

## Student Views

# PROFILE OF CARL GRECCO

When Carl Grecco graduated from the University of Scranton he did not plan to become a debate and forensic coach. But, as Grecco puts it, forensics chose him.

In 1962, the debate and forensic coach at Woodrow Wilson, later called Harry S. Truman, took leave and the principal asked Grecco, still a newcomer to the faculty, to step in and coach the team.

“And I never gave it back,” Grecco said.

Grecco had experience with the debate program. He competed in cross-examination (CX) in high school. During his college years the University of Scranton developed an oratory concert, which Grecco won his junior and senior years.

When Grecco took over, the Wilson team was solely focused on CX. Today, Truman’s team has shifted, becoming predominately a speech team.

As part of his recruitment for the team, Grecco traveled to the middle schools in the district explaining the debate and forensics program to eight grade students.

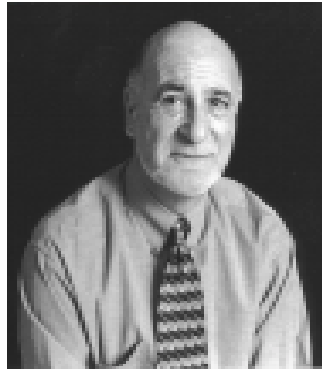
“I liked that he took the time to come explain [the program] to us,” Jackie Trick, ’98, said of her first meeting with Grecco.

Steve Schuster, ’68, said, “Carl always treated us as intelligent young adults, rather than students to be talked down to.”

Currently, the Truman debate and forensics team boasts 200 degrees per years, the largest chapter in the Valley Forge District. Grecco is working on his sixth diamond, and has seen eight state champions, and countless students succeed to state and national levels. The debate program has also aided students in their future careers.

“My success in debate has translated into success in other aspects of my life and has also helped to shape my future goals,” Collin Imhof, ’01, said.

Traci Butterfield, ’98, said: “If Grecco hadn’t pushed me to keep going I would’ve given up on debate in the very beginning.” Butterfield said she was glad she didn’t adding, “Overcoming that fear of public speaking has had an impact on my employment.”



Dr. Eric Klien, ’73, who helped raise money for the program at Truman, said, “Joining the debate team and working with Grecco was the single most important thing I’ve ever done.”

During his coaching career, Grecco has forged a bond with the students he coached.

Nishant Choksi, ’98, said, “Over the past eight years he has turned from a coach to a close friend, who I can always count on for advice.”

“I really thought of him as a father figure for a while,” Chris Scott, ’97, said. “He helped straighten me out and become more mature.”

Shawn Eliason, ’94, said, “There are few people I respect and admire more than Grecco.”

Although he retired from teaching in 1998, Grecco stayed on to coach the team.

“I like the continued contact with students. It keeps me young and keeps the program going,” he said.

His students are grateful that he did not retire from coaching.

John Wheat, ’02 said, “Debate [at Truman] will be lost without him.”

*(Submitted by Kathleen Pasek, who was a member of Carl Grecco's debate and forensic program from 1994-1998 and a student of Carl's Advance Placement United States History Class during her Junior year at Truman. Kathleen graduated in May, 2002 with a BA in Journalism from Susquehanna University.)*

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## Tom Huber



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