 members. Your gift, regardless of size, is a crucial resource that assists the NFL in making a difference in the lives of all member students and teachers who are so committed to this activity.



**Questions about giving?**

Please contact the NFL national office at 920-748-6206, e-mail us at [hschristensen@nflonline.org](mailto:hschristensen@nflonline.org), or write to us at NFL Bruno E. Jacob Youth Leadership Fund, P.O. Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971

*Thank you for helping us provide the best possible opportunities for our 6,500 active coaches and 93,000 speech and debate students!*

I am a/an Alumni Coach Parent Friend of the NFL

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

High School Attended \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to be a member of the NFL Alumni Program and receive future mailings

# Investors are creative these days...



*Name the NFL as a Special Benefactor of your IRA*

*Secure a spot for the League in your will*

*Designate stock to the National Forensic League*

*on behalf of the NFL*

*Thank you!*

# Over the Rainbow



## Derby / Wichita

# The 2007 Kansas Nationals Where Dreams Come True

*Looking for something to do the third week in June?* Join the NFL for the National Tournament in Derby/Wichita, Kansas!. The 2007 tournament will be full of excitement as we *Follow the Yellow Brick Road* to the Schwan Event at the Sedgwick County Zoo, final rounds, the awards ceremony, and more!

Thousands of students from across the country will be headed *Over the Rainbow* in search of their dreams for six days in June. Students competing at the National Tournament will have advanced through their District Tournament earlier in the year. The 2007 National Tournament will be *Where Dreams Come True* from June 17 to June 22. National Champions will be crowned in all of the NFL's Main events as well as in Supplemental and Consolation events.

Those not competing will find no lack of activities in the Derby/Wichita area. From the Exploration Center, Wichita Art Museum, Musical Theatre of Wichita, and more, no one will be saying

*"There's no place like home!"*

## Monster's Making It Count - Speakers Needed!

Making It Count (MIC) is currently recruiting speakers for our upcoming 2007 programs, "Making High School Count" and "The Ultimate Road Trip". These 45-minute programs are offered to high school and college freshman from May-December 2007.

### Who We Are & What We Do

MIC, a division of Monster Worldwide, is the industry leader in "edutainment" delivering more than 11,000 free educational trainings to high school students, college students, and parents nationwide. Speakers offer motivation and information to students on how to make the most of their high school experience, succeed in college, and best prepare themselves to maximize their opportunities upon graduation. By achieving these goals, MIC will play a meaningful role in reversing the long-term negative trends in college graduation rates and graduate employment statistics. Since 1998, we have reached more than 15 million students!

### How Does it Work?

Our school marketing department calls on schools daily, signing them up for our free programs. Regional Managers then contact our speakers and check their availability to deliver the scheduled presentations. MIC provides the program content for speakers. We do offer compensation for your time and an all expenses paid, top-quality, professional training. Compensation varies between \$100 and \$250 per presentation based upon distance traveled. All speakers are hired as independent contractors.

### How many Presentations will I give?

The average speaker will deliver approximately 10-15 presentations per semester depending upon the following:

- \*School sign-ups in your area
- \*Your speaking ability/availability
- \*Your flexibility (travel, driving, overnight trips, flights)

### What are we looking for in a Making It Count speaker?

- \*Associate or Bachelor's degree
- \*Excellent public speaking skills
- \*Ability to speak to and engage large audiences of students and educators (100-800)
- \*Vocal projection and variance
- \*Strong stage presence and image of professional success
- \*Immediate access to the Internet and email
- \*Reliable transportation
- \*Ability to travel up to three hours by car

### How do I Apply?

Please visit our speaker website at <http://speaker.makingitcount.com> for detailed instructions on how to apply!

## Three Generations of Coaches



Photo taken at  
2007 Park Hill/Park Hill South  
Forensic Tournament

Tyler Unsell, new coach  
(student in 1999)

NFL Vice President  
Don Crabtree, coach since 1977

Kyle Howe, coach since 1995  
(student in 1986)

# On Stage

## *NFL Member Celebrities Return*

Actress Shelley Long  
with  
NFL Secretary Emeritus  
James M. Copeland



TV Broadcaster  
Jane Pauley



CNN Founder  
R. E. Turner



NBC Dateline  
Co-Ancor Stone Phillips

# See What NFL Kids Are Saying About Forensics!

"Being part of the NFL was a tough, grueling, and unpredictable experience, but it was the best four years of my life, and I wouldn't take it back for anything. Thank you NFL!"

