



**BUSINESS
PROFESSIONALS**
of **AMERICA**
Giving Purpose to Potential

Ceremonies Handbook

Updated September 2023

The Ceremonies Handbook provides a framework for how members engage in the traditions of Business Professionals of America and celebrate our organization's rich history.

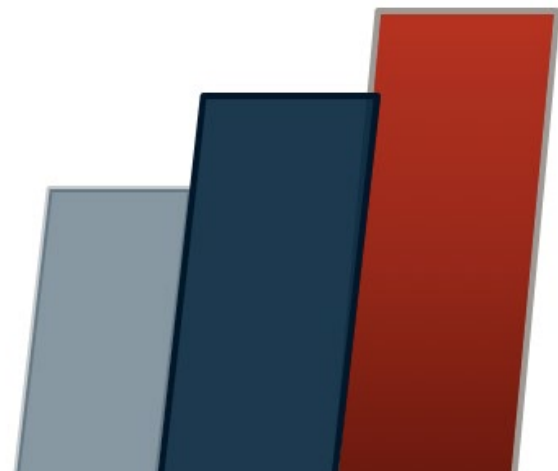


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Foreword

Like many organizations, Business Professionals of America has traditions that have grown, developed, and sometimes changed with the organization. Traditions provide our culture with continuity from one generation to the next. Within an organization, traditions are maintained by passing on information, beliefs, practices, and customs by word of mouth, by example, or in writing.

Traditions unify our organization because they provide chapters with commonalities. For example, members nationwide are wearing the same pins and repeating the same pledge.

BPA's traditions have been evolving since 1966 with the formation of the Office Education Association, our former name. Undoubtedly, some traditions will remain intact through future years and help maintain the organization's thread of continuity. Others will be changed, updated, or eliminated as the organization grows and the world changes.

Business Professionals of America ceremonies symbolize the commitment of members to the fundamental principles and purposes for which our organization stands. The ceremonies have proven to be a starting point for learning about these principles and for developing leadership skills.

It is the purpose of this booklet to explore how the ceremonies are used in a variety of settings and how ceremonies can be used as a leadership training tool.

Why do we have ceremonies?

The use of ceremonies is effective in developing a sense of belonging to the Business Professionals of America organization. It is the responsibility of the chapter advisor to teach members the meaning of the ceremonies and how to conduct them properly.

An effective Business Professionals of America chapter will use ceremonies on a regular basis and can be an excellent public relations tool. Official ceremonies are a source of pride and identity, a common bond among members and chapters, and a constant reminder of the traditions and purposes of Business Professionals of America.

Appropriate ceremonies can contribute much to a chapter by way of unifying it, lending a sense of privilege, importance, and permanency to membership, and keeping the basic ideals of the chapter continually before all the members.

A ceremony should be more than repeating memorized words. It should say and be something special to those who participate in it. Chapters may even personalize their ceremonies to make them appropriate for specific occasions.

Members often want to express their own ideas by changing a ceremony. Chapters may give their ceremonies an ethnic interpretation, such as conducting them in American Sign Language for the Deaf or incorporating elements of the Hispanic culture. It's important that ceremonies communicate the members' real thoughts and feelings about their organization and its activities. There are three primary reasons to use ceremonies:

Ceremonies provide leadership training. The start of a member's leadership development in Business Professionals of America can begin with participation in ceremonies. Training can develop basic leadership qualities of teamwork, poise, voice control, a sense of order in conducting business, and attention to personal appearance.

Ceremonies reinforce basic organizational beliefs. By speaking Business Professionals of America's beliefs out loud, we begin to adopt their meanings as our own. Memorization results in commitment. The emblem was selected by student members when the organization was formed. Members learn that all of the components combined represent Business Professionals of America.

Ceremonies provide for orderly and effective meetings. With the use of ceremonies, meetings are started in an orderly, businesslike manner. When visitors come to a class or chapter meeting, they are told the story of Business Professionals of America and vocational education in a brief, effective way. Members are more likely to have a businesslike frame of mind when ceremonies are used in meetings.

Where are ceremonies appropriate?

Official ceremonies were designed to be used in a variety of situations, ranging from the classroom to large assemblies, from informal situations to structured competition.

