Ten years ago I received my diploma from a small, rural high school in Riverton, Kansas. In the following years, I have attended several high school events as a spectator. Two of the three were football games of my alma mater. I added the third event in March and it left a mark on me.

Last month Ardmore high school held its 49th annual interclass oratorical contest. I was asked to serve with Miss Brunette Shanklin, ’30ba, Extension Division specialist, and Dr. Loren N. Brown, ’28ma, ’37ph.d, specialist in school services, as a judge.

With some combat experience as a speech contestant, I suspected that I was ready for anything to happen—but I was wrong.

Perhaps, if I described the occasion, it would indicate what a fine afternoon the Ardmore students and teachers gave Miss Shanklin, Dr. Brown and me.

The high school auditorium was sparsely settled when the judges took their places at various points in the room. A few parents had already found seats but the students were still in class.

I found myself seated in the junior class section. A large crepe paper banner had been constructed to inform me of my transgression. Across the room the seniors had placed a similar notation of their sovereignty.

The lovely sophomores had to be content with balcony seats, but placards indicated that they were unconscious about their positions.

The school bell system worked wonders at 2:30 p.m. What had been a quiet auditorium erupted with sound as the classes filled their sections.

A junior, whose section I was usurping, turned from his seat in front of me and said, “Mr. Judge, where are you from?” “O.U.,” I replied. After a brief discussion about how I was associated with O.U., I asked him if he had done any speech work.

“My colleague and I have qualified for the state debate tournament,” he told me with a reasonable amount of pride in the telling.

The three contestants took seats on the stage. Cheer leaders dressed in their own class colors presented the orator representing their class with baskets of flowers and led class cheers. The juniors sang a song to let their entry know he should be a front runner.

The enthusiasm was real. There was a spontaneity about it that could not help but pierce the false sophistication that I have a tendency to adopt towards those in a younger age group.

George Hann, ’36m.ed, superintendent of Ardmore schools, presided and introduced the contestants as they moved to the front of the stage to bring credit to themselves and to their classes.

Each of the contestants had chosen a subject for his oration that fitted the times and either concerned wars or rumors of wars.

The seniors and juniors were represented by young men and the sophomores by a young lady.

Their style of delivery differed sharply. Each did a good job. They seemed to feel a responsibility towards their classmates, and were making their finest effort to win.

The suspense in the auditorium would have done credit to an Alfred Hitchcock movie as the judges left the room to reach their decision.

Murl Price, principal of the high school, waited as anxiously as the orators. We gave him our placements and returned to a vantage point to witness the announcement.

When the seniors heard the outcome, they whooped it up. Their entry had taken first and the juniors and sophomores followed in that order.

The three judges paled into the car and headed back to Norman. All three were impressed with the speeches, the contestants and the high school that had channeled student enthusiasm into such a worthwhile venture. Next year Ardmore will hold its 50th contest. It should be another fine occasion.

The club holds monthly luncheon meetings and sponsors the “Beat Texas” dinner dance before the O.U.-Texas game.

Special Days

Three professional schools will hold special days in April. Alumni of each of the celebrating schools and colleges are invited to attend. Those celebrating are—

- Journalism Day, April 10, no speaker announced.
- Business Day, April 15, (inauguration of an annual day), principal speaker, James Q. DuPont, DuPont Company, Wilmington, Delaware.
- Law Day, April 20, principal speaker, Oriel Phillips, Chief Judge, U. S. Court of Appeals, 10th District. Retired Law School professors will be honored.