--Matt from Massachusetts

"Without a sense of dispute, world problems would go by unnoticed, with people afraid to question the more powerful. Speech and debate provides the opportunity to question, and ultimately makes the world a better place, because of it."

--Teddy from New York

"Debate is important to me, because I get to learn about topics affecting our world today along with learning to do better research and my talking skills have improved."

--Louis from Alabama

"Being in speech and debate is important to me, because it allows me to learn something new each day. At tournaments, I meet new people, who also help me learn more. Being able to speak in front of others gives me a sense of confidence that I will take with me throughout my endeavors in college and the rest of my life."

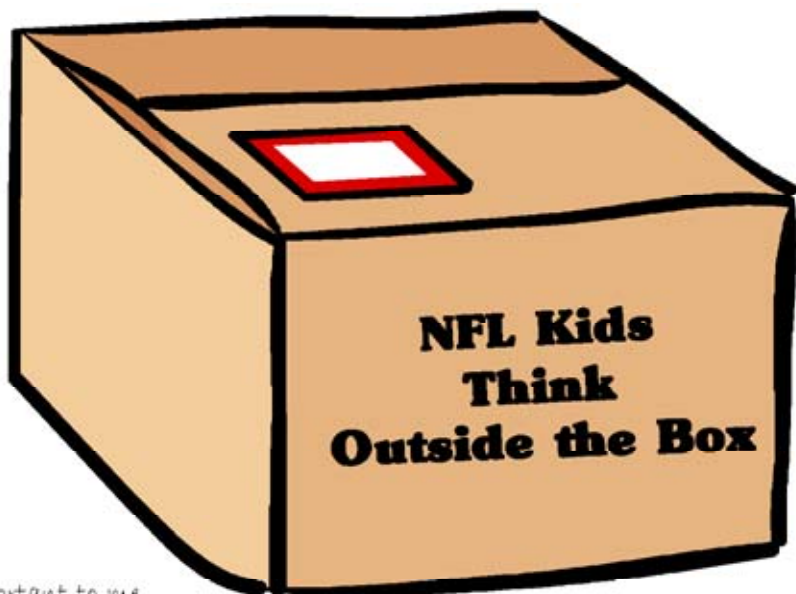
--Paloma from Nebraska

"Is it not our purpose everyday in our life to be the best that we can be? I definitely know that I can do better if I try. So speech and debate is important to me because it will benefit my life, as I want to be the best I can be. I have no limit in life because I refuse to be the wasted potential."

--Mark from Guam

"Speech and Debate and my involvement in the National Forensic League have opened a world of opportunities for me. I have gained the confidence to speak anywhere and in front of anyone. This organization and activity has given me a truly irreplaceable experience."

--Jamie from Missouri



"Being in Speech and Debate allows me to refine my speaking skills and having something to say on important matters, or just try to prove I can convince a judge of my point. It's a lot of fun because I can meet new people, even if it is just for one day. It will also help me get into college."

--Ian from Colorado

# NFL MERCHANDISE



The NFL offers an exciting line of merchandise so you can show your NFL pride. Shown here are only a few of our items, to see the other great items we have available, visit the NFL website at [www.nflonline.org](http://www.nflonline.org)