At chapter meetings, members practice democracy, parliamentary procedure, develop leadership qualities, and grow into mature, responsible citizens. Meetings should be planned and well organized to keep the program moving, eliminate time loss, and keep the members' attention. The opening and closing ceremonies assist in achieving these goals and should be used regularly.

Regardless of where chapter meetings are held, certain equipment is necessary to conduct the meeting properly. Frequent checks will ensure that all equipment is available and usable. Missing articles should be replaced immediately, and articles unfit for use should be repaired or replace.

Standard chapter meeting room equipment includes:

- United States flag
- Business Professionals of America banner
- Gavel
- Ceremonial emblem
- Secretary's notebook
- Treasurer's notebook
- Official yearbook(s)
- Chapter Management Reference
- Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

Before a meeting is called to order, all ceremonial equipment must be in place and the officers seated correctly.

What is the advisor's role?

Business Professionals of America ceremonies can be the beginning of the leadership training program conducted by the chapter. All chapter members should have the opportunity to participate in ceremonies.

Opening and closing ceremonies are an orderly way to open and close the class from time to time, especially when guests are present. The ceremony tells the Business Professionals of America story and the vocational education story. It can be used to get members "on their feet," perhaps for the first time. Why not let different members perform each time? Getting up and speaking is the start of personal development.

Advantages of using ceremonies in the classroom setting or chapter meetings include:

- Ceremonies which are conducted properly and effectively add dignity to chapter meetings or special activities.
- Ceremonies emphasize the purposes of meetings, the duties of officers, and the significance of recognition given to individuals.
- Students get "on their feet" to speak.
- Students and guests are reminded of the values of vocational training.
- Professional class openings and chapter meetings are provided for special occasions.

To be most effective, all official ceremonies are memorized and conducted with dignity and pride. Practice each ceremony in the meeting room before using it to ensure proper physical arrangements have been made and that all parties know their responsibilities and speaking parts. Properly conducted ceremonies reflect leadership and sincerity.

New members will want to follow along with their copy of ceremonies until they understand and appreciate the meaning of each part.

The advisor should keep the following points in mind when using ceremonies:

1. Motivate members to become involved. Emphasize the following points:
 - Participating in ceremonies teaches poise and leads to professional development.
 - Ceremonies are a quick and easy way to describe vocational education and Business Professionals of America.
 - Every member should know the basic principles of Business Professionals of America which are spelled out in the ceremonies.
 - Most civic clubs, societies, and unions have similar ceremonies. In preparation for participation in these activities in the future, the member will become accustomed to being a part of such ceremonies.
2. Help the participants become familiar with the emblem by actually handling it.

3. Walk through the ceremonies slowly until the participants feel comfortable with the staging. Ceremonies eventually should be conducted from memory. Fine tuning and polishing must follow. When determining the specific method of presenting a ceremony, consider the ceremony's real purpose, what the theme is, and how the members want to express their feelings. What about background music for atmosphere? Would special songs help the symbolism? Would special lighting help? Are there special surroundings? What about including poems, stories, prose, or choral readings? Do you want any special props such as candles, pictures, or multimedia presentations? Do you want to include a skit or dance routine?

As members plan their ceremonies, consider that sincerity is more important than showmanship; originality is more important than perfection. Start by sharing lots of ideas among chapter members; listen to all ideas before rejecting any.

Room arrangements are very important. Attention should be given to the comfort of the members by checking the heat, lighting, and other aspects of the meeting room. Any special equipment, such as microphones, laptop computers, projectors, and speaker's stands should be set up and tested beforehand.

Anyone associated with the production of plays or other dramatic presentations would be a good resource to use in the development of effective ceremonies presentations.

What else should be considered?

The following suggestions may be useful in evolving ceremonies to fit various chapter occasions:

- Avoid making the ceremonies religious or sentimental in character.
- Keep ceremonies simple and short—no long speeches.
- Be sure the setting is appropriate and as beautiful as possible. Flowers, screens, curtains, greens, etc. help to achieve the proper background.
- Musical background adds a good deal, but be sure that the music is appropriate and well played. If members sing, be sure everyone knows the words and music. Nothing detracts more from the dignity at this occasion than poor music.
- Be sure each participant knows exactly what to do and say. It is a good idea to have the major participants practice their roles before the ceremony is presented.
- Decide what will be worn by both the participants and the other chapter members. Uniformity is not necessary, but there should be harmony in the style of clothing.
- If possible, invite parents, faculty, or other special guests to attend the ceremonies.

