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Law Drama 101

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Re "In Summation, Power to Win Jury's Favor: Last Chance to Tip Scales May Rest on a Wry Line" (news article, Jan. 23):

As one lawyer put it, there is an "element of theater" at a trial, and it is not simply the content of the closing argument that will win or lose a case, but in fact, the way in which the speech is delivered. Tone of voice, eye contact, gestures, clarity of speech and a passionate commitment to what one is saying all contribute to whether the lawyer can convince the jury that his or her point of view is the one to support.

In recognizing this, some law schools are now offering courses and coaching in public speaking for lawyers. Whether in the courtroom, boardroom, negotiations, press conferences or dealing with the media, public speaking and overall presentation skills are vital in communicating persuasively.

A skilled and trained orator takes words and ideas, breathes life into them and reaches the minds and hearts of the listeners.

Katina Kalin
New York, Jan. 24, 2006
The writer is a speech and voice coach.

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