**NFL Events**  
**Consider Judging or Coaching?**

*lincoln douglas debate*

*policy debate*

*public forum*

*U S Extemp*

*international Extemp*

*speech & debate*

**for more information contact:**

**Heidi Christensen, Director of Alumni**

**[hschristensen@nflonline.org](mailto:hschristensen@nflonline.org)**

*duo interp*

*dramatic interp*

*commentary*

*prose*

*poetry*

*impromptu*

*storytelling*



# Come Visit

NFL National Office



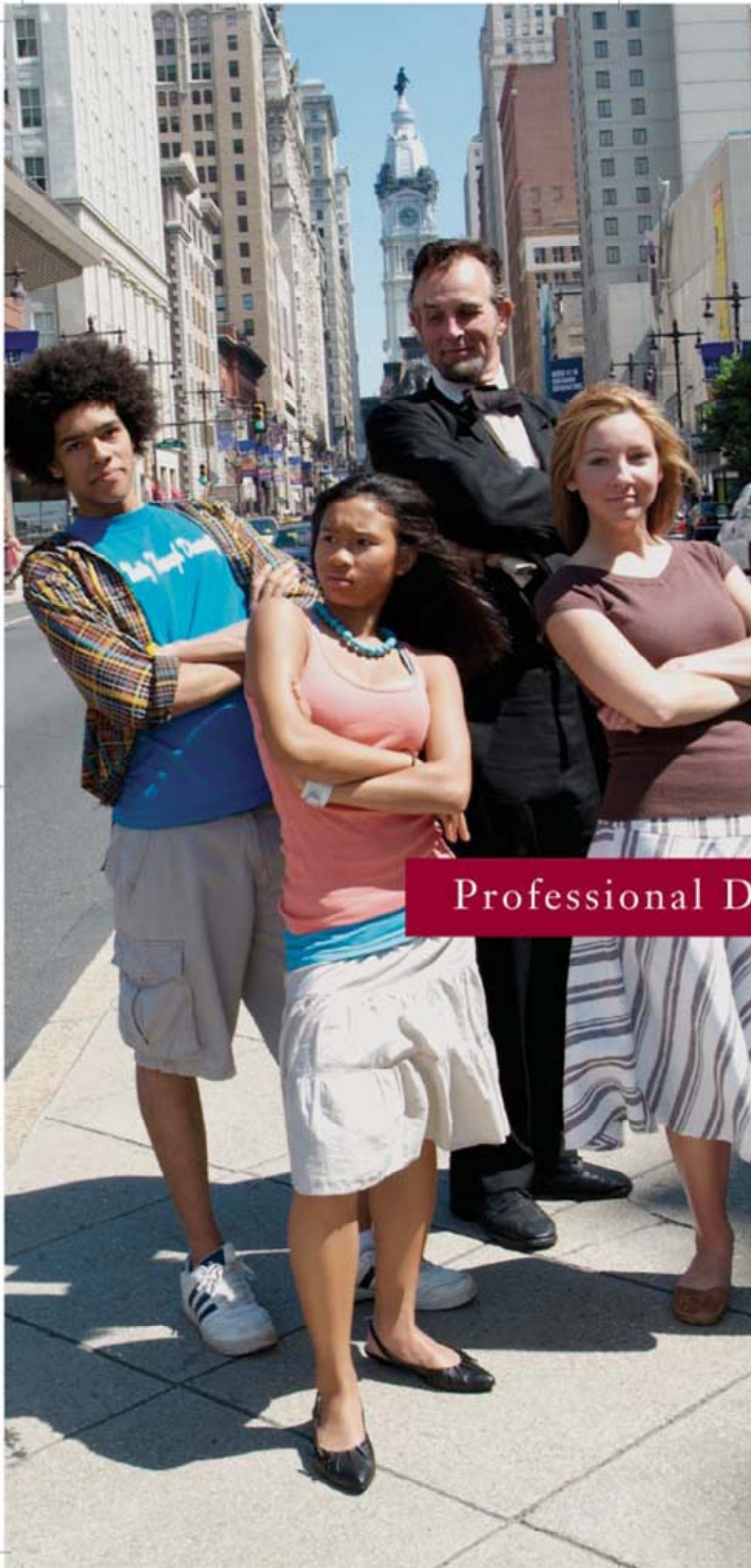
**Founder Bruno E. Jacob**

**Founded in 1925**

**Currently over 93,000 active members**

**Over 6,500 active high school teachers**

**Total enrolled members, 1,224,095**



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## Professional Development Program

**Contact Info:**

Professional Development Program  
E-mail: [PDP@LFG.com](mailto:PDP@LFG.com)



Hello future:™

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CRN200509-1003025

# *Alumni Connection*



Founder Bruno E. Jacob

## **National Forensic League Established 1925**

**Over 1,224,095 enrolled members**  
**Over 93,000 active high school members**  
**Over 6,500 active high school teachers**