Here are some hints to make ceremonies run smoothly:

- Those who present ceremonies should remain outside the meeting room until starting time.
- If special guests are to enter with the members, explain the procedure to them. They will then understand when their part in the program or ceremony occurs and what to expect.
- Assign one or two members to arrange facilities. They should see that there are enough seats and that all ceremonial and technical equipment is in place.
- It is important to start on time.
- Members participating in the ceremony should enter the room together, walking like leaders by standing up straight and turning smoothly.
- When sitting down, all should approach their chairs on the same side. Practice this at least once.
- Being well trained avoids the extremes of stiff and jerky movements and sloppy movements.
- Leave “popping to attention” to the military, but don’t slouch or “die” on the stage. “Confident” and “smooth” should describe all movements.
- When arriving at the speaking location, come to a full stop. Plant your feet firmly on the floor. Take a deep breath, smile, and establish eye contact with the audience before speaking. Take your time.
- When speaking, make sure the person in the room who is farthest away can hear.
- Speak with quality. Give attention to resonance, pitch, diction, enunciation, and tempo. Slow down.
- Although it is best not to look around during a ceremony, don’t just stare straight ahead. Speak as though telling the Business Professionals of America story to specific people in the audience.
- Take care with appearance. Check each other on appearance.
- Give attention to the presentation of the head table. It must be clear of books, papers, and briefcases.
- If refreshments are to be served following the meeting or ceremony, they should be prepared prior to the meeting. Needless to say, the refreshments should be kept out of the room until they are ready to be served.

There are many other ways to make ceremonies more effective and meaningful. Practicing will develop technique. Devise a chapter award or certificate for each member who successfully completes a Ceremonies Participation Training Program.

Use this checklist for formal presentations:

- Will members walk in front of (or behind) the chairs in which they are to sit during a ceremony?
- Will members stand during the entire ceremony?
- Is there room to walk behind (or in front of) the other participants during a ceremony?
- Will the participants go to the lectern to say their parts?
- Is the United States flag in the proper location? (*Remember: The United States flag should be located to the right of the speaker, if it is positioned as a part of the stage or on stage level. However, if the flag is positioned on the audience level, it should be to the right of the audience.*)
- Have the participants actually walk through the ceremony in the room in which it will be given. Are they comfortable with the ceremony?
- Are the ceremonial props placed so that participants have easy access to them?
- Are the members familiar with the actual ceremonial props? Do all pieces fit together properly?
- Will special lighting effects be used? If so, this should be rehearsed in advance.

Remember, performing a ceremony in a formal setting is not a training situation. Training should be conducted well in advance so that members will not be embarrassed at the time of performance.

Careful attention must be given by the participants to the sound amplification, if it is necessary. It is essential that each participant be trained in the use of the microphone.

Opening a Meeting

The opening ceremony sets the stage for a chapter meeting. The ceremony, done in a proper and professional manner, will demonstrate to the members a well-planned and organized meeting. This, in itself, will make meetings more orderly and effective.

Equipment and Supplies

- American Flag
- Table (if desired)
- Officer chairs (if desired)
- Gavel

Suggested Procedure

Officers should be seated at the head table or should stand to one side of the lectern.

The Ceremony

President

(Stands and raps the gavel for attention.) The meeting will come to order. We are now holding a meeting of the (chapter name, state association name) of Business Professionals of America. Mr./Madam Vice President, what are the major purposes of our professional organization?

Vice President

We recognize the importance and understand the contributions that have been made to our country by business professionals. We are preparing to take our place in these challenging positions. We work together in Business Professionals of America to develop essential competencies in leadership, scholarship, character, and citizenship so that we may share in the improvement of our economy and the advancement of our nation.

President

May we accomplish these objectives. Mr./Madam Vice President, will you please present the other officers.

