

# HONORARY PRESIDENT DEGREE



Clarence A. Forbes, NASSH Honorary President.

The presentation of Emeritus Professor Clarence A. Forbes as a candidate for Honorary President of the North American Society for Sport History was delivered by Bruce L. Bennett during the NASSH business meeting on May 24, 1987:

“It is a personal honor and a privilege for me to be able to present Dr. Clarence A. Forbes, Emeritus Professor of Classics at Ohio State University, as a candidate for the honorary degree of Honorary President of NASSH to President Tom Jable. Dr. Forbes is a respected colleague and a dear personal friend, and I am grateful to Tom and the NASSH Council for making this occasion possible.

Dr. Forbes’ qualifications as a scholar need no elaboration at this time. His book, *Greek Physical Education*, published in 1929 is a pioneer work and a solid basis for his scholarly reputation, and he has published many articles over the years on Greek athletics and physical education as well as on other aspects of Greek life.

However, I would like to comment on a few facts about this man that you may not know. Clarence often refers to his invalid wife, Florence, as the “Best of Maine” in reference to her home state. I like to refer to Clarence as the “Best of Bates”. Bates is the small college in Maine from which Clarence graduated, but did you know that it is also the home of two other distinguished classical scholars? Dr. Rachel Sargent Robinson, the author of that wonderful book, *Sources for the History of Greek Athletes*, is a graduate of Bates, and the third Bates scholar is present in this room. I would like him to stand up and be recognized. I didn’t get your name, sir? Oh, it is Dr. Earle Zeigler!

It is true. All three of these individuals not only graduated from Bates College but also taught at the University of Illinois at various times.

May I also point out that Dr. Forbes is a master teacher which he proved during his long career at Illinois, at the University of Nebraska, and at Ohio State University. The best thing that I ever did for my classes in the history of physical education and sport at Ohio State University was to invite Professor Forbes to come in and talk about Greek physical education and sport. Every lecture was different, he used hardly any notes, and he spoke with a vigor and enthusiasm that was contagious. I have a stack of notes which I took during each of the twenty five or thirty times that he came to my class over a period of twenty years.

And so, President Jable, I am delighted to present to you a man who was born 2500 years too late, a man who would have been right at home on the streets of ancient Athens, and I will present him as he often signs his letters, ‘Clarence, the Greek’.”