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.

Patriotism
I light this torch to illustrate the patriotism of the Business Professionals of America membership for our nation and its inherent freedoms. Ours is a rich heritage—one of proud, honest people interested in the welfare of all nations. Through Business Professionals of America, we recognize our obligation to our country and accept the responsibility of dependable citizenship. This torch shines for patriotism.

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 American way of life, and with God’s help and guidance 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
“This is My Country” 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 www.bpa.org/mall.html 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 God, 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.)