



# JEFF STOREY

Prior to the creation of MCCGA, there were about three contests located throughout the state of Missouri. At the time, I was the Director of the Hickman Mills HS Wintergard, and I found that at each contest, there would be different judging criteria. Many held contests with only two judges! I had gone through a successful program in Illinois when I was in high school, and I was used to how things were done there, as well as in Indiana. So after a particularly frustrating contest, from which feedback was limited, I was determined to start a circuit that would provide continuity and consistency from weekend to weekend.

In those days, the internet was not widely used, so there was a lot of phone calling and letter writing. Many directors and instructors thought a circuit was a good idea, but some who were successful under the old system were not so keen on the idea of accountability through uniform criteria. The idea of using a rubric versus more generalized feedback appeared to be daunting to some. At any rate, I recall a few meetings examining handbooks from different state organizations and working on adapting what we thought was best for creating our initial document. And again, since laptops were not a thing at that time, I lugged around a file/suitcase full of anything we might possibly need. Technology does, indeed, make our lives better!

I was very proud of the organization when we held that first championship. Again, not everybody was excited, however, it was a step in the right direction. That championship was a prelims and finals day, and a unit did pull out after prelim results were announced. Finals were held, and we all took notes because we knew what needed to improve for the second season of MCCGA. I think I'm most appreciative of the involvement of leadership as well as unit directors in order to build on a successful first season.

There were a lot of "moments" in those early days of the circuit. Probably the most memorable

for me was the third championship. It was important for that board to hold championships near the center of membership, so after an extensive search, we held it at a private university in Fayette, Missouri. I was excited to hold a contest in a large venue. Plans for the weekend championships began to fall apart on the Tuesday prior, and membership stepped up to run the show. I still can't believe that week and appreciate all who assisted. And then, on the night of championships, with two units left in finals, the town's transformer was struck by lightning, and we were left in the dark. It would not be repaired until sometime the next day. After some scrambling, we held the awards ceremony (thanks to the crowd's flashlights) and handed out trophies. There will always be an asterisk for those results!

In addition to my work with Hickman Mills, I have also designed, instructed, and choreographed for other winter guards in the circuit: Francis Howell HS, Francis Howell Central HS, Shawnee Mission South HS, PAFI (now ICT Independent), and Blue Valley HS. In addition to seeing me on the floor with timing and penalties adjudication, I judge dance team for the Indiana HS Dance Team Association.

Since my time as president of MCCGA, I have enjoyed watching the circuit grow with each passing of the baton. I love seeing former colleagues in the stands as well as those who continue working with groups. I'm very proud of former students who are currently instructing and directing units of their own. I look forward to seeing what's next!