Vice President

With pleasure, I introduce: *(Introduce in order the President, Historian, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Regional Vice Presidents. Pronounce the name of each individual and the office held. As each officer is introduced, he or she should stand and remain standing until seated by the President.)* Mr./Madam President, all officers are at their stations.

President

Will the members and friends please rise and join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag? *(Raps the gavel three times to call the members and guests to stand. The audience should rise on the third rap of the gavel. All members face the flag with their hands over their hearts to repeat the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.)*

Everyone

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

President

Will the members and friends please join me in stating why we are here. *(Raps three times with the gavel. The audience should rise on the third rap of the gavel.)*

Everyone

We are met in a spirit of friendship and goodwill as we prepare for productive lives in business and office careers. We work together to develop professionalism and leadership through Business Professionals of America, and pledge our loyalty to our nation.

President

Please be seated.

Closing a Meeting

The closing ceremony, when properly presented, will bring a dignified closing to a session or meeting. It is an indication to the members or guests present that all business has been transacted. This is the appropriate time to serve refreshments.

Equipment and Supplies

- Gavel

The Ceremony

President

Mr./Madam Secretary, do you know of any further business which should be transacted at this time?

Secretary

(Rises, replies, and sits down.) I have none, Mr./Madam President.

President

We are about to adjourn this meeting of the *(chapter name, state association name)* of Business Professionals of America. As we associate together, let us be supportive of each other as we strive to attain the goals of this organization. *(Pause)* If there is no further business and no objection, the meeting will be adjourned. *(Pause)* I now declare this meeting adjourned. *(Rap gavel once.)*

Initiation of New Members

This ceremony can be as small or as large as your resources allow. It can be strictly “members only” or it may be held in the evening with the public attending. Whether small or large, it must be conducted with due respect. The ceremony may be conducted either on a stage or in the center of a room, with the audience around the outer edges.

Performing this ceremony indicates to the new members that Business Professionals of America is an established organization with definite goals and purposes. It is important that new members feel they “belong” to the organization. By accepting membership, they also accept the responsibilities of membership.

Candles are appropriate. Membership pins, silk flowers, or paper replicas of the pins should be available for presentation to each new member during the initiation ceremony. The Business Professionals of America banner can be hung behind the table.

Parts may be read from scripts. However, the initiation ceremony will be more effective if parts are memorized. Where the initiation ceremony is large enough to warrant it, spotlights and background music are effective.

Immediately following the initiation, the President might introduce the advisor who could make a short inspiring talk. The President may announce that refreshments are being served and tell where. As the meeting comes to a close, existing members should make a point of welcoming the initiates and see to it that they are accepted immediately.

This ceremony will take about ten minutes, not including the short talk by the advisor. The length can be varied.

A social hour after this occasion is recommended as a time when the new members can be assured that they are accepted within the organization. The ceremony may be held at a time other than the usual meeting time.

Equipment and Supplies

- Covered table
- Candles
- Pins, roses, or ribbons to present to new members
- Business Professionals of America banner
- Background music
- Special lighting
- Refreshments
- Roster sheet for initiates to sign

Suggested Procedure

The President, Vice President, and Secretary are standing behind a long table on which there are several candles to light. Chapter pins, ribbons, or other insignia are arranged attractively on the table. There is also a sheet of paper bearing a heading similar to “*The following members were formally initiated on September __, 20__ in the auditorium.*”

Members of the organization are seated at the front. After the group has assembled, a guide will bring in the initiates who remain standing, facing the President. Appropriate background music is played softly at the beginning and end of the ceremony and during the time when initiates are receiving their pins.

The Ceremony

Guide

Mr./Madam President, I present these initiates who desire to become members of Business Professionals of America. They have met the requirements of membership as established in our constitution.

President

(To the initiates) I accept you as candidates for membership in Business Professionals of America. The purpose of our organization is to create an interest in, and an understanding of, the business world, to encourage each member to develop himself or herself to a higher level of leadership, personality, service, and professionalism, and to participate in a worthwhile understanding for the improvement of the college or school, of the community, and of business life. Do you understand and will you support this purpose? Please answer, "I do."

Initiates

I do.

President

Will the members please rise. This time of accepting new members into our organization is a time for existing members to renew their faith in Business Professionals of America and the ideals for which this organization stands. Let us recite the membership oath together.

