

While cleaning my garage recently, I discovered one of the medals I won as a participant of the *Grand Concours* when I was in high school. It got me thinking about the impact this annual competition had on me, studying French in Louisville way back in my impressionable years as a teenager. Encouraged to compete by my French teacher, Madame Kearns, and well prepared each year for success, when I look back at the experience I realize that the *Grand Concours* was much more than a competition against peers, so much more than prizes and self-validation. Participating in the *Grand Concours* was fun, exciting... and *formative*: it set me on my path to becoming the French professor that I am today!



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