



HOW TO BECOME A JUDGE

by Jerry Powel,
Chief Judge

Judges are often asked this question. The answer is not always easy to explain. Two factors must be taken into consideration:

1. The judge's personal background.
2. The judge's actual training for adjudication.

The personal background of a judge varies and reveals that he or she is a business person, a technician, a teacher, or administrator, a laborer, a white or blue collar worker. Many judges exhibit leadership qualities in their everyday lives. In some cases, the judge is a professional whose background is so musically oriented that judging becomes the next logical step, while other people judge because they simply have an interest in the activity.

A typical judge has had some exposure to either bands or drum corps as a teenager or probably carried a rifle, flag, or saber, twirled a baton, or played an instrument of some kind. Most judges have been involved in some competitive situation, mostly on the field, but in some cases, on the stage.

Most judges have gone from the competitive situation to the teaching situation. In other words, they have taught some aspect of the band or drum corps. The judge has probably taught a rifle or flag line, the entire color guard or band front, band or drum corps. Contact with students is very much a part of a judge's background.

BACKGROUND AND TRAINING

Somewhere in a judge's early adult years, the decision to become a judge is developed. The transition from teacher (instructor) to judge occurs. The teacher has had much contact with the "evaluation." People who teach bands, and drum corps get a chance to talk to the judges about the scores when the contest is over. A great deal of interaction takes place. The teacher learns to evaluate his own work first and then considers what it would be like to evaluate someone else's program.

There are basically two large judging associations in the tri-state area. The Cavalcade draws from both and adds other individuals as well to form its own association. This association provides judges only for Cavalcade shows.

Although the Cavalcade is not an association of adjudicators of other activities, the Cavalcade Association does train people who want to become a judge. During the year several people will contact the Chief Judge who sends out an application. The application asks for information, previously mentioned, such as education, participation in bands, drum corps, teaching experience, other judging association training, and clinic attendance.

After the Chief Judge screens the application, making sure the background experiences provide a substantial basis for a prospective judge, mini-clinics are organized in the spring. Several small workshops provide the applicant with the proper theory and practical application of judging skills.

If the prospective judge progresses satisfactorily this far, he or she is given field trials in the fall. Understanding the intricacies of judging is one thing, but practicing it is another. A judge might be an excellent evaluator, but talking into a tape recorder, handling clickers and being articulate takes skill. Sometimes many trials are necessary before the person is ready to take the responsibility of ranking and rating the young people of this area in the Cavalcade activity.

Finally, the performances of all judges are monitored by the Chief Judge. Clinics are provided periodically for all judges to update techniques.

Anyone contemplating the judging aspect of band competition is then facing years of preparation based on many years of background experiences.