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January 31, 1958

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Dr. Ralph Y. McGinnis, chairman of the Montana State University Speech Dept., has been elected national executive secretary of Tau Kappa Alpha, honorary speech fraternity, MSU officials announced.

The National headquarters of the fraternity will be in Missoula during Dr. McGinnis' three-year term of office. All records have been transferred from Florida State University to an office in the MSU Liberal Arts building. The office employs a secretarial and clerical staff to handle the volume of business of the organization.

MSU, which received its TKA charter in 1936, is one of more than 100 colleges and universities that belong to the forensic honorary. Chapters are located at the Universities of Alabama, Notre Dame, Denver, Southern Methodist, Duke, Vanderbilt, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the majority of schools most prominent in forensics, Dr. McGinnis said.

Membership in the honorary is restricted to students who rank in the upper third of their class scholastically and who have participated in at least 16 intercollegiate speech contests, Dr. McGinnis said. Since 1946, MSU debate teams have won 20 championships in state, regional, or national tournaments, he added.

"The privilege of serving Tau Kappa Alpha as executive secretary-treasurer provides the opportunity of helping to promote the fraternity goal of 'intelligent, responsible and effective speech in a free society'," Dr. McGinnis commented. "The problems of American democracy will not be resolved by sacrificing free speech to the expediencies of totalitarianism. Free speech in a free society can be fostered by supporting the highest possible standards in college forensics."

(More)

Dr. McGinnis, who has directed MSU forensics since 1939, is the author of many articles in professional journals and of two chapters in the TKA textbook, widely used in American colleges. His speech on "Lincoln's Devotion to a Cause," which placed second in the national American public address event of the 1954 Freedom Foundation competition at Valley Forge, was published in Vital Speeches Magazine.

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