Everyone

(To be recited in unison or repeated in phrases after the President.) I _____, believe in the purposes of Business Professionals of America and the ideals of business competency, service, and leadership for which it stands. I realize that my responsibilities as a member require me to cooperate to the fullest extent with the goals of the chapter. I will seek to grow in personality, professionalism, and character, through my associations with other members. I do solemnly promise to uphold the aims and responsibilities of Business Professionals of America as an active member. *(Old members are seated.)*

President

Will the candidates please come forward and sign their names on the chapter register?

(The initiates are started by the guide to file past the long table where the Secretary, Vice President, and President are standing. The candidate goes first to the Secretary who oversees the signing of the roll. Then the President presents the pins [or flowers, or even a handshake] and gives individual congratulations. The Vice President assists in the duty by handing the pins [already opened] to the President. At the conclusion of this part of the service, the candidates have filed back to their original positions.)

It is with great pleasure that I declare you members of Business Professionals of America.

President

Will the members and friends please rise and join me in stating why we are here? *(Raps three times with the gavel. The audience should rise on the third rap of the gavel.)*

Everyone (Pledge)

We are met in a spirit of friendship and goodwill as we prepare for careers in a world-class workforce. We work together to develop professionalism and leadership through Business Professionals of America, and pledge our loyalty to our nation.

(Lights are turned on and music indicates a change of mood.)

Instillation of Officers

Installations are times of passage — when Business Professionals of America officers pass on their official duties and responsibilities to incoming officers. This transition may be accomplished in many ways — some formal and some less formal. Many chapters write their own ceremony to suit their membership. Some chapters add a time for leaders and advisors to share feelings and past experiences with family, friends, administrators, members, and fellow leaders.

Equipment and Supplies

- New officer pins
- Candles, holders, matches
- Covered table
- Chairs (if desired)
- Refreshments
- Business Professionals of America banner
- Background music

Suggested Procedure

If candles are used, they may be held by the officers and officers-elect or placed on a table.

The Business Professionals of America emblem and colors may be used to add a special decorative touch to the occasion. Lighting may be dimmed for special effect and soft music played while participants take their places for the ceremony.

Attaching officer pins is often awkward and time consuming. Instead, find a method of presenting the pin more easily.

The following are the oaths of office which are read by the outgoing officer and repeated by the incoming officer. They are suitable for local, state, or national officer installations.

The Ceremony

Regional Vice Presidents

Mr./Madam _____ Region Vice President-elect, you have shown your leadership ability by being elected to this station. It will be your responsibility to preside over all _____ regional meetings and work within your region to promote the high ideals of our national association.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as _____ Region Vice President of Business Professionals of America.

Historian

Mr./Madam Historian-elect, your duty is to strive to supply public information. This can be accomplished in part by gathering and submitting all interesting news. All outstanding news

should be reported to you by the members. You will assist the Secretary in making association reports by keeping a yearbook of pictures and articles published concerning the association and its members, and help in compiling our organization's history.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as Historian of Business Professionals of America.

Parliamentarian

Mr./Madam Parliamentarian-elect, your duty will be to ensure that this organization is run according to good parliamentary procedure. You will assist the organization by providing guidance and information on parliamentary procedure in conducting meetings. You will also supervise the election of officers.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as Parliamentarian of Business Professionals of America.

Treasurer

Mr./Madam Treasurer-elect, being elected to this office means our organization has placed high honor and trust upon you. Your duties require you to keep accurate records of all receipts and disbursements and be ready at all times to give a report of the financial condition of our association.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as Treasurer of Business Professionals of America.

Secretary

Mr./Madam Secretary-elect, you have been chosen by your fellow members to keep accurate minutes of all meetings, carry on all correspondence of our organization, and preside over meetings in the absence of both President and Vice President, or until a temporary chairman has been chosen. You must be responsible for association reports. The Secretary has custody of the constitution, by-laws, and other reports of the association. You will keep an accurate list of members and furnish membership cards. You should provide the President with a statement of all business to be transacted at each meeting along with a list of all committees.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as Secretary of Business Professionals of America.

Vice President

Mr./Madam Vice President-elect, you have shown your leadership ability by being elected to this position. You are to assist the President at all times in directing the work of our organization, preside over meetings in his or her absence, and help to keep all committees working efficiently.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as Vice President of Business Professionals of America.

President

Mr./Madam President-elect, you have been selected by your fellow members to be the leader of our organization for the coming year. Your past record of accomplishment has marked you as possessing those qualities of leadership which all future business professionals should possess. You now become responsible for leading our association in all its worthy undertakings. May you work intelligently and seriously to carry out the responsibilities of your office.

If you agree to assume these responsibilities, will you repeat after me: I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as President of Business Professionals of America.

Alternate Ceremony

The following script could be used to help shorten the installation ceremony.

Officer

Will _____ please come forward. _____, you have shown your leadership ability by being elected as _____. If you agree to assume the responsibilities of this office, please repeat after me:

I, (your name), do hereby state that I will fulfill my responsibilities as _____ of Business Professionals of America.

Each officer in turn would call up their corresponding officer-elect and perform the installation in the same manner. (The chapter might want to use this method to perform a "group" installation where all officers take the oath of office at the same time.)

Additional Alternate Ceremony

Instead of reciting the duties of the office, candidates can tell in their own words what Business Professionals of America means to them and what they hope to accomplish in the coming year.

The Torch Ceremony

This ceremony is presented at the conclusion of each annual National Leadership Conference. It is also suitable for state associations or local chapters. This ceremony explains the ideals for which Business Professionals of America stands. It is Business Professionals of America's most solemn ceremony; no photographs are to be taken during the ceremony.

Equipment and Supplies

- One large candle or flashlight for the Main Torchbearer
- A medium-sized candle or flashlight for each of the torches
- Robes or other appropriate attire for the cast
- Notebooks for the cast to carry with their scripts
- Recording of "This Is My Country"

Suggested Procedure

The station for the Main Torchbearer should be located at the back center of the stage. A low desk or candle holder should be in front of the Main Torchbearer. Room should be provided for the torches to stand in a semi-circle behind the Main Torchbearer. The lights in the room should be dimmed as far as possible during the entire ceremony. A spotlight on the Main Torchbearer and each torch is effective as they take their places; it should then be focused on the person speaking.

Use a recording of "This Is My Country" (or have piano accompaniment) as background music while the participants enter. If arrangements permit, half should enter from the left and half from the right side of the stage. After the Main Torchbearer has reached his or her station, the torches take their places, carrying an unlighted torch in their right hand. The Main Torchbearer steps forward, taking his or her place beside the large candle.

The Ceremony

Main Torchbearer

We now come to the close of this (name of meeting) of Business Professionals of America. We have had the rare privilege of sharing in an organization which is designed to promote professionalism and leadership in our career development and personal growth.

We are thankful for the progress we have made through Business Professionals of America and the many new friendships we have developed. Through participation and diligent work, we now have a better understanding of the ideals and objectives of our organization.

May we learn to know ourselves, strive to build lives of service for others, and recognize the opportunity to share Business Professionals of America with students in business professions throughout the United States. With pride, I light the torch of Business Professionals of America and call upon my associates to tell you more about the high ideals for which our organization stands.

(Representatives come forward one at a time and stand by the Main Torchbearer. As each lights the torch from that of the Main Torchbearer, the oral presentation is given.)

Hope

I light this torch as an expression of our earnest hope for the continued success of our organization and for the success and happiness of our membership. Hope, shining through the centuries, dispels darkness, and through honest efforts, hope comes for a better life. This torch shines for hope.

Faith

I light this torch signifying a deep faith in our creator and in our fellow members. This light represents faith in the future of our nation, our profession, and our success. Action, inspired through faith, creates progress. Our firm faith inspires our efforts to attain the ideals of Business Professionals of America in our personal and business lives. This torch shines for faith.

Love

I light this torch as an implement of love. Love is reverence, family affection, community fellowship, peace of mind, and goodwill among nations. The giving of love will fulfill the needs of others as it will give us a feeling of satisfaction. This torch shines for love.

Cooperation

I light this torch to commemorate the privilege and dignity of serving Business Professionals of America. Through teamwork in planning and building our organization, we seek to better not only ourselves as individuals, but also our association. It is our cooperation that sustains our ideals as one. This torch shines for cooperation.

Knowledge

I light this torch as a symbol of the qualities of intelligence and ability of all members of Business Professionals of America as they work with dignity in their profession. Let us strive to recognize our capabilities and develop ourselves as fully as possible so that we may share in a better tomorrow. This torch shines for knowledge.

Service

I light this torch in recognition of the service of our members in the field of business professions. As an active national student organization, we recognize our potential influence and responsibility to our nation. May our concern for others inspire us to live lives of service. This torch shines for service.

Leadership

I light this torch as a symbol of leadership today and as a promise of continuing leadership in the years ahead. A leader is like a light held high that brightens the way not only for oneself, but also for others. Let us each pledge that in all our personal, social, and business relationships, we will demonstrate the qualities of true leadership and professionalism. This torch shines for leadership.

Friendship

I light this torch to illustrate the flame of friendship in our hearts. As we light each successive torch, the glow of friendship brightens our world and the world of those we touch. Light gives life and power to our earth and all its people. We are grateful for friends in Business Professionals of America who have helped us become true friends. This torch shines for friendship.

Citizenship

I light this torch to illustrate the citizenship Business Professionals of America members demonstrate for their respective nations. This ideal implies proud, honest people interested in the welfare of others. Through Business Professionals of America, we recognize our obligation to our communities, and accept the responsibility of dependable citizenship. This torch shines for citizenship.

Main Torchbearer

As the light of the torches pass from one ideal to another, so may we pass the ideals of Business Professionals of America to those who follow us. Let us strive to keep that which is good in our way of life, and move forward in our dedicated service to all people.

Let us adjourn with pride and appreciation and live with a firm resolve to build an organization that will be a credit to its founders and membership. Let us depart in a spirit of the torches of Business Professionals of America.

Recessional

An appropriate patriotic or somber song should be played as participants leave the stage. The Torch Awards Program Ceremony is suitable for presentation at a meeting or conference as suggested here:

- Local level - Executive Award - local chapter meeting or banquet
- Regional level - Diplomat Award - regional meeting, conference, or regional banquet. (In states not operating at a regional level, the Diplomat Award may be presented at the state conference, or at the local level when necessary.)
- State level - Statesman Award - at the Spring State Conference
- National level - Ambassador Award - at the National Leadership Conference

Recipients of the award should be notified in advance of their eligibility status and should be informed as to the time, place, and method of presentation. When large assemblies are present for the award, the recipients should be seated in an honors section of the assembly, in close proximity to the stage.

Equipment and Supplies

Certificates for each level of achievement are available from the National Center and should be signed and framed prior to presentation. The "Torch Awards" pin is available for purchase from the national emblematic materials supplier (see the BPA Mall at shop.bpa.org for ordering information).

Suggested Procedure

The President and Vice President proceed to the podium. The Vice President, who has been involved in approving the recipient for the award, speaks. The President presents the award.

It is appropriate for the President to close the ceremony with concluding remarks and ask that the persons assembled recognize the honored recipients with their applause.

Ceremony

Vice President

(As Vice President reads the name, the recipient comes forward, shakes the hand of the President who presents either or both the certificate and pin. When several recipients are honored, they receive their award and exit off stage and remain standing in the audience until all have been honored. When only a few recipients are honored, they remain on stage and exit only after all recipients have been honored.) The objective of the Torch Awards Program, as demonstrated by the recipients of the _____ award, is to provide the member an opportunity to develop a better understanding of responsibilities to their communities, to country, and to fellow man. It is designed as a means for personal development and recognition. The persons honored here today have met the standards of the Business Professionals of America Torch Awards Program, and have, therefore, earned the honor of wearing the _____ pin.

Honored recipients, may you wear the _____ pin proudly as an example of the worthy goals and ideals of Business Professionals of America which you have demonstrated through your participation in the Torch Awards Program.

The Torch Awards Program has been developed with the Torch Ceremony as its foundation. The light of each of the nine torches illuminates the path as each member strives to attain the goals of our organization.

(pause)

It gives me great pleasure now to announce the recipients of the award. Please come forward as I call your name and receive your award.

(As members arrive in front, the pin presenter shakes each recipient's hand with his/her right hand while presenting the pin with his/her left